

## Female Expatriation: Brighter Prospects at a Cost

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### ABSTRACT

Expatriates are individuals doing business internationally. They face particular challenges because they are required to live and work in an unfamiliar environment. Effective managers are ones who pay attention to the variations across national borders and adjust to and manage these variations.

The paper is a conceptual study focusing on the various challenges and issues faced by female expatriates. Literature for the last two decades is delved into to find out the barriers which female expatriates face as an international assignee. Once the expatriate assignment is accepted by the females, and then a plethora of hurdles falls on the female expatriate and her family (if she has one) and her balancing act starts. The actual experience of female expatriates can vary widely. Some females may find an international posting to be successful and rewarding both; from personal as well as from career perspective. Others may find it unsuccessful, resulting in career setbacks and family breakups. Research suggests that there is substantial number of female expatriates with careers and that their number will increase. This paper gives insights regarding such barriers and also suggests turnaround strategies for these barriers. Organizations that recognize and work upon these barriers or pay attention will certainly benefit by retaining and developing their female workforce.

**Keywords:** International assignee, Female Expatriates, Barriers faced, Turnaround strategies to Barriers.

### INTRODUCTION

A gradual transition from Personnel management (PM) to Human Resource Management (HRM) and recently to International Human Resource Management (IHRM) implies that HR managers necessarily have to have a global vision of how to manage their people effectively both at home and abroad. Domestic based HR managers who import staff from overseas should also have a very good knowledge of IHRM.

The early years of 21<sup>st</sup> century saw a significant rise in cross border international business activity driven by globalization adding number of multinational companies and resulting in mobilization of human resource. The concept of globalization is based on simple premises like technological development resulting in easy and speedy international communication making the world a smaller place with an increased awareness and better understanding of opportunities for increased international trade and investment, particularly those factors that influence people's behavior and human resource choices. For a successful HR manager understanding the similarities and differences across borders to exploit the opportunities and deal with the threats is vital. Effective management of HR in a multinational corporation is a major determinant of success or failure in international business (Scullion & Starkey, 2000). Evolution of a multinational enterprise is a long process and the steps of evolution is different for different firms. Some may go through these steps with a fast pace while others may evolve slowly with time (Dowling, Festing and Engle, 2008, 26-27).

The role of women in society varies from country to country and even from region to region within a country, and it varies over time. International managers, whether they are men or women, cannot avoid dealing with the question of the role of women in business. They must often decide whether to employ women, when to

employ them, which ones to employ, where to employ them; then they must decide how to manage the women employed. They need to recognize that men and women view roles differently and differential treatment can be interpreted in a variety of ways. By paying particular attention to understanding the role of women in society and business in each country, international managers need to assess consciously their reaction to this role.

### **International Assignee**

In an International Assignment an employee is assigned to work in a country other than his or her home country for a fixed period of time by the employer. A person sent on an International assignment is an Expatriate or International Assignee.

There are three types of assignments:

Extended Business trip – Duration lasting upto 3 months

Short-term trip- 3 to 12 months

Long-term trip – 2 to 5 years (3 years being typical)

The new era marks the beginning of new revolution in terms of working women. Every day, more and more women are moving out of their house and choosing job of their choice. They are competing their fellows in almost all the fields, be it the field being employed or being employer. As doctors, engineers, lawyers, entrepreneurs, pilots, educationists and many others, the working women have proved their mettle. In present scenario, there are many working women, who are highly educated and qualified to take up jobs in various sectors. More women are engaged in business enterprises, in international platforms and have greater career opportunities as a result of international network. Although the demand for international assignee has grown, the number of females are found to be remarkably low. Women's progress as expatriate and inspite of advances in equal opportunities legislation, women failed to go on board in significant numbers in 1980s. In the 1990s more number of females were offered international assignments but still the number was negligible when compared to male international assignees.

According to the 2011 Global Relocation Trend Survey Report the percentage of female assignees was 18 per cent. The significant low number 22 of female expatriates prompts a series of questions: is the low female participation in international assignments due to career development issues or to personal and family issues? Is there a class ceiling for women regarding international assignments?

