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Manish C. Talwar

University of St. Gallen, manish.talwar@student.unisg.ch

Andrea Back

University of St. Gallen, andrea.black@unisg.ch

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Differences in ERP Implementations in India & Western Europe

Manish C. Talwar

Institute of Information Management (IWI),
University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
manish.talwar@student.unisg.ch

Prof. Dr. Andrea Back

Institute of Information Management (IWI),
University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
andrea.back@unisg.ch

ABSTRACT

Globally the IT business is worth more than \$3 trillion, out of which a huge part is ERP projects. More and more of these projects are now being implemented in Emerging economies, like India. There are differences in the ERP project implementation between Indian Organizations and those in Western Europe. This paper investigates through case studies what are the differences between these two project implementation cultures. Some of the key insights are that Indian projects have more cross-functional teams as opposed to more focused teams in Europe, as also there being better & more detailed planning in European projects vis-à-vis Indian projects. Managerial implications of these differences are also discussed.

Keywords

ERP implementation projects, Emerging Economies, Differences between India and Western Europe, Soft factors.

INTRODUCTION

As per market researcher, Gartner, the Worldwide Information Technology (IT) spending will surpass \$3 trillion; in 2007 it is expected to reach \$3.1 trillion, an 8 percent increase from the year before. Spending for IT for 2008 is forecast to grow 8 percent further to reach \$3.4 trillion. This spend of around \$3 trillion is almost 3 times the Global military spending, which was around \$1.2 trillion. This means that Globally, IT is truly Big Business!!

"On a worldwide basis, IT spending continues to grow at a rapid pace in developing countries," said Peter Sondergaard, senior vice president and global head of research at Gartner. "In fact, one-third of IT spending now occurs outside of North America, Western Europe, and Japan. This development will create new innovation in IT, new competitors, new usage patterns, and continued cost improvement benefits for users," he added. How and with what efficiency Companies implement IT systems and ERP systems in particular is a big question as often these are big projects, with significant project team sizes, big budgets and often spanning cultural and country boundaries for some multi-national companies.

An emerging economy can be defined as a country that satisfies two criteria: a rapid pace of economic development, and government policies favoring economic liberalization and the adoption of a free-market system (Arnold & Quelch, 1998). Multinational enterprises (MNEs) often focus on the revenue-generating potential of emerging economies. Accordingly, MNEs have focused on the marketing challenge of creating and capturing the huge latent value associated with big emerging economies such as China, India, and Russia. (Hoskisson et al., 2000) Although there is a growing body of ERP literature, the issue of differences in ERP Project Implementation between companies in India and those in Western Europe have not been addressed in detail. This paper aims to address this gap by focusing on the differences between an emerging Asian economy such as India and that of a developed economy like Western Europe. Both in India and in Western Europe, companies are spending huge sums and resources on IT systems to sustain and improve their competitive advantage and firm performance. However in both these regions there are also differences in how these IT Systems are both deployed and used.

This paper takes up six case studies and tries to examine the differences in the various stages of the ERP implementation projects with the help of these case studies. In order to do this the roadmap for building theories from case studies as presented by Kathleen Eisenhardt is used (Eisenhardt K.M. 1989). With the help of this insights are provided into what are the key differences in ERP implementation within India and Western Europe. The Managerial implications of these are then discussed. It is hoped that equipped with these key insights into cultural and project differences, managers of these projects

can be better prepared and can effectively deal with and manage to leverage the positive differences while compensating for the negative ones in order to improve the projects success.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is an information system that manages, through integration, all aspects of a business including production planning, purchasing, manufacturing, sales, distribution, accounting and customer service (Scalle and Cotteleer, 1999). Several vendors exist in the ERP space like SAP, Oracle, Peoplesoft, JD Edwards etc. As per Davenport, an enterprise system imposes its own logic on a company's strategy, culture, and organization (Davenport 1998).

