CHAPTER - VII

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The sojourner who sets out to study in a foreign land embarks on what may be for him a great adventure. There is eagerness, anticipation, curiosity, also hope and excitement, and for that matter even nervousness, apprehension and fear. It is all a grand mix, with subtle shades of feeling dissolving one into the other. However, the time spent in the foreign country is lived busily - not just as "a foreign student", but as a person, a human being. New situations are encountered and dealt with all by himself or herself. If the encounter is successfully handled, there is a newly acquired self-confidence. But if the encounter is mishandled and there is a failure, the sojourner becomes uncertain and bewildered and is shaken. What is longed for is companionship, and if no worthwhile companion is forthcoming, the time spent is often lonely and unhappy. On the contrary, chance could throw up life-long friends and even stray cases of love. Very often, what is new and different becomes also stimulating and even challenging. Again, some aspects of life in the host country could be found more cogenial, and at the same time the poor sojourner in a new and foreign environment could feel uncomfortable, puzzled and also threatened. However, the quest for knowledge and skill could very much
end in success and mastery, though very often too, the course studied, or training taken be thought not satisfying at all, or, even quite off the mark from whatever it was that was aimed at. Or, yet again, what is also not very happy, the sojourner may find the demands of the new course of study beyond intellectual reach or ability.

The sojourn abroad may broaden horizons and help gain new insights into one's own self, and into others, and the sojourner may develop a profound sense of commonality with people the world over, and marvel at the different ways they have worked out to meet their common needs. And yet, the sojourner may just consider others different and the ways of his homeland and his people the best, and therefore think that there was no ground for true communication and sharing.

The foreign student may return home feeling that he or she has grown, having gained in knowledge and strength, that, there now were new resources to draw on, and a new helping hand to lend to the development of the home country. Both the host and the home country may now get more respect and affection. Of course, the sojourner would find one congenial to the exclusion of the other. Home could be a familiar and beloved haven after a period of exile, or, the foreign student after the sojourn abroad, on return could find the home country provincial, backward, narrow and ugly, an anathema to which one could hardly ever reconcile.
Now, out of such variegated experience, the social scientist abstracts the relevant information to build up a conclusive point of view, undertaking often large-scale explorations, and at other times, abstracting where necessary every bits and pieces to put together a complete picture. For the present research also, some 500 sojourners studying in India were selected to play respondents. They were from 39 countries, out of which, the majority were underdeveloped third world nations, practically all from Africa and West Asia, most of whom were non-English knowing: Off these 500 foreign students, 425 were male and 75 female, of whom a majority, i.e., 64.2 per cent were below 26 years of age (Table 4). They had come to India for various courses of study. Very few joined either at the pre-school or the higher level, for most were undergraduates and formed 66.6 per cent of the sojourner population (see Table 6).

These respondents belonged to different socio-economic backgrounds, and majority of them were non-English speaking (see Table 8). 38.2 per cent had Arabic as their mother-tongue, and a bare 2.4 per cent English instead. Again, the parents' of about 52.6 per cent were literate and with an educated background. Of another 17.6 per cent, fathers were literate but the mothers were not, 13.8 per cent had literate mothers but illiterate fathers, 16 per cent had both parents illiterate. Thus, a majority of the respondents had educated
parents (see Table 9). Again, for most both parents were working and therefore earning members. Further, most respondents were from middle-class families, and only a few belonged to the upper and lower status groups (see Table 10). Further still, the late-twenty age-group preponderated, and by that time, had therefore quite absorbed their own culture, and this could find adjustment in the host country quite a difficult proposition. Furthermore, practically all were unmarried. Again, practically all used the mother-tongue to converse amongst themselves, but English, when interacting with others. In English most respondents were poor. Of course, various factors determined the sojourners' social relations in the host country, including language, age, sex, academic background and personal characteristics, as also the world-area from which they came.

Now, since the majority of the sojourner-respondents were non-English speaking, and, in fact poor in English, their social relations in India were quite restricted. However, within various African and European groups, social relations were quite intimate, and statistically were found significant, while between Indians and the sojourner-respondents, social relations were statistically found insignificant (see Tables 14, 15 and 16). Of course, personal characteristics of self-confidence and motivation, and, the interest in getting to know Indians, as well as, the self-
ratings of the English language facility and of the ability of making friends, as also, the environmental opportunity for association with Indians, all appeared to have some influence on the extent of a foreign students' interaction with Indians. These relations were, for the most part, statistically significant, only when the examination was limited to the foreign student's desire to know Indians. But of course, personal characteristics had to influence the extent of interaction with Indians. In this respect, even earlier short visits abroad were found to help Asian/African students develop friendships in India more easily, than where, this experience was lacking.