According to Global Relocation Trends 2012 Survey Report 20% of international assignees were female, the historical average is 16%. The percentage of female assignees increased to 20% and this year's report, which is up 2% from last year and marks a return to 2009 levels. As noted last year, the rate over the past several years has spanned between 17% and 20% of the population. While it may be difficult to make precise predictions based on a year to year increase or decrease, it is clear that the overall trend in the percentage of female assignees continues to rise. This year's percentage is a full 4% above the historical average of 16% and, when comparing the average of the last five years of the report (19%) to the first five years of the report (13%), the increase is even more marked.

According to Global Relocation Trends 2013 Survey Report reveals that international assignment growth is continuing to outperform the survey's 18-year historical average, despite uncertain and uneven economic outlooks in the USA and Europe.

According to Global Relocation Trends 2014 Survey Report 20% of international assignees were female. The historical average was 17%.

According to Global Relocation Trends 2015 Survey Report although women comprise nearly half of the global employable workforce, they are still underrepresented on international assignments. On average, women represent 19% international assignees. Although the number of female assignees has risen steadily over the past 20 years, and is double the amount from nearly two decades ago, companies still send significantly more men on international assignments than women. Women do, however, represent a higher

percentage of assignees than the overall average in the Consumer Products and in the Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals industries (25% and 23% respectively). In addition, companies with a large volume of international assignments have a higher percentage of female assignees than average. Women are increasingly choosing to obtain what many companies consider a mandatory component of leadership development – international experience.

Changing demographics with emerging markets, global competitiveness and interconnected economy are the main contributors for expatriates. Employing expatriates bring diverse global mindset which helps an organization in addressing dilemmas and help gain and sustain competitive advantage. Apart from workforce shortage and skills gap; organizations at a global level are facing leadership crisis as well. A feasible optimal solution seems to be tapping into female talent who are available, educated and possess competencies in profusion.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- 1) To identify the barriers faced by Female Expatriates
- 2) To suggest turnaround strategies to the barriers faced by Female Expatriates

**Rationale of the Study**

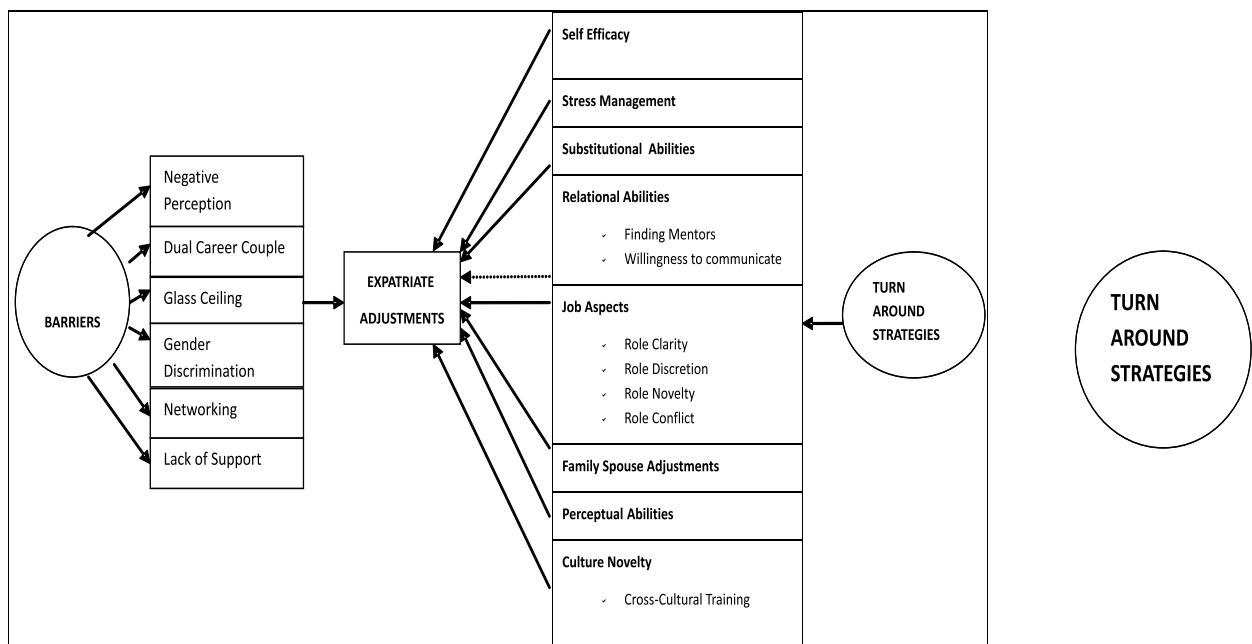
Most of the researches in IHRM have been focused on male expatriates rather than female expatriates; the reason being majority of expatriates are generally males. Few studies which are found on females on international assignments are focused on to the role of an expatriate wife. There is confusion amongst the roles of female expatriate manager with those of female expatriate partner. Women are now attaining higher educational qualifications and are attracted to and try to successfully complete international assignments, but there are significant issues which limit the performance of such female expatriates. These issues, when are remained unsolved, act as a hindrance to the 'moving forward' of the females in their career.

