



What is Work Culture ? Bring Out the Differences in the Western and the Indian Work Cultures. (250 Words / 15 M) (GS-4 Work Culture)

Approach:

1. Intro – define work culture.
2. Briefly mention about the prevailing Indian work culture.
3. Chart out the comparison b/w Indian and Western work-cultures.
4. Conclusion suggesting some required changes.

Work culture, in an organization, is a **consequence of the set of values and beliefs** carried over a long-time and has substantial **impact on the behavior, quality and quantity of work** done by employees in an organization.

A decade ago, the work culture in India had a vast difference when compared to the rest of the world. But now, there has been a **paradigm shift** due to enormous growth of MNCs in IT sector, BPOs, etc. The advent of **globalization** made enterprises and employees to work across borders. This eliminated the huge gap in work culture to some extent, but still **some difference** remains between Indian work culture and other countries, **especially the west**.

Indian work culture: Indians have various **cultural yardsticks** which extend to their professional culture too. For e.g., **'namaste'** forms an important part of Indian etiquette, generally used while greeting. However, educated Indians also are acquainted with western customs of preferring hand-shaking. Besides, Indian workplaces follow a **hierarchical system** and **decision-making is usually top-down**. The **lack of infrastructure** and **inadequate supply chain management** creates hindrances, which requires immense patience to transact business. Additionally, **bureaucratic hurdles** and a **laidback approach** in government circles can result in delays in processing, paperwork overload and a general lack of confidence in the system.

Comparison between Indian and Western work cultures:

- In all **western** countries, people **strictly adhere to time**, attend meetings sharply in the scheduled timings. Contrarily, **Indian** people **don't always abide by strict timings**. They are **not very impressive on deadlines** and negotiate for extending timelines. Sometimes, even **scheduled meetings get cancelled** for unavailability of key persons.
- In **western work-culture**, they **value more to the time spent for their personal life**. They seldom carry workplace pressure to home. Eventually **work is a part of their life, not life itself**. But **Indians** have a **poor work-life balance** as some even work day & night beyond limits. They **value work more than personal lives**, which causes stress in personal lives.
- In **western culture**, the **boss-subordinate relation is not more formal & hierarchical**. Superiors treat subordinates with respect and **do not demonstrate ranks**. They are entrusted with important assignments. They accept **shared responsibilities**. Managers



often **socialize with subordinates**, and meetings are **interactive sessions** to arrive at **best decisions**. Whereas, in **India** the relationship is **overtly formal & hierarchical**. People in power **openly display ranks**. Subordinates are **not always respected** and they are expected to **take the blame for failures**. The boss-subordinate relationship is **rarely personal**. Meetings are **more dominative** than interactive.

- In mentoring, in **India**, either due to the appraisal process or due to lack of skill of the appraiser, the much needed **critical assessment is often held back**. Even assessments are **influenced by personal biases**. In **west**, there is a **better balance** in practice.
- In **west**, people are **adaptive and conducive to change implementation**. In **India**, work culture do **not accept change** easily, lot of **resistance** is encountered to implement changes.

Work culture is important for not only organization's growth, but for **national growth** as well. There exist many differences with pros & cons in work cultures. We need to **pick and adapt the best practices of work culture** around the globe and implement them. **Changes** need to be brought about in the **mindset about management hierarchy**, in **attitudes towards appointments & deadlines**, in **ensuring more commitments & dedication**, in **following a result orientation over process orientation** and **directedness**, especially in **addressing disagreements**.