A Study on Diversity & Inclusion at Workplace

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Introduction:

Diversity and inclusion are the central concepts in contemporary workplaces. Diversity refers to changes in demographic characteristics of the workforce and work organization like race, ethnicity, sex, education level, geographic background, language, value system and other attributes. The narrow usage of surface diversity meaning attributes of people that can easily be seen and thus often become the basis of stereotyping and misunderstanding. These dimensions are often important in social interaction and are familiar to most of us as potential bases for difficulties at work.

Most of these differences relate to ascribed status: like social position that is accorded to people because of who they are rather than what they have achieved. Most of these attributes are not under the control of a person and cannot be changed at will through energy, effort or talent some, such as sex, race, typically do not change throughout one's life.

The broader usage of diversity exist within the organization can cause problems in communication and interaction to which diversity can be applied. Some examples are an employee's functional area (Department/Specialization), organizational level, geographic origin or accent or personality and work style, any of these can be the basis of a serious stereotyping and prejudice. Thinking of these diversity issues improve our understanding of workplace dynamics and leads us to a broader range of research literature and techniques for addressing problems, for examples many studies exist on homogeneity vs heterogeneity in problem solving groups based sometimes on sex but often on other types of differences.

From the psychological perspective on diversity management, our concerns are the behavior and feeling of different people and how organization and managers can most effectively deal with these issues.

People from different backgrounds, worldviews, and cultures provide a variety of work methods, cognitive processes, and insightful viewpoints when you group them together. Consider managing workplace diversity as a vital instrument for igniting employee creativity, enhancing corporate efficiency, and developing relationships with consumers and clients rather than as a necessary part of the modern business world.

Objectives of the study:
- ➢ To help individuals and organizational members to deal with diversity in positive manner.
- ➢ To create impact on desired changes in employee's attitudes, behavior toward diversity.
- ➢ To discuss the legislative issues on diversity and inclusion

To help individuals and organizational members to deal with diversity in positive manner

It is not sufficient to follow a rigid set of rules and expect employees to abide by them in order to successfully manage diversity in the workplace. Instead, try to frame acceptance of diversity in the workplace as a decision that can benefit each employee and, in the end, provide fruitful and long-lasting outcomes.

The following, among others, are some best practices for handling diversity in the workplace:

1. **Set up shared objectives**: Common ties are formed as a result of the development of shared objectives. People who are committed to a same goal must go forward together and cooperate in order to accomplish it; else, they will never succeed. This emphasizes the benefits of teamwork and collaboration and enables.
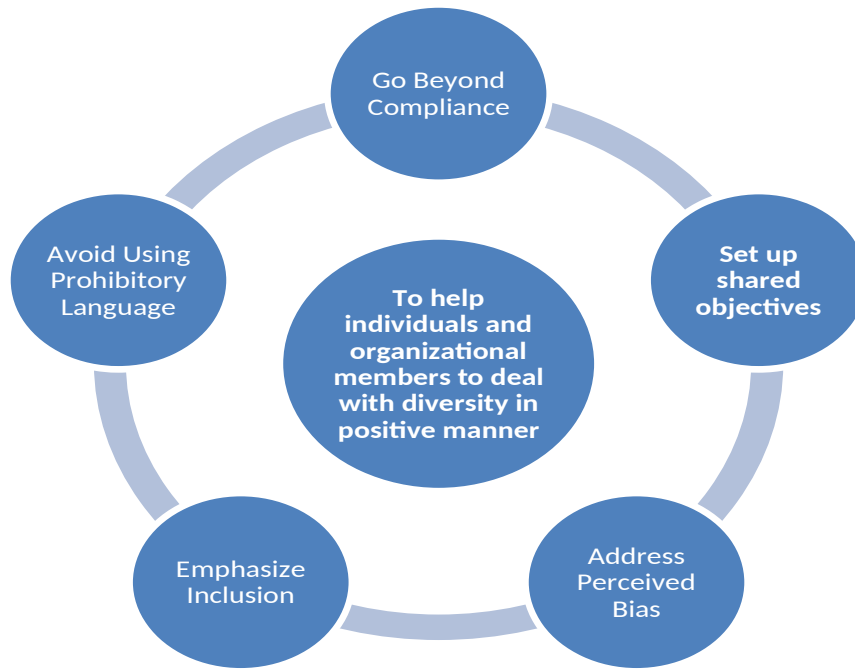
Figure 1: To help individuals and organizational members to deal with diversity in positive manner