Thus, it is clearly that personal motivation to develop social relations with Indians, and the confidence in one's ability to do so, did have some bearing on the development of a close friendship, though neither were strong determinants. For Asian students, the experience of having lived or travelled in a foreign country, for no matter how short a time, also contributed markedly both to the extent of the interaction with Indians, as well as, to the development of close friendship with them. Other characteristics and experience also influenced the extent of interaction with Indians. Thus, although Arabs score higher in interaction with Indians than do students from other countries; they are no more likely to feel that they have made close friends.
Again, the extent of environmental opportunities for association with Indians, which strongly influences the extent of interaction for both Asian/African and Arab students, is also an influence on the development of close friendships with Indians, though for Asian/African students only (see Table 13, 14, 15 and 16).

Social relations lead to some sort of adjustments also. Earlier, in this thesis it was observed that foreign students interact freely among themselves, and less freely with Indians, because of factors like language, personal characteristics, and previous experience of foreign travel. Out of these, language plays a very important role, for, being the very basis of social interaction, it is at the hub of all social relations. And since most sojourners who came to study in India were non-English speaking, they had willy-nilly to face the misfortune of a failure in adjustment to the new situation (see Table 17). Language apart, these students also had to adjust to different weather conditions, and to the problems of residence, for often both the climate and the living conditions in the host country were quite discomfitting. For most students, during their first year in India, found it hard to adjust to the living conditions in the host country and were in low spirits. They found hostels overcrowded, facilities scanty and restrictions galore. The weather too was in no mood to help and showed off its
vagaries (see Tables 18 and 19). Teaching methods and the
examination system made matters worse. Library facility was
at its minimum. Recreation was scanty and even rare. And to
top it all, teachers were thought to be practicing
discrimination. The already low spirit therefore sunk to a
new low (see Tables 24, 25, 26 and 27).

Lack of social adjustment had to take its toll and
ultimately did tell on sojourner’s health, as well as
academic performance. Students had come to India with
definite aims, and were therefore the more saddened because
factors already listed above gathered together to make
adjustment to the new environment in India quite a difficulty
task. Naturally therefore, academic performance was the
ultimate casualty. The academic performance of the "foreign
students has been assessed in terms of nationality, sex, age
and family background".

An analysis of the adjustment and the academic
performance of these foreign students made it clear that male
respondents were better adjusted in comparison to the female
respondents, and hence, the academic performance of the males
was better than that of the females (see Table 28 and 29).

The relative values of "r" for male and female students
in regards to their social adjustment and the academic
performance show that the female students are more adjusted
and their academic performance was also better in comparison to male students. It has been shown in table 30.

Age was also found to be a very important factor in social adjustment. For this, the respondents were divided into different age-groups. One set was put below 26 years, the other between 26 and 35 years, and the next between 36 and 45 years, and the last was above 45 years. The first set, that is, below 26 years, and found better adjusted than all the rest, and its academic performance was also good, and the value of 'r' in majority of the cases, the coefficient of correlation too was significant.

The socio-economic background of the respondents was also found a factor influencing the academic performance of these sojourners. Thus students from economically good families were more career-oriented, and hence their academic performance was also better. However, since the majority of these sojourners were from middle or lower class families, their academic performance was not good as is clear from the values of 'r' which were insignificant.

The educational background of parents was also taken into account while assessing the performance of the students. Thus, parents were divided into FLML, FIMI, FLMI and FIML (where F is for father, M for Mother, L for literate, and I for illiterate). Now, it was found that the academic
performance of those students was good who had both parents literate. It was poor where both parents were illiterate because the values of 'r' were significant for literate parents and insignificant for illiterate parents (see Tables 31, 32, 33 and 34). Apart from this, the academic performance of students in age-group I, that is, where students were below 26 years of age, was good among all categories of parents and with different socio-economic and educational backgrounds, as is clear from Tables 31, 32, 33 and 34.

It has also become clear that academic performance also depended on the available language facilities, as also on the factors that together influenced social adjustment. And, therefore, the greater and the more acute the problems encountered, the lower was the sojourners' academic performance (Table 35, 36).

SUGGESTIONS:

The present research effort makes the following suggestions:

1. That at the time of admission to various educational institutions, students should be tested for their command over both spoken and written English, and only those should be admitted, whose knowledge of English is good.
2. That admission should be given only in select institutions, and that too, only in those where the medium of instruction is English.

3. That no foreign student should be admitted in any privately managed college, more particularly if the medium of instruction is a regional language.

4. That foreign students be provided separate hostel facilities as per their standard of living.

5. That all foreign students should be given proper hostel facility within the campus and no foreign student should be permitted outside residence.

6. That foreign students be provided a separate mess in which they can get the food of their own choice.

7. That all foreign students be given some kind of schooling or instruction on Indian culture and society.

8. That foreign students be provided more recreational facilities.

9. That foreign aspirants for technical and non-technical courses should be treated as two separate categories and each category should be given separate and proper attention.

10. That foreign students should have adequate medical and library facilities.