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## What are the major obstacles to intercultural communication? How can they be reduced? Do you subscribe to the view that when you live in a new culture your

## values, opinions or behavior should change in any way? Support your arguments

## with relevant examples or expert opinions.

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Intercultural communication refers to the effects on communication behavior, when different cultures interact together. Hence, one way of viewing intercultural communication is as communication that unfolds in symbolic intercultural spaces. (Arasaratnam,2013). Intercultural communication can be major obstacles for people living and working in a foreign country so, one needs to learn lots of things before he/she travels to foreign country for example, if an American is going to visit Nepal and he knows to greet people with ‘namaste’ it can be a very respectful act.

People face various obstacles regarding intercultural communication the overcoming obstacles are assuming similarities, language barriers, non-verbal misinterpretation, preconceptions and stereotypes, quickly evaluating and high anxiety. One can create a mental conflict by being confused and anxious about how to deal and adopt in the new cultural environment.

Assuming similarities is a first major obstacle many people may assume that there always exists some similarities among all people of the world but people have different values, beliefs and attitudes they act, think, talk, express as their cultural values and background so, one should avoid assuming similarities while communicating with people from different cultures. Language barriers is also among the major obstacle as people from various cultural background talk various languages vocabulary, syntax, idioms, slang, and dialects can all cause difficulty in understanding people from other places. Non-verbal misinterpretations means to communicate mistakenly, unclearly or when someone misreads a persons body’s language, gestures which definitely is a great communication barrier as people focus on whatever fits into the recognition of their personal world and interpret as their cultural influence. Preconceptions and stereotypes can may also lead to the failure of communication as people may preconcept based on limited image, negative stereotypes, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status which can lead to biasness and conflict. People have tendency of quickly evaluating and judging people as per their actions rather than try to comprehend the thoughts and feelings expressed by other person or group so, quickly evaluating can lead to a huge misunderstanding or can cause difficulty in communication. High anxiety is caused when we are facing new challenges and problems as it leads to stress one can feel highly anxious about how to start a conversation, greet, maintain distance and privacy as he/she has to think everytime time they are interacting with people from a various cultural background.( AFS Program 2015).

Obstacles of Intercultural communication can be reduced if one can be less assuming about similarities a better approach is to form a framework for on-site observations it is even more important to develop an investigative, nonjudgmental attitude, along with a high tolerance for ambiguity. Language difference problem can be solved if one becomes aware that these differences exist and having an open conversation about them can help overcome these unwanted misunderstandings. Discussing and adjusting to the other’s communication style will be useful to get to know each other well. Non-verbal misinterpretations can be reduced if one tries to understand the behaviors which seem odd and see what different values stand behind them. Sharing your cultural norms and learning about others cultural norms and values will help you better understand and cope with different nonverbal styles. One should strictly avoid preconceptions and stereotypes a simple way of not stereotyping is to avoid qualifying the behavior of one person as being representative for the entire culture, but instead being aware that it only the example you have encountered. Staying flexible and curious about new information about the members of one culture can help you make sense of complex intercultural situations. Tendency of quickly evaluating can lead us to misunderstanding so to maintain a pleasant interaction one should try to understand and observe the thoughts and feelings expressed by other person or a group rather than judging. High anxiety can be overcomed if we admit people living in different parts of world have their own culture and norms and if we are able to maintain positive attitude they will help us face the new challenges.

Yes I do subscribe, to the point that when one lives in a new culture their values, opinions and behaviors should change. People across the globe have different cultural norms and values and their own way of understanding things one cannot expect to live the same life that one is living in his/her country after he/she travels or moves to a new culture or a country. For example, if someone is about to travel to USA from Nepal one needs to understand American values and time as Nepali people are not punctual to time if one tries to act according to Nepali values and times in America that can be a very bad impression as Americans are very punctual to time. Developing the habit of understanding religions, races, values and cultural norms is very essential. For example, if a Christian and Hindus are having a conversation they both should always be mindful about what they are talking if a little bit of misunderstanding occurs it can lead to a violence act so the proper intercultural communication can only happen between them if they both respect and discuss their and others religion. One should always keep in mind that being unable understand others opinions and thoughts and not acting accordingly can lead one to be disliked as we all know if someone does not respects our opinions and norms we all feel humiliated. People living in western culture are very open minded than that of people living in Asia. For example, hugging in public is very normal act in USA while if living in Asia one tries to do the same way it can lead to misunderstanding and conflict as Asians people are not familiar with public hugging. There is a famous proverb and phrase ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans do’ (St Ambrose 387 AD).The phrase means that when you are living, traveling to different community of people you should do as per the laws, customs, cultures and norms of a community. However, in a broader sense the proverb also has a more general moral sense. It is polite and respectful to observe local customs and do as locals do. It demonstrates a ‘willingness to learn about others’ way of life and to see things from their point of view, and a respect for that viewpoint too‘ and finally it signifies that ‘whatever country we are in, we should act like the locals.

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