Several studies (DeLone and McLean, 2003; Markus et al., 2000) have concluded that organizations implementing ERP systems can expect transactional, informational as well as strategic benefits. ERP systems may well count as 'the most important development in the corporate use of information technology in the 1990s' (Davenport, 1998). ERP implementations are usually large, complex projects, involving large groups of people and other resources, working together under considerable time pressure and facing many unforeseen developments. Not surprisingly, many of these implementations turn out to be less successful than originally intended (Davenport, 1998; Avnet, 1999; Buckhout et al, 1999)

Within the IT World, ERP systems are some of the most widely used applications, mostly used in North America and Western Europe, however now it is also gaining a grip in Asian developing countries such as China and India (Huang and Palvia 2001, Motwani et al., 2007). These countries had earlier been slow to adopt ERP but the rate of adoption seems now to be accelerating (Motwani et al., 2007). The implementation of ERP is affected by two broad categories of factors: national/environmental and organizational/internal (Huang and Palvia 2001)

ERP implementation projects normally are big IT projects and which take up a lot of the Organizations time, resources and money. Different Cultural reasons lead to differences in how these projects are both staffed and are deployed and implemented in different countries, for e.g. as taken in this study in Western Europe and India. Cultural differences have been explored between countries earlier by Hofstede, and others. These studies however are old, slightly out of date and based on a single organization and have been criticized (Maznevski, Distefano et al. 2002), and also the context in the countries examined has since changed and a fresh perspective needs to be applied in looking at this issue. Within the discipline of information systems, the concept of culture is generally regarded as being very important. Stair (1992) says that organization culture can "have a significant impact on the development and operation of information systems within the organization".

The concept of organizational culture is frequently mentioned in the research literature in IS e.g. Applegate, 1994; DeLisi, 1990; Olson, 1982; Schein, 1984; Straub, 1994; Zimmerman et al. 1994 (D Avison, 1995) As ERP spreads worldwide, the cultural issue which separates these different countries is gaining more and more importance. Many ERP studies have spoken about the cultural issue like Soh et al. 2000; Heeks 2002; Liang et al. 2004; Reimers 2002; Martinsons 2004; Davison 2002 (Davison, 2002).

Hoskisson et al. have discussed special challenges associated with doing research in emerging economies and have shown how different theoretical perspectives can provide useful insights into enterprise strategies in emerging economies (Hoskisson et al., 2000). Taking the case of an Asian Company, Molla & Bhalla have studied the issues of ERP and competitive advantage in developing countries. Results of their case study demonstrated that ERP enabled the case organization to achieve competitive advantage, but the physical technology alone was not a cause of this, but also several factors related to innovations, managerial coordination, business routines and processes contributed to this. The key lesson from their study is that the ability of an organization to leverage the ERP system to its maximum potential depends on a number of business as well as human factors. It also depends on how open an organization is to change its culture from an individualistic culture to one which encourages teamwork, communication and experimentation. (Molla & Bhalla, 2006) As per Tarafdar and Roy, there is a need to study and analyze the issues associated with ERP adoption in developing countries. As per them, developing countries face concerns that are significantly different from those in the developed world, because of differences in the sophistication of IT use, and in the cultural and social contexts. Over the last few years, many organizations in India have implemented ERP solutions and have consequently benefited from improved processes and better information availability. For many others, the adoption of ERP has resulted in a very painful transition and adaptation period, while the benefits have not been immediate or tangible. The framework provided by Tarafdar and Roy serves as a useful starting point from where the ERP experience of Indian companies can be analyzed and generalized to companies in similar developing societies. It also presents some practical implications for managers, for managing and controlling relevant aspects of the implementation process. (Tarafdar & Roy, 2003). This present study adds to the literature on IT adoption in emerging

economies by focusing on ERP and studying the key differences between an emerging economy in Asia, viz. India and that of a developed economy like Western Europe.

Over the past few years, a considerable amount of research has been conducted into critical success factors, or CSFs, for ERP implementations (e.g. Holland & Light, 1999; Sumner, 1999; Willcocks & Sykes, 2000). The model from Holland and Light (1999), see Figure 1 below, groups the CSFs into strategic and tactical factors.

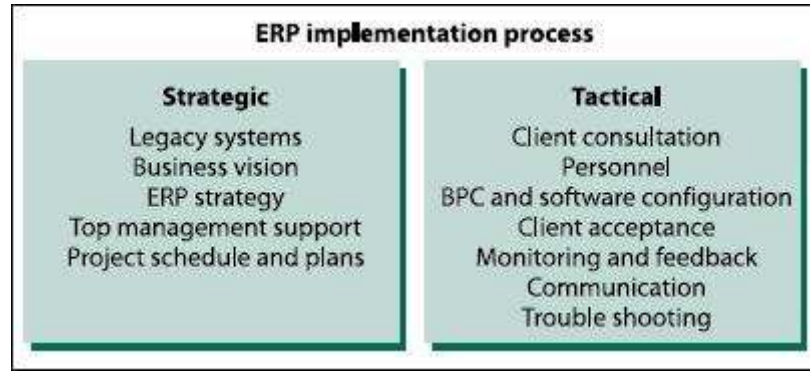


Figure 1. A Critical Success Factors Model with Strategic and tactical factors (Holland and Light)

