ABSTRACT

The problem of the present study is culture contact of foreign students from Middle East and African countries in India. The purpose of the present investigation was to find out what kinds of social difficulties foreign students encounter in India, whether the two groups of the students mentioned above encounter the same difficulties or not and to find out what predictor variables are responsible for which difficulties.

There are six independent variables that were used as predictors, namely; the reasons for preferring India for further studies (WHY), cultural similarity (CS), ego-strength (E-S), communication skills (CoSk), fulfilment of expectations (EF), and intolerance of ambiguity (IA), while social difficulties scale (SDFS) which has eight subscales was used as the dependent variable or criterion variable.

The eight social difficulties that were to be predicted are as follows: relations with the host stewards (RHS), stress due to habits and lifestyles of the hosts (SLH), treatment meted out (TM), pleasure-unpleasure of interaction (PUI), suspiciousness of hosts-guests relations (SHG), reaction to unfamiliar people and situations (RPS), accommodation and crowding (AC) and problems of interaction and freedom of choice (IFC).

The specific hypotheses that were tested in the present study are:
(i) Male and female African students will differ in regard to each of the eight kinds of difficulties experienced by them, viz.: relations with the host stewards (RHS), stress due to habits and lifestyles of the hosts (SLH), treatment meted out (TM), pleasure-unpleasure of interaction (PUI), suspiciousness of hosts-guests relations (SHG), reaction to unfamiliar people and situations (RPS), accommodation and crowding (AC) and problems of interaction and freedom of choice (IFC).

(ii) Male and female African students will differ in respect to the following variables: reasons for preferring India for further studies (WHY), cultural similarity (CS), communication skills (CoSk), fulfilment of expectations (EF), ego-strength (E-S) and intolerance of ambiguity (IA).

(iii) African and Middle East (ME) students will differ in respect to each of the eight kinds of difficulties experienced by them; African students will experience more difficulties than Middle East students.

(iv) African and Middle Fast students will differ in respect to the following variables: reasons for preferring India for further studies (WHY), cultural similarity (CS), communication skills (CoSk), fulfilment of expectations (EF), ego-strength (E-S) and intolerance of ambiguity (IA).

(v) The variables, viz.: reasons for preferring India for further studies (WHY), cultural similarity (CS), communication skills (CoSk), fulfilment of expectations (EF), ego-strength (E-S) and intolerance of ambiguity (IA) shall
have significant correlation with each of the eight factors [viz.: relations with the host stewards (RHS), stress due to habits and lifestyles of the hosts (SLH), treatment meted out (TM), pleasure-unpleasure of interaction (PUI), suspiciousness of hosts-guests relations (SHG), accommodation and crowding (AC) and finally, problems of interaction and freedom of choice (IFC)] of difficulties in both African and Middle East samples.

The present study was carried out on foreign students from African and Middle East countries who are studying at the three Northern Indian universities, namely; Aligarh Muslim University, Delhi University and Panjab University. The African countries included in the study are Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan and Tanzania. On the other side, the Middle East countries included in the study are Jordan, Iran and Palestine. The investigator approached 500 students from the three above universities, but the present study is based on 200 African students and 100 students from Middle East countries. Both male and female students were interviewed. In the African group, the number of male students interviewed was 110 and female students was 90, while there was absence of adequate number of female students from Middle East countries due to low enrollment of undergraduate female students from this region in Indian universities.

The investigator encountered a number of problems at the time of data collection, viz.: the students were apprehensive to give their experiences spontaneously, others were not willing to co-operate, some students could not
lifestyles of the hosts (SLH) in both the groups of the students. The predictor variables explain 19.4% and 29.7% of variance of this criterion in the African and the Middle East samples respectively. Subsequently, there is need for the search for additional predictors for the prediction of the difficulties encountered by the students. It is suggested that the new set of predictors should include: educational system, social life, living conditions and attitudes of the hosts/relations with the hosts. Furthermore, one can search for moderator variables that would be helpful in the improvement of predictability of social difficulties experienced by the guest students coming from different countries, make use of a large number of predictors which may have low correlation with the criterion to be predicted, and finally, to make a search for the variables which bear high correlation with the criterion to be predicted.