



## Southern Asia cluster: where the old meets the new?

Vipin Gupta<sup>a,\*</sup>, Gita Surie<sup>b</sup>, Mansour Javidan<sup>c</sup>, Jagdeep Chhokar<sup>d,1</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Fordham University, Fordham, NY, USA*

<sup>b</sup>*XLRI, Jamshedpur, India*

<sup>c</sup>*University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada*

<sup>d</sup>*IIM, Ahmedabad, India*

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### Abstract

The GLOBE southern Asia cluster consists of India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand. The cluster has a total population of almost 1.5 billion and a gross domestic product of almost U.S.\$1 trillion. The hallmark of the cluster is its high power distance and group and family collectivism practices. In terms of values, it aspires for a much stronger future orientation and performance orientation, and much lower levels of power distance. The cluster highly values charismatic, team oriented, and humane leadership. The managerial implications of GLOBE findings are discussed in the paper. © 2002 Published by Elsevier Science Inc.

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### 1. Introduction

Cultural data consist of measurements of the worldviews or systems of mental constructions that people use to interpret and respond to the world around them, and of the values and behaviors that this sense-making process generates. Cultures evolve over time, so to understand a cultural landscape, it is critical to develop an in-depth knowledge of the worldviews and the historical processes of their construc-

tion, evolution and diffusion. This article analyses the findings of the GLOBE study in the context of history and religion to provide an in-depth understanding of the culture of southern Asian cluster. Insight into the social foundations of south Asian culture is essential for multinationals and managers given the rising importance of this region as a manufacturing center, a developing and high growth market, and a source of talent for knowledge and technology intensive industries.

In GLOBE's upcoming book (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, Gupta, & GLOBE, 2002), Gupta, Hanges, and Dorfman (in press) empirically showed the southern Asian cluster to consist of the following countries in GLOBE: India, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Iran. While there are several other countries like Nepal and Pakistan that are probably members of this cluster, they were not studied by GLOBE, so they are not included in our analysis in this article.

In this report, we will:

- present a demographic and economic profile of the cluster;
- discuss the historical and religious foundations of the cluster's worldviews;
- present GLOBE's findings on the dimensions of societal cultures in the cluster;
- present GLOBE's findings on the major leadership models in the cluster;
- discuss the managerial implications of the GLOBE findings.

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\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: gupta@management.wharton.upenn.edu (V. Gupta).

<sup>1</sup>The four lead authors prepared the manuscript. The following country investigators collected data in their countries as part of the GLOBE project. Arif Mirian Sofyan, Hartanto Frans Marti, Hidayat Jann Soenaryo, Indriyati Tjahjono Gunawan (investigators from Indonesia); Ali Dastmalchian (investigator from Iran); Ismail Zakaria, Mansor Norma, Nik-Yakob, Nik Rahimah (investigators from Malaysia); Alvarez-Backus Eden, Lobell Jean (investigators from Philippines); Ubolwanna Pavakanun (investigator from Thailand); Agrawal Girish, Aima Ashok, Bhal Kanika, Chowdhary Nimit, Debbarma Sukhendu, Dzuvichu R. Rosemary, Fenn Mathai, Irala Lokanandha Reddy, Khan Mohamed Basheer, Kharbihh Hasina, Mahajan Seema, Matthew Mary, Miller Lalbiakzuala, Mukherjee Doel, Mukherjee Kumkum, Nagar Renu, N. Natarajan, A.K. Pani, Pareek Ashish, Puri Roma, Raghav Sarika, J. Rajasekar, Rana Neeti, Rohmetra Neelu, Saran Pankaj, Sharma Dinesh, Shrivastava Mrinalini, E.S. Srinivas, Thevanoor P. Pramod, Fr. V.M. Thomas, Yagum Taba (investigators from India).