Hence this study while giving an insight regarding the barriers faced by the female expatriates during international assignments suggests turnaround strategies to these barriers.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is conceptual in nature .Qualitative analysis of the literature is done and the findings are deduced based on the researches done for the last two decades.

**Table 1: Research Framework**



Source: Author

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Barriers faced by Female Expatriates

#### ➤ Negative Perception

Prejudices against female expatriates as manager, sometimes outright denial of companies to send a female as an international assignee, work-family conflicts in case of married working mothers, cultural adjustments, physical safety of female expatriate during international assignment and the assumption that females simply are not interested for a foreign assignment are the key barriers that a company may face while selecting a female for sending on international assignment.

The demand for expatriate employees has increased rapidly. An international enterprise has to develop a pool of expatriates for managing their overseas operations. Earlier this pool of expatriates had no females but with a rising trend of female business expatriates started forcing companies to re-examine their reluctance towards women in international assignments. Companies were apprehensive in hiring female expatriates as they may not be successful. Companies are reluctant to hire females due to negative perceptions of managers at corporate control centre (Alder, 1993). Female expatriates interested in international assignments sometimes experience biasness in the selection process (Linehan and Scullion, 2001) and is assumed that they are not interested in international assignments (Adler, 1984).

#### ➤ Dual-Career Couple

International assignments and happiness of spouses are directly linked. International firms are finding, more and more, that their married employees are part of dual career couple. Dual career couples are couples where both partners work, and both see their work as not simply providing financial remuneration but also as an important occupation which they wish to pursue for personal accomplishment and progression (Gibb and Clark, 1991). A growing number of women are being offered and are accepting expatriate assignment. International firms need to pay attention to dual career couples. The personal happiness of the accompanying spouse is vital and becomes more serious in case when a male spouse has to adjust to his partner as secondary financial source (Linehan and Scullion, 2001, 399-404). Female expatriates have spouses with professional careers while in case of male expatriates the spouse may be an expatriate wife. This dual career issue for female expatriates becomes problematic as most of the IHRM policies are framed on a supposition that all expatriates are men (Brett, 1992). Dual career couple problems are to be addressed by multinationals by framing successful family policies (Porter, 1989) which will attract and retain these best employees; especially female expatriates (Dowling, Festing and Engle, 2008, 129; Linehan and Scullion, 2001, 402). This increased prevalence of dual-career couples has required the multinationals to broaden their view of what the expatriation process must involve. This broader view includes adequate consideration and management of the trailing spouse who follows the partner to the foreign location, often having to quit his job in the process. Research on expatriate transfers has identified the family, and particularly the spouse, as being critical to the expatriate's success overseas. The adjustment is more difficult for spouses because they lack the focus and support provided by work. Spouses accustomed to working and having a career might be particularly frustrated if they cannot work or if they encounter difficulties finding work.

