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Working in a cross-cultural context

PDPU

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3 parts of presentation-- People, behavior, communication

Trevor Godston

The topic I would like to reflect upon is the marketing of products and services that I experienced while in India. Between the guest lectures and manufacturing site visits, I noticed an underlying theme that I found very interesting. The use of soft words opposed to hard facts and interpretation of those facts was a shock to me. While observing this, I related it back to the themes we were asked to address. There seems to be an immense gap between the poor and the wealthy, and I infer the level of education comes with this. When driving around, everyone shares the same environment. Everywhere we have been exposed to looks more or less the same. The streets have rubble on the sides, loose trash is plentiful, and the buildings seem to mostly look the same, with the occasional building that looks like its freshly constructed. While common spaces look similar, underlying provided amenities like schooling are not common. We discussed some differences between government schools and non-government schools, but It would be interesting to see statistics based upon post mandatory education living situations. Do most lower-class children attend school? If they do, do they learn things similar to other more affluent children? How many children are able to escape poverty and move into better housing with better living conditions? How much of a desire is there to change and convert living situations? Do families that live in temporary roadside housing dream to live in nice bungalows or do they accept their situations and only look to make the best of it? All of this ties back to the marketing that is used. In guest lectures, a better life was promised but and quantifiable metrics seemed bogus or as if they weren't backed with any unbiased research. Specifically, the "green school" presentation blew me away. In academia, I am used to seeing quantifiable metrics that are backed with info that can be measured. When attempting to sell tuition, I couldn't believe the presenter used information such as, "fair trade, environmentally sourced uniforms have resulted in a 3-year change of students being 20% more attentive, 30% more fit, 100% more successful, and 100% happier." I inquired where he got this information and he responded saying they tracked student behavior over the period. What I'm extremely interested in, is how it's possible to measure success, fitness, success, and happiness. These are all soft concepts and it's not realistic to assign percentage improvements to this. A similar scenario occurred at Amul in the advertisement video. Throughout the video, points were highlighted that seemed to be opinion based, more than story or fact based. The presentation mentioned that the milk makes the consumers happier, the co-op program made farmers happier, and made the cows lives easier. While it's reasonable to have an ad that allows the viewer to infer these things, I was surprised that the advertisement came outright to say this as it can't be truly backed. It only invokes emotion at a shallow level. From these experiences, I can infer the greater mass of people are not highly educated, or don't desire information that is quantifiable. They respond to emotion suggestions without desiring more. Their behavior suggests that they don't have a choice, or they are hopeful enough for a better life or better experience that they accept suggestion without questioning or

probing. Communication seems to be surface level. Because of reception to shallow marketing and information, there must be a trust that is easily attained for businesses, by the people.

Bill Mastroni

To see rags and riches in such a close proximity has shown me there is a common ground that all who endure are after— live life the best they can. Some show it in a way where the best is a symbol. Usually indicating as many zeros and commas as possible. Others show that humanity at its core is about survival. In other words— to do the most with the least. My perception on this parallel of socioeconomic classes may change. But one will stay constant— to live, to breathe, & to simply just be. This is at the core of cognitive functionality that makes us human.

During our beautiful hike in Sembalpani the people of a nearby tribe suffered two fatal losses. They were preparing for a traditional cremation ceremony. This burial method illustrated some interesting observations of Indian culture.

People

The people of the tribe were very formal. Following all crevice norms of the ceremony— bringing a piece of dry wood with them for the cremation process. The tribal leaders orchestrated the process by first gathering all the wood. Transporting their loved one on the wood. Then covering said loved ones with wood. Oil was splashed on the dry wood and ignited with a match to start a fire. The people of said tribe represented Satvik style of living. They were self-sufficient and selfless in the act of completing the cremation. They truly emulated the Gandhian philosophy of living.

Behavior

The way these members of the tribe operated in this event was regimented. There were only male members present in this ceremony. Women of the tribe were not permitted to be at the ceremony— women are too emotional after losing a loved one. Their grief would cause the ceremony to be not a “happy” sendoff. The men that are in attendance are supposed to behave with little emotion— to emulate stone faces. In this practice they give their loved one the respect of a “happy” sendoff. Only remembering and speaking of good memories of said loved ones.

Communication

We stumbled across this cremation— we were told to bring dry wood as a sign of respect as we approached the cremation site. In our group we had women among us as we sat in awe at what were we witnessing. It was permitted that the women within our group were at the ceremony because they had no emotional ties to the deceased. This was spoken to us by a very friendly tribal member. He was the professor of the tribe representing a high position in their hierarchy. The professor spoke very good

english. He gave us a summary of the traditional ceremony that was being performed in front of us in great detail. He told us the event was performed with respect and silence. Talking was permitted at times of prayer and at the lighting of the fire. After the flame was lit— all left the cremation site in relative silence. We followed and continued our hike.

People of the tribe were very formal in how they carried themselves. Showing that they can do cremate loved ones internally from the tribe. Proving they do not need external help.

Behavior was based off of the formal ceremony that was being performed. The tribe did it all on their own. Demonstrating that they are self-sufficient.

Communication of the tribe was performed in a way of formality. Prayers were present in the ritual being performed. The professor of the tribe welcomed us in open arms— showing us how the tribe communicates in the formal setting. Even with symbolic cues not requiring spoken directions.

Satvik style of living. Self sufficient— Gandhian philosophy

Ilya Boyd

People

During my experience one trip I really got a lot of information out of was the trip to the non governmental school. What I observed was that everyone was happy. From the moment we arrived we were greeted with open arms. The students loved to come up to us and talk to us and learn about us. I could see that all of the meals we had the people were so happy to share with us. They wanted us to have lots of food and I enjoyed it. I believe they had farms and some of the food was freshly put out for us. In the morning I observed about 4 people sweeping all around the area. They were up around 7AM cleaning.

Behavior

The behavior of everyone was happy. All the kids were enjoying themselves. I observed the different behaviors on stage with sadness, happiness, humor and some more.

Communication

The speaker was great as well. He communicated well by telling us about the school. It was great to be able to ask questions and learn. Something that I loved was that the parents could stay overnight at the school if they needed or wanted to see their kids or needed a place to stay. When we went to the New Year's Eve celebration all the kids were great communicating with us and explaining what was happening on stage. All the kids wanted to talk to us and communicate.

<http://www.lokniketan.org/home/index#.XDd-71xKhPY>