As per Dr. Donald Marchand, IMD (2004, 2007), "The deployment and usage of IT differ in managerial focus, mindset and measures of performance. On the one side, IT deployment is concerned with the governance and provision of IT services in most companies from networks, to IT projects, to the daily management of the IT function. On the other side, IT usage is concerned with the organization of decision rights in a company around lines of authority, accountability and expertise so that ideally information and IT can be used effectively in decision making at all appropriate levels. An IT enabled business project is NOT about IT deployment alone, but about how people use IT and information in the work place to achieve their benefits and the company's benefits. So, by definition, an IT project is at best, half done, when it goes live. Every IT project must incorporate a usage phase to address the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of information and IT usage to realize the business benefits of integrating new tools and information management practices into the work behaviors and values of the employees and managers involved." He explains with a figure how IT deployment differs from IT usage, where the focus of IT deployment is on IT governance, services and processes etc. while IT usage deals with the usage of IT and information processes for management decision making. See Figure 2.

IT Deployment Differs from IT Usage	
Deployment Focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT governance • IT services and processes • IT infrastructure • IT applications and data management • IT resources (people and expertise) • IT investments 	Usage Focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization and governance of decision rights in a business • Usage of IT and information processes for management decision-making • Usage of information and IT in operational and business process management • The behaviors and values of people that lead them to use IT and information in their work
IT Deployment Measures Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT availability and access • Quality of IT services • User satisfaction • Cost reduction and standardization • Efficiency of IT • IT ROI for projects 	IT Usage Measures Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and IT usage in the business • Effectiveness of information use by people, (Information Orientation Maturity) • Contribution to top line growth relative to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Profitability - Market share - EBIT - EVA - Innovation in products and services - Company reputation

Figure 2. How IT Deployment differs from IT Usage (Donald Marchand)

Source : Reaping the business value of IT, Donald A Marchand, IMD

Dr. Marchand further adds that when both IT deployment and IT usage are combined in a project and IT is properly used by managers, employees and the external partners like suppliers and customers then a multiplier effect can be achieved for driving business performance as explained in Figure 3.

Key strategic choices about achieving the business value of IT		
Deployment ? Usage = Business Value ?		
Deployment - Usage = Dilutes Value		
Deployment + Usage = OK Return		
Deployment x Usage = Multiplier Effect		
Deployment of I/T inside and outside the business	Usage of I/T by managers, employees, suppliers, customers, and partners	for Driving Business Performance

Figure 3. Key Strategic Choices about achieving the Business Value of IT (Donald Marchand)

Source : Reaping the business value of IT, Donald A Marchand, IMD

This paper addresses not only the cultural differences between Indian Organizations and those in Western Europe but also seeks to understand these differences within the larger framework provided by Dr. Marchand, of IT Deployment versus IT usage, and how the soft factors lead to a higher usage of IT and this in turn leads to project success and firm performance. Also some key factors emerge from the study which are highly important to make a project successful.

CASE STUDIES AND METHODOLOGY

Six Case studies were taken in total, 3 from India and 3 from Western Europe. The case studies were selected from various industries like Engineering, Airlines, Telecommunications, Postal services etc. Most of the companies were large Multi-national corporations, which had a strong global presence and where the Group often recommended a solution which would be followed by the other subsidiaries. The projects in these companies had spanned between 2months to one year in the case of India and between 6 months to 5 years in the case of Europe. The project team sizes were between 4-8 person teams, up to as many as 150 people for one European project. Most of the ERP projects were implemented with SAP with release levels spanning from 3.II to ECC 6.0.

The data was collected by means of Primary Research through Questionnaires, and Interviews as well as Secondary research by means of Project document study and analysis of company literature. A new questionnaire was developed for the study with mostly open ended questions based on the existing literature as well as experience of the authors. These were then distributed to senior project consultants who had first hand experiences having worked on the ERP implementation projects in India as well as in Western Europe (Switzerland, Germany, France etc.) as well as to senior managers serving in the companies e.g. Head of Application Services and Business Process Owners etc. Data collected included general background information about each company, details about each of the phases in the ERP implementation process model, and the key differences considered most important in each phase. The data was then analyzed and compared with existing literature, both conflicting as well as similar literature. Responses to each section of the questionnaire were asked with a view to experience in the Indian context as well as the Western European context. The responses were then coded independently by one researcher, and also subcategories were identified to further the understanding of the differences within each category. Each difference was weighed by counting the number of respondents who provided the same or similar answers or emphasized similar themes. Qualitative Analysis techniques developed by Miles and Huberman (1984) and qualitative research methods based on cases studies (Yin, 2003) were chiefly used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The Case study data and the outcomes are presented in a tabular manner in Table 1. for ease of comprehension. The Differences between the Indian Organizations and those in Western Europe are presented therein.