#### ➤ Glass Ceiling

Glass Ceiling is experienced by the female expatriates who are on the managerial position. According to them, men still do not prefer to report to women bosses. Organizations do not take interest in promoting female employees. In spite of all the efforts and hard work, reaching to the topmost position becomes too difficult. Women are said to encounter a glass ceiling over their aspirations which allows them to see where they might go but stops them from getting there (White, 1995). This "glass ceiling" needs to be broken

through first at their home organizations in order to be selected for higher decision making positions in foreign land. (Adler, 1993; Selmer and Leung, 2002 & 2003). Female expatriates must overcome this barrier to climb up the ladder in order to achieve expatriate status in the companies at global level (Linehan & Walsh 1999).

#### ➤ **Gender Discrimination**

Female expatriates at times become victim of gender biasness. Office discrimination has been rampant (Handy et al, 2007). Dominating attitude of male colleagues results in women being considered incapable or rather the job seems to be practically difficult to be handled by the working women. Women managers deal with male-dominated environments where they become tougher (Marshall, 1995). Also the remuneration paid is sometimes not equal to the salary paid to men. Corporate headquarters may result in discrimination against women on foreign assignments if they have unfavorable perceptions about the achievement and accomplishment of female expatriates (Selmer and Leung, 2003). It was also noted that women expatriates were less frequently married as compared to male expatriates (Adler 1987; Selmer and Leung 2003, 195). Despite continuous evidence for gender biasness in expatriation, there is still an increase in the relative participation of women as international assignees.

#### ➤ **Networking**

Building networks and friendships is considered critical for an international assignee to be successful (Linehan, 2000). Female expatriates face difficulties in adjusting in host countries where there is a huge difference in the culture (Hartel, 2004). Making friends can be a particular challenge to female expatriates (Taylor and Napier, 2001) especially in cases where women are not that often found in the upper rung of the corporate ladder. (Shortland, 2011)

Cross-cultural adjustment is an individual process and not all expatriates experience the same level of culture shock. Sometimes female expatriates find it difficult to adapt to new culture and show signs of depression and home sickness. Cross-culturally competent expatriates are open to host culture and gel their home cultures with new customs, values and behavior (Briscoe and Schuler, 2004, 242; Caligiuri, 1997, 120-121).

#### ➤ **Lack of Support**

People everywhere have needs, people probably seek some kind of equity, people react to rewards, and they work towards goals and have expectations about performance. It is very tricky to motivate one-self in unfamiliar contexts. The expatriate usually has a family whose needs have to be considered. One needs to ask a female expatriate regarding the training and support she will need to function effectively. When company lessens the support, the expatriate and the family is left to fend for themselves. Suddenly what seemed exotic and exciting becomes frustrating and confusing. This makes situation difficult, they find difficult to handle daily tasks and thus may encounter continuous challenges. Some may never adjust and can actually suffer from severe depression and psychological trauma and then end up being described as failures.

### **TURNAROUND STRATEGIES TO BARRIERS**

#### **Self Efficacy**

A female's confidence in oneself is termed as her self efficacy. Results from the studies on self efficacy has shown that there is a positive co-relation between a female's self efficacy and organizational engagement. Low self efficacy makes one to avoid the tasks whereas High self efficacy pushes on to attempt the tasks, work harder and continue even in difficulties. Self-efficacy influences what work related activities women select, how much effort they put forth, how persistent they are in the face of difficulties, and the difficulty of the goals they set. Women with low self-efficacy do not expect to do well, and they often do not achieve at a

level that is commensurate with their abilities. They do not believe they have the skills to do well so they do not try. Since female expatriates have to deal with unexpected barriers, a sense of self efficacy, or a belief in one's own ability to deal with these challenges, is important to effective adjustment.

### **Stress Management**

Most of the time female expatriates often have to deal with frustration, conflicts, social alienation, pressure to conform, loneliness and differences in housing, climate, cuisine, all of which are stressful, management of stress is critical to the productive functioning female expats. Different people and different cultural groups may manage stress differently, but all expatriates need to have an ongoing stress reduction program that works for them. Activities that have generally been found to be helpful in managing stress include meditation, religious worship, writing in a diary, physical activity and hobbies of various kinds.

