

IN THE MELTING POT

SPICING UP THE SERVICE QUOTIENT, THE INDIAN WAY



NOT SO long ago in the collective historical memory of the worldly cartographers and sea-faring journeymen, Columbus set out to find the land of spices and untold riches. A few hundred years in the life of our civilisation is hardly a blimp, a batting of an eyelid, a heartbeat, really. What the fabled land of abundance and ancient wisdom offered visiting pioneers of the new worlds of the Europe and America was everything from silk to spices to spirituality. Telecommunications and multiple forms of travel have erased the imaginary boundaries, even time-zones, it has seamlessly created a single entity — a global village. The melting pots have changed — from having disparate cultures and ethnic groups it has changed to distinct economic and social strata.

The landscape includes those who gravitate to greater pastures in search of jobs and more money. There is also an growing group who pioneer new business ventures. Of all kinds of commodities and capabilities the two experts which the land along the

banks of the ancient Indus has most contributed in the last two decades, have been information technology and process outsourcing.

Highly-skilled migrant people have moved to the developed economies of US and Europe, resipped in yards of silk, armed with a spice for every season and sold in their spiritual storerooms. And some have returned since. Glad in jeans and sweats, wise in the ways of the West, complete with a repertoire of current development methodologies, effective global governance models and a desire to leverage the infinite opportunities of the fast-developing economy of India. The IT-enabled-retained-in-India from 'abroad' generation has taken to entrepreneurship and laid the foundation for the increasing attractive option of working in an integrated, seamless global environment where a service can be offered from India to a customer anywhere across the Atlantic.

There are multiple factors that make this attractive as a business option. Foremost is the highly competitive environment where essential equities continuous self-improvement against

an increasingly higher bar.

Multiple languages, a graduate degree at the minimum and soft-skills beyond research are always there. Added to this is the ancient Indian USP, "service with a smile" fuelled by

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the Gandhian adage that "customer is God" and a genuine interest in the larger world, as yet unvisited and unmined except through the ubiquitous cable networks and no-holds barred internet. The youth of the evolving Indian melting-pot migrates from villages armed with lady whites, having vicariously experienced life in the cities through advertisement channels and pilfered with a can-do will-do attitude that can only be acquired at one does meditate. This impressive attitude with a fire in the belly to prove himself or herself an equal and sincere citizen of the world, enriches the ecosystem of the global village through providing a quality of service that cannot be bought at any price in economically developed regions of the

world where a problem of plenty has blunted the edge that makes one go the extra-mile or like Columbus did, many many extra unknown miles.

This shift in the global landscape has confirmed beyond all doubt that the theory of cause and effect is timeless and without boundaries. Every strata of the globephere trends in continuum across the universe and a shift in socio-economic plates has an effect that leaves a new paradigm in place. So is the case with our new one global village.

A laptop needs a health-check? No problem. A no-fee call to a 1-800 number is all it takes and any issues connected with a machine of any make can potentially be resolved via a private, personalised service while you're sipping your coffee in bed. The rates at the receiving-end is technically qualified, conventionally fluent and has a single reason to care, which is, to serve and do so in context with the peoples of other times and other places. In

all this, rural areas are developing into the new source, the fountain-head that is setting in place a new world order where globalisation is starting to stretch and redefine the perimeters of urbanised India to include the rural. If economics defines relationships (personal, social and global), then the evolving political landscapes in developed countries will add a dimension that qualifies the part politics plays in defining economics which again, inevitably defines the rest. In the context of outsourcing, the interesting aspects to watch will be the influences of economic policy on caste, class and gender. The melting pots hold much of interest to many in this emerging socio-economic world order.

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