The criteria on which the differences were measured were taken with a view as to first understand the project context, the size and scope of the projects, then on how the teams were selected – the internal project team vis-à-vis the external consultants chosen for the project and finally on each of the different project phases of the ERP implementations.

Criteria	India	Western Europe
A. Project Size and Scope		
IT initiative choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More ERP implementations - Cost is a more significant factor in the Indian decision making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Europe- more consolidation , Reporting, BW , E platform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"INDIA - more ERP implementations, now its more to innovation-RFID, APO, SRM(supplier relationship mgt) Europe- more consolidation, (one client, reporting BW, E platform)"</i> - <i>"Cost is a more significant factor in the Indian decision making process."</i> - <i>"India: More price sensitive."</i> 		

Criteria	India	Western Europe
Average Project spend	- 50,000 CHF to 3,00,000 CHF	- Around 1,50,000 CHF (between 50,000 to 100 Million CHF)
- "about 5 times more spend in Europe"		
IT Team Size	- "Team size in India is half that of Europe as more cross functional people in India, while in Europe are more focused"	- "about 5 times more people in Europe"
B. Project Team		
Internal Project team selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project team had more cross functional experience - "Indian project team were close to 100% availability , any work commitments were met via even out of hours/weekend work" - "Strong management commitment to importance of project" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More process or module specific - "Strong management commitment to importance of project"
External Consultant Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking for Specialist know-how, More functional experience and business experience is sought in the consultants - "India offered much more experienced consultants , with wider cross functional knowledge and implementation experience" - "Consultants knew each other personally , having worked together on previous projects ,thereby enabling strong team dynamic from the beginning" - "Consultants willing to take ownership and responsibility for the implementation, much more so than in Europe" - Fixed price contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Basically IT Specialist , interview 2-3 people before selecting 1 (also from different companies)" - Less experienced with more specific module know-how - Rate per Hour/per day
Project Management Skills and Tools used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In India scheduling was more informal - In India, the go-live date was given by top management and a reverse planning was done for the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Lotus notes calendar and meetings etc used" - Managers used their own project management tools e.g. Microsoft Project etc. More professional and detailed planning in Europe, considering a lot of holiday plans and resource planning

Criteria	India	Western Europe
		- basically the go-live was derived
C. Project Phases		
Pre Project Phase and Evaluation Phase	- In India, basically the evaluation phase was quite rigorous , where right from the Heads of Marketing, Manufacturing, Purchase and the CFO, were involved in the Demo evaluation phase	- In Europe its a smaller team of people Evaluating, and sometimes you meet people in pre-sales who will not work on the project
Design and Configuration Phase	- <i>"Was difficult as the requirements were quite tough, expectations were high"</i> - In India there was more of a scope creep than Europe	- Sometimes Scope creep seems to be high also in Europe (e.g. in Germany, Spain)
Testing Phase	- Often there were no test plans, the consultant works with the users often on the same computer, there is more manual explanation than a detailed test plan	- Testing was more organized in Europe, with detailed test plans etc. and steps
Go-Live Phase	- Dedication in India was more and time and effort spent were higher as there were tight go-live dates, more weekends were spent working (both Sat & Sunday) and there was no Full Migration tests etc.	- Europe - more planned, so efforts were quite less, teams worked only on the Sunday before the Go-Live
Post Go-Live and Support phase	- <i>"Clear RUN lead was defined in India, who could do the changes & transports, each module had 1 support & lead for RUN, no other person could transport, was overall more restricted than in Europe"</i> - Externals were engaged - in India for 2-3weeks after Go-Live - In India - there were limited resources for post implementation support , based on process documentation and ad hoc training and support by local project team members - This led to severe problems once key staff left the	- In Europe for 1 Big Project when they went live they were not very well organized - Externals were engaged in Europe - at least 4 weeks after Go-Live