2. Address Perceived Bias: Social prejudices regarding particular groups of people that have been created by people without their own conscious awareness are referred to as unconscious biases. Unconscious bias cannot be eradicated. Everyone has unconsciously held opinions about different social and identity groups, which is a pattern that results from our propensity to categorize social worlds.

Recognizing this natural human reaction and making an effort to address it when it gets in the way of productive collaboration and acceptance of diversity can help to reduce this "other-ness" reaction in the workplace and workers to appreciate the unique contributions made by their peers.

3. Emphasize Inclusion: This goes beyond inclusive hiring practices and taking workplace diversity into account. The goal of inclusion in the workplace is to actively seek out, welcome, and support various approaches to and methods of problem-solving. It entails fully appreciating each voice and opinion on a subject while acknowledging and taking them all into account.

4. Avoid Using Prohibitory Language: It is considerably more beneficial to encourage employees to embrace one another by embracing the idea of a varied workplace as opposed to imposing strict requirements on them. Don't use the same prohibitive and directing language in your diversity training as you would in regular employee training because people don't always respond favorably to strict rules, especially when they understand how their personal beliefs affect their professional life.

5. Go Beyond Compliance: Recognizing that workplace diversity is about more than just following affirmative action policies and meeting quotas is the first step in creating a truly inclusive corporation. Building a diverse workplace is more about creating a workforce that reflects the diversity of your clientele and utilizing individual characteristics to propel your company forward.

To create impact on desired changes in employee attitudes, behavior toward diversity:

Another crucial aspect of context in a company setting is the perceptions and attitudes of management. These are established within the first month, when the majority of managers naturally categorize their staff into those they can count on and the others, resulting in the development of psychological stereotypes of strong and weak performers that endure a lifetime.

	Strong performers	Weak performers
Manager's perception	Greater levels of drive, initiative, ingenuity, big-picture thinking, stronger leaders, optimism, agility, and open-mindedness	Less innovative, more defensive, parochial, prone to hoard information, disrespectful of authority, and unlikely to go above and beyond the call of duty.
Manager's behavior	Shares more, gives them more demanding assignments, shows more personal interest, is available, explains "what and why," is open to their ideas, acts as a sparring partner, and invests in them.	Explains "how," promotes own ideas, tracks progress and outcomes, is more directive and less deferential, is less patient, and pushes own ideas

Figure 2: How Manager Create desired change in employee behavior

When dealing with strong vs. weak performance, this psychological stereotyping results in distinct tactics and attitudes, which reinforces their conduct. Leaders who set greater standards for their direct reports see an improvement in effort and performance. This is referred to as the Pygmalion effect in psychology.

To discuss the legislative issues on diversity and inclusion

The diversity and inclusivity policies of corporations doing business in India will be impacted by four significant recent developments in Indian employment legislation. The first is the improvement of benefits for maternity leave. The second involves a series of modifications to the terms and circumstances of employment in several businesses in the State of Maharashtra, which is home to the financial centers of Mumbai and Pune, particularly those that pertain to women. The third change is a new requirement for some businesses to declare their efforts to combat sexual harassment at work. The fourth is the decriminalization of private, voluntary sexual activity between adults of the same sex by the Indian Supreme Court. These advances are d

Additional Maternity Benefits

For mothers with less than two living children, the central government changed the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961 in 2017 to extend the term of maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks. Women still have the right to 12 weeks of maternity leave if they have two or more living children. The legislation also grants 12-week leaves of absence to women who surrogate or adopt infants under the age of three months.