### **Substitution Ability**

Since familiar activities are often unavailable in the foreign location, successful expatriates find alternative activities as substitutes (Brein and David,1985).This involves “replacing activities that bring pleasure and happiness in the home culture with similar yet different activities that exist in the host culture”(Mendenhall and Oddou,1985,40)

### **Relational Abilities**

Since expatriates need to interact with host country nationals, the ability to develop relationships is very important. Relational skills is important factor and affect significantly to expatriate success (Van Den Anker , 2009). The majority of expatriates meet host nationals on a daily basis and in a variety of settings like work, grocery shopping, public transportation, church and the neighborhood. Expatriates have to decide whether these interactions will be purely superficial, or if they will try to develop relationships. Those who actively try to develop relationships seem to be more effective and productive. Two skills emerge in this context: Finding Mentors and Willingness to communicate with host nationals.

### **Finding Mentors**

Domestic as well as professional life perspectives are crucial for working people; especially women. They find it very difficult to strike a balance between the two. Things become easier for them to handle, when they are either independent or when they get adequate support from the family members. European and Japanese enterprises mentor the new female expatriates and define their career path and also look after the well being .They also provide ample support system .This plays the most important role in reinforcing the support provided by corporate headquarters (Tung, 1987, 121).Home corporation should frequently contact the female expatriate and guide and mentor her regarding career development mechanism during repatriation process; back into the home organization (Chew and Debowski ,2008).

Mentoring has an important role in the career success of female expatriates (Linehan and Scullion , 2001). A superior's active support is required in introducing the female expatriate to professional and social networks .This helps in getting their names known in the host country.

Mentoring regarding the country's culture is a must before putting the female expatriates on international assignments; the failure of which decreases the possibility of these female expatriates to be successful on the assignment (Caligiuri, Joshi and Lazarova, 1999, 197).

Expatriates who develop close relationships with host nationals generally are better adjusted and more productive in their international assignments than expatriates who do not try to develop such friendship(Mendenhall and Oddou,1985).Establishing friendships with host nationals means that the culturally experienced person guides the neophyte through the intricacies and complexity of the new

organization and culture and protecting her against mistakes and helping her to develop appropriate behaviors. If an expatriate develops and nurtures a relationship with a host national, then she can go to the host national with questions whenever she is confused.

Developing such relationships take time and the payoff for the expatriate for investing time and energy in developing friendships with host nationals may not show for a year or more. Expatriates satisfaction level is different from each other based upon who their friends are (Torbiorn,1982).Female expatriates who limited their friendships to other expatriates were more satisfied during the first year than were expatriates who sought out host nationals as friends. However this changed at the one-year point of the overseas assignment. From then on, female expatriates who had friendships with host nationals experienced higher levels of satisfaction and adjustment than did expatriates who limited their friendships to fellow expatriates

### **Willingness to communicate**

Communication is essential to success in an expatriate position. People often assume that being fluent in a foreign language is necessary in order to be a successful expatriate; however that is not always the case. While complete fluency is desired goal, it is not a precondition to international adjustment. Researchers have found that in developing relationships with host nationals, it is not so much the level of fluency that is important, but rather that the expatriate shows that she is learning the language in order to get to know and become more familiar and intimate with the host nationals and their culture. Fluency becomes a powerful tool when it is used by expatriates to create and foster relationships with host nationals.

### **Perceptual Abilities**

Female expatriates deal with an unfamiliar environment; hence their perceptual abilities are especially relevant. The expatriate's ability to understand why host nationals behave and think the way they do, and to make correct inferences as to the motives behind these behaviors, means they can relate effectively to the host nationals. If they are able to understand the motives of host nationals, they are able to reduce to a large degree the psychological uncertainty of cross-cultural experiences. Knowing the reasons or motives for host national's behavior allows the female expatriate to feel comfortable in the presence of host nationals. The more understanding the expatriate has about the way people feel and think and the reasons why they do, what they do; the more likely the expatriate will be able to predict how people are likely to behave in the future. Being able to predict how people will treat you reduces psychological uncertainty. Unfortunately, this "understanding of what goes on in other people's mind" is not a skill that comes naturally to a lot of people. Research shows that people from different cultures usually misinterpret each other's behavior due to the way they have been socialized about how they should perceive and evaluate the behavior of others.