Criteria	India	Western Europe
	organization	
D. Cultural Differences		
Differences in Culture noticed during IT implementations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated Teams - <i>"Indian teams were more motivated than Europe"</i> - <i>"The commitment was quite high in Indian teams. In case of problems, no one cared to work long after hours and people also solved problems which did not belong to their area and they tried to contact any external help"</i> - In the Indian teams there was better Teamwork, more knowledge sharing, and more open communications as compared to Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated Teams
Differences noticed generally between India and Europe culture and working environment & behaviors (IT or non-IT , general)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"The know-how sharing is different culturally , in India there is more sharing and cross functional experience"</i> - <i>"The atmosphere in India is more informal e.g. you don't need a meeting request to have a meeting etc"</i> - Professional atmosphere - Probably in India you have more personal relations with colleagues than in Europe - In India the work culture was very impressive - <i>"There was Unlimited overtime to meet deadlines (including occasional weekends)"</i> - <i>"There was a good use of contacts / networks to find solutions if no in-house knowledge was available"</i> - There was a genuine desire to be part of a successful project, and commitment to work, as much as was required to achieve team goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"In Europe you have differences in culture within Europe - German, Swiss, French, Spanish, Italian etc. These cultural differences can be seen in the projects"</i> - <i>"In Europe they solve problems on their own and don't share the experience"</i> - In Europe there is more of a protectionist attitude and people are not expected to solve problems outside their area , they don't think its their problem , In India people try to find solutions to any and every issue - There is a more formal atmosphere in Europe - Professional atmosphere - In Europe even the management does not emphasize cross functional problem solving behavior, seeks expertise behavior , and in India it is otherwise
Soft Factor differences (Training, Team Involvement, Motivation, Expectation and Change Management etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"Less time spent on soft factor management, it is taken for granted."</i> - More competitive job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"Europeans spend more time on soft factor management than in India. In India its a kind of given"</i>

Criteria	India	Western Europe
	environment	- Less competitive job environment
- " In India if you don't do your job, someone else will come in, its more competitive, in Europe you wont be questioned so hard as in India"		
E. What can be Improved?		
What can be improved?	1.More planning , 2.More training, 3.Clear test plans	1.More of a Cross functional approach 2. More flexibility 3. Consultants need better cross functional knowledge 4. <i>"Too much green field customizing - consultants should be more proactive and should recommend best practice customizing solutions"</i>

Table 1. Results and Outcomes

The following questions were a part of the questionnaire, but were asked in a more general context and they reflect a broader perspective which is applicable to both the Indian as well as European context.

The Role Consultants and externals play in IT projects:-

1. They give a lot of know how, share experience from different IT projects they had and also new ideas
2. The respondent would always implement projects using external know how
3. Consultants bring the initial support role
4. They recommend best practice in all customizing settings, and to be willing to argue with and override the customer if they have the real knowledge of what works best.
5. They should be open, pass on as much as possible to Customer project team.
6. Ongoing support at a reasonable price

What can be done for better know how transfer and Knowledge management:-

1. There should be more open know-how transfer sessions, cross functional expertise and problem solving, when you have a problem & solve it together, you have a better know-how transfer
2. Consultants should be responsible to ensure all customizing is fully documented
3. The Customer has to ensure all key users fully understand the process as customized, and maintain work instructions and process flows.

The results of the case studies are discussed below along with their implications for managers.

DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Differences between India and Western Europe can be seen at each stage of the ERP implementation Project.

Some of the key results are also presented in the following Figure 4 which bring out the differences between Indian and Western European Organizations as well as which show what can be done to improve project management in these 2 different national settings.

INDIA	WESTERN EUROPE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More Cross Functional Teams ✓ More knowledge sharing ✓ More willing to put in overtime/weekend work without extra pay ➤ Need for better planning ➤ Need for More Training ➤ Need for Clear test plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More Planned ✓ More Focused on Soft Factors ✓ Better Project Management tools used ➤ Need for cross functional experience & approach ➤ Need for more knowledge sharing ➤ Need to be more flexible

Figure 4. Key Differences between India and Western European ERP implementations

As the data suggests, the Western European projects are bigger in scale and scope often having bigger budgets as well as bigger project teams working on them. Some of the differences may perhaps be explained at least partially by the larger size and scope of the project, however cultural and other factors could lead also to these differences.

There are differences also in the Infrastructure between India and Western Europe, where for e.g. Indian infrastructure services though improving are still lagging far behind their Western European counterparts. Nevertheless, as mentioned in other articles (Huang & Palvia, 2001 etc.) these infrastructure issues are not anymore hampering the adoption of ERP projects in the Asian countries.