Daycare facilities must be made available to women returning to work after maternity leave by employers with 50 or more employees. The amendment empowers women employees to work from home if their line of employment permits it and they both agree to the terms and conditions described one by one.

The maximum length of maternity leave that can be counted toward the five years of continuous service requirement was increased from 12 to 26 weeks as part of an amendment to the Payment of Gratuity Act of 1972, along with a general increase in end-of-employment payment (referred to as a "gratuity" under the law) from INR 1,000,000 ($13,521) to INR 2,000,000 ($27,042) paid to employees with at least five years' continuous service.

Maharashtra Provides Additional Protections for Women Workers

The general working conditions in commercial establishments in the State of Maharashtra are mostly governed by the Maharashtra Shops and Establishments Act. This law was recently updated, and many of the modifications related to women's working circumstances, such as the following:

Prevention of sexual harassment at work: The modifications underline the requirement that employers take all necessary steps to strictly enforce the relevant central legislation, namely the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act of 2013. ("Prevention of Sexual Harassment law") This law provides a comprehensive definition of sexual harassment and establishes a procedure for resolving complaints of harassment. In particular, it mandates that any business with 10 or more employees set up a "Internal Committee" to handle complaints of workplace sexual harassment made by women.

Regulations for working conditions: Among other things, employers are expected to
- Keep a box for complaints.
- Display the local police and women's hotline phone numbers prominently.
- Provide adequate lighting and illumination inside the business, as well as in the area and other locations that women may visit for work-related reasons.
- Engage a suitable number of female security officers if the establishment employs at least 10 female employees.
- Women should have access to private, secure restrooms.

Daycare facilities: In establishments where 50 or more workers are employed, employers must provide daycare facilities for employees' children.

Protections for women working the night shift: Additionally, the changes outline specific working conditions for women who work nights. In particular, an employer may only require a woman to work the night shift (that is, from 9:30 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) if the woman gives her written consent, there are at least three other women working the shift at any given time, and the employer provides safe and secure transportation from the workplace to the woman's front door. Additionally, women are not permitted to work the night shift for 24 weeks prior to and following childbirth. However, if accompanied by a medical certification from a licensed doctor.

Committee on health, safety, and welfare: A Health, Safety and Welfare Committee must now be established by employers with 100 or more employees. If the firm employs women, at least a "sufficient number" of the committee members must be women. The committee's duties and responsibilities include a survey of the property to identify any danger zones or hazardous objects, repairing them, holding annual health and wellness camps to raise awareness of any infectious diseases or epidemics, holding annual recreational events, and planning social and educational awareness campaigns..

Reporting Requirements on Sexual Harassment Prevention Efforts

As of July 31, 2018, businesses must state in Board of Directors reports whether they have complied with the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law's mandate to establish a "Internal Committee" in every establishment with 10 or more employees, for the purpose of receiving and resolving sexual harassment complaints. This is due to changes made to the Companies Act of 2013.

Failure to comply with this reporting requirement may result in the company's officers being imprisoned or paying a minimum fine of INR 50,000 ($676).

It is also significant to note that the Indian government has created "She-Box," an online portal for reporting sexual harassment claims from female employees working in both the public and private sectors (Sexual Harassment Electronic Box). The government will examine these complaints, send them to the internal committees of the relevant employers for investigation, and keep track of how well the employers are resolving them.

Conclusion

Encouraging diversity is the way forward for organizations. In a global talent market, businesses that can successfully manage diversity in the workplace will have a definite competitive advantage over others in terms of differentiation, innovation, and employer branding. Particularly in terms of diversity and inclusivity, the landscape of Indian employment law is fast evolving. Navigating these changes presents substantial cultural issues as well as legal difficulties for American and other non-Indian businesses, necessitating the participation of knowledgeable counsel. In the companies, diversity and inclusion have received more attention and action from last few years.

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