Most important is the ability of not to be judgmental when faced with confusing situations. This means not labeling people as "backward", "stupid", or "unsophisticated" when they do or say things that would be viewed as such at home. The ability to put one's natural evaluations of people "on hold" until one can collect more information about why they did and what they did; is a critical skill for international adjustment.

### **Family Spouse Adjustment**

Career oriented women are likely to be married to career oriented men .This holds true vice-versa. Male spouses who accompany their wives on international assignment have some specific concerns. Spouses have to be flexible and have to fend for themselves in terms of finding appropriate employment; if they cannot find an appropriate employment, then the transfer will not be successful. Organizations have to realize that most spouses have careers and are not interested in just any job; it needs to be something that contributes to a sense of self-worth and future career opportunities. The lifestyle of a well paid corporate family and their wives advancement can be positive, but the specifics can be negative since the male spouse being streamed into

traditional spouse activities feels neglected. Spouses want activities that can benefit their careers and provide interest while in foreign location. The female expatriate may have excellent cross-cultural skills and be doing very well on the job, but research shows that if that expatriate's spouse and/or family members are having trouble adjusting, then the expatriate will have problems that could lead to a premature departure from the overseas assignment. A relationship between expatriate adjustment and the adjustment of the expatriate spouses was derived (Black and Stephens, 1989). If the spouse viewed the assignment positively and initiated cross-cultural training, if a support network is available and if the spouse is involved early in the selection process, then the male spouse is more likely to adapt successfully. If the culture is relatively similar to the home culture, then adapting is likely to be relatively easy.

### **Job Aspects**

To be successful in an international assignment, the female expatriates must perform at acceptable levels at the job. The various job aspects that seem to be important are:

**Role Clarity** relates to how clear the new job's tasks, demands and roles are for the expatriate. Does the expatriate have a clear idea about what is expected on the job, or is the expatriate basically uninformed about her duties? High role clarity reduces the amount of uncertainty associated with the work situation and this helps the female expatriates to adjust to the new workplace.

**Role Discretion** relates to the degree to which the workplace is flexible in its rules, expectations, procedures and policies. In a situation where the workplace is flexible, the female expatriates can influence what her role will be in the office rather than having to adapt and conform to rigid work restrictions. The greater the degree of role discretion, the higher the level of adjustment the expatriate will experience towards her job.

**Role Novelty** relates to how different the new job's duties, tasks and responsibilities are from the previous job the expatriate had back home. The greater the degree of role novelty, the greater the difficulty the female expatriate will have in adjusting to the new job.

**Role Conflict** relates to conflicting signals from people at work as to the female expatriate's role, duties and performance standards. These conflicts add to the expatriate's stress levels and make adaptation more difficult.

### **Culture Novelty**

The wider the differences in norms, values, religious beliefs, sex roles and so on of the host country compared to those of the home country, the more novel or new the culture will be for the female expatriates. The greater the novelty in the host culture, the more difficult it will be for the expatriate to adjust to that culture. Many experts who have reviewed studies on international adjustment have found this to be a consistent and important aspect of international adjustment (Stening, 1979).

### **Cross-Cultural Training**

Cross-Cultural Training Programs are designed to educate the trainee in the key cultural norms, values, behaviors, beliefs and other important aspects of the country to which she is assigned. The assumption is that if an expatriate is taught about these things she will then be able to transfer that knowledge when overseas in terms of making sense out of why the host nationals are doing, what they are doing and in terms of adjusting their own behavior to fit the requirement of the host culture's social system. They will be more satisfied with their overseas assignments, more productive in their jobs and will be able to interact in a better way with host nationals.



## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Female expatriates miss out global assignments due to various reasons. Lack of mentors or role models, access to appropriate network, sponsorship are the most common ones. International managers need to understand the reasons for varying male and female roles as well as contrasting interpretations of equality. Most cultures differentiate between the appropriate roles for men and women. Women are still perceived as child bearers and child reapers. These traditions are still deeply ingrained even when it is no longer necessary for women to remain at home. The result has been that women who worked outside the home often work in subordinate positions. The expatriate glass ceiling is one of the prominent obstacles that women in the foreign organizations are facing. Receiving foreign assignments is becoming increasingly critical for promotion to upper level management. This glass ceiling has to be broken by both the females and the organizations.