The Internal project teams in India had more of a cross functional experience and know-how as compared to their European counterparts which were more module and process specific. The Indian work teams were strongly committed and met their normal work requirements out of office hours and on weekends, while devoting their time primarily to the project. Top Management commitment as well as support for the project was high in both cases.

The External consultant selection also reflected that in India the consultants had more of a cross functional know how and experience than those in Europe.

Both these results also reflect the trend where specialization is sought after in Europe while in India, various team members wear various hats, also in certain business roles. External consultants often having similar work experience bring the same flexible and integrated mindset to the project. Managers of large ERP projects would be helped if the team members have a cross-functional approach and hence should look at this as a potential factor to look for while staffing the project teams.

Also reflected in the results was that Project Management as a skill was more structured and well defined in European projects than in India. Project Managers in Europe had a better control on the Project Scheduling and management aspects, often using Tools like MS Project and Lotus Notes to manage and schedule the projects, while the Indian approach was more informal and not as structured. Any project can greatly benefit from a mature and structured project management approach and this should be factored in by the managers right from design phase to go-live.

The Testing phase also reflected a better and more structured approach in the case of European projects with more time spent on planning as well as executing the testing phase with the involvement of key business people as well as the project teams. In India this was more on an ad-hoc basis and was not as carefully structured as was in Europe.

The Know how transfer in India was done more openly both within the Project teams (Internals and consultants) as well as training to the end users, while in Europe it was seen that there was more of a protectionist attitude where one person solved a problem in his own area and did not share the problem solving approach and know how with the others. In Europe it was seen

that even the management did not emphasize cross functional problem solving behavior, but sought expert behavior, while in India it was otherwise. According to Hislop et al., much of the knowledge necessary to the implementation is embodied in the people and not codified in a disembodied form (Hislop et al., 2000). This therefore is more relevant when an open and knowledge sharing culture is present during and after the implementation phase.

Dr. Marchand has stressed on the IT Usage and the importance of Soft factor management, however it was seen that in the Indian context less time was spent on managing the soft factors. While this was seen to be low both in Western Europe as well as in India, what was striking was that in India, soft factor management was almost taken for granted with little or no time especially devoted to address it. In Europe there was an easier approach where the Training needs as well as the expectation management was given greater importance.

As raised by Dr. Marchand, by stressing further on Soft Factor management, IT projects in general and ERP projects in particular would have greater chances of succeeding as well as be generally better accepted by the end-users who would finally be using the ERP product. As has been mentioned by him, a multiplier effect for achieving the business value of IT can be achieved when both IT deployment and IT usage are focused on and leveraged during the implementation process.

With these insights into differences in ERP projects in the Indian and Western European context it is hoped that project managers of these large projects can understand the differences as well as leverage the positive differences in their favor while making provisions for compensating for the not so positive factors so as to vastly improve the chances of project success while at the same time increasing the efficiency of the whole project management process and thus make the project a highly rewarding experience for the project team members as well as all involved stakeholders like the top management and also especially the final end users of the project.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that there are opportunities as well as challenges on both sides, in Indian Organizations as well as in Western European ones. Emerging economies like India can learn from the experiences of developed economies like Western Europe and vice versa. This can lead to better understanding as well as managerial preparedness in managing cost intensive IT projects like ERP implementation projects. As Davenport says Enterprise systems can deliver great rewards, but the risks they carry are equally great. Those companies that stressed the enterprise, not the system, gained the greatest benefits (Davenport, 1998). Critical to ERP success are taking care of the many soft factors and the IT usage. Settling for good IT deployment without concurrent focus on usage means that these managers will fall far short of the objective of optimizing the business value of IT in their company. Competitive advantage goes to those business managers and companies that deploy and use information, people and IT more effectively to impact their growth and business performance in their industry and globally. They strive to extract 100% of the business value of effective information and knowledge use in their business through improving the Information Orientation Maturity of the people, information and IT practices. (Marchand, 2004)

Managers are advised to better understand the cultural differences as they formulate and plan their ERP project initiatives. The study also opens the ground for further analysis of the differences as well as identification of what could be success factors for ERP implementations in these different cultural contexts as well as study how the success factors in this context, Indian and Western European Organizations, be better managed.

As the Global IT industry and the ERP industry in particular, become multi-billion dollar industries, better project management as well as savvy project formulation, staffing and implementation would become more and more important. The best run businesses would probably be the ones which have implemented a good ERP package at the least sacrifice of its precious resources and manpower, in short in the most efficient and optimal manner.

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