Literature suggests that a fairly large number of expatriates experience problems during their international assignments and estimates of failures (who return home early) have ranged from 15 percent to as high as 40 percent. An additional 30 to 50 percent of expatriates stay in their international assignments, but are regarded as either marginally effective or ineffective by their organizations (Bird and Dunbar, 1991). According to evidence accumulated over the past two decades, roughly one in three managers sent overseas gets the job done the way headquarters wanted it done. This is costly to firms. The following are the characteristics that help expatriates adjust effectively and companies can select female expatriates based on the degree to which they possess these characteristics, and training can be designed to ensure that expatriates develop and use the needed characteristics.

### Willingness to go

- Interview questions to assess the expatriate's understanding of the mission and why she thinks that she has the characteristics that will help accomplish that mission.
- Discussion of the career implications of the foreign assignment. What skills and experiences, in the expatriate's view, will the foreign position provide for advancement in the chosen career path? What position would the female expatriate expect to receive upon return from the foreign assignment?
- Biodata that might indicate the level of the individual's interest in and knowledge of the host country.

### Ability to do the job

- For individuals who may have made short term troubleshooting trip overseas, assessments of their performance during those assignments collected from individuals with whom they worked.
- Technical knowledge tests related to particularly important or unusual aspects of the job (like technical standards required by the host country, knowledge of labour relations laws relevant to operation in the host country, etc.) that will occur in the foreign assignment. Evidently what is tested is determined by the exact nature of the foreign job assignment and what can be learned readily on the job.
- Assessment by domestic colleagues of the female's managerial and administrative abilities. Current performance appraisals can be looked into.
- Situational exercises, role-plays or simulations in which the individual must deal with situations likely to arise in the foreign location.

### Ability to adapt

- Situational exercises characterized by high levels of ambiguity and time pressure to examine how well the candidate performs under such conditions.

- Behavior description interviews focused on previous examples of behavioral flexibility.
- Biodata concerning the nature and breadth of hobbies and other leisure activities and a check of the availability of those activities in the foreign location.

#### **Ability to form relationship**

- Psychological tests of traits typically associated with relationship development.
- Assessment of how the individual typically deals with conflict and how that compares with the conflict management norms in the host country.
- Situational exercises where the individual must meet, greet, and establish initial positive social interactions with people from different cultures.
- Biodata relating to person's ability to establish friendships with people from other cultures.

#### **Ability to communicate**

- Traditional written and oral tests of language ability.
- Situational exercises in which the language ability must be used like explaining a technical procedure to individuals from the host culture using the host language.
- Videos of host country nationals in which the candidate is asked to interpret the non-verbal communication taking place in the situation on the video.
- "Diplomacy exercises"-asking that the candidate, without saying "your performance is lousy and I am going to fire you if you do not improve," expressing this sentiment tactfully to a sub-ordinate.

#### **Family Situation**

- Interviews with spouse and family members to determine interest and willingness to go overseas.
- Family biodata to identify possible predictors of adjustment-any previous experience of abroad.
- Most of the preceding selection procedures also may be used to assess the spouse's ability to adapt and communicate in a foreign environment.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

There may be certain uncovered barriers which may be prevalent but are not visible. These uncovered invisible barriers needs to be studied. The study talks about the cultural differences in general .Future research may recruit expatriates from different cultural backgrounds and findings from this study can then be compared.

The study does not include any impact of pre departure cross cultural training programs on female expatriates. This effect of pre-training, on-training and post-training programmes on international assignments can be explored.

A comparative study is needed in finding the actually and expected Return of Investment for female expatriates who were provided proper training and other support versus the actually and expected Return of Investment for female expatriates who were not provided proper training and other supports.

Another area that needs to be explored is the repatriation of female expatriates on their comeback.

Similarly a comparative study regarding Return of Investment between trained and untrained female expatriates can be done.

Also the future research subject could be to investigate the difficulties faced by dual-career couples especially in case if male is the accompanying spouse.

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