

# A Study on Understanding Diversity at Work Place: Managing People and Organization

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**Abstract**—Diversity only applies to race and ethnicity, but in reality, it encompasses so much more. As business leaders, it is essential to understand what the word “diversity” actually means and how it affects our organizations.

*Diversity is nothing but the variety of experiences and perspectives which arise from differences in race, culture, religion, mental or physical abilities, heritage, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other characteristics. These differences come from our backgrounds and our unique worldviews. It is tempting to be taken aback by the breadth of diversity, but ignoring it can cause serious consequences throughout your organization.*

*Creating a corporate environment that appreciates diversity can have lasting benefits on your organization. Managing Diversity has so many dimensions that, a strategy that effectively deals with one situation may not be effective in a different context. At the core, managing diversity is acknowledging people’s differences and recognizing the value in these differences is essential. By appreciating the unique qualities that each employee brings to the table, you can prevent discrimination and promote inclusiveness.*

*Dealing effectively with diversity is not just to manage, but to thrive on the rich variety of differences. It is an issue for all areas of the organization. It is required a real change in attitudes, practices, structure and policies from the executive suite down. Here the leaders are responsible for driving the diversity initiative. Leaders must spread out the responsibilities in this regard, or the potential of diversity may die early.*

**Keywords:** Diversity, Workplace, Leader, Management, Human Resource Management.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to recent developments in technology the style of management functioning has undergone a drastic change. This change is reflected in the working style, thinking patterns and attitude of leaders. Across industries, norms not prevalent before are seen in common practice for better organizational performance. For every successfully and continuously better performing organization, incessantly evolving their present strategies on a broader and deeper perspective is a must for survival. Organizations, who fail to recognize, adopt and change to everyday changing percepts, face their extinction

soon. These changes promote varied think tanks to work distinctively yet cohesively to achieve their goals. Trends like increase in minority, women, expatriates and mixed generation of workforce working together, is on the rise. This is the existing diversity at workplace. Diversity is the differences and similarities in terms of personality, age, gender, work experience, ethnic/cultural background that coexists. This imposes various challenges and opportunities that need to be exploited so that talent utilization is achieved to the maximum. Versatility needs recognition, Valued, Connected so that programs implemented through the changes in work processes, structural organizational reforms and policies are uniform and integrated across organization. The key to successful implementation of the diversity program involves inclusion at various levels and forms. This creates acceptance and gradually becomes a culture.

Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization. That sounds simple, but diversity encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education, background and more.

### 1.1. BENEFITS OF UNDERSTANDING WORK FORCE DIVERSITY

An organization’s success and its competitiveness depend upon its ability to embrace diversity and realize the benefits. When organizations actively assess their handling of workplace diversity issues, develop and implement diversity plans such points are:-

- Increased adaptability

Organizations employing a diverse workforce can supply a greater variety of solutions to problems in service, sourcing, and allocation of resources. Employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands.

- Broader service range

A diverse collection of skills and experiences (e.g. languages, cultural understanding) allows a company to provide service to customers on a global basis.

- More effective execution

Companies that encourage diversity in the workplace inspire all of their employees to perform to their highest ability. Company-wide strategies can then be executed; resulting in higher productivity, profit, and return on investment.

### 1.2 DIVERSITY: A COMPATITIVE ADVANTAGE

- Creating the largest possible talent pool for recruitment

In this competition it is important for organization to hire energetic people, smart people which are talented. At the very least, it may find that a high proportion of the talented candidates who are women and people of color will choose other organization.

- Becoming an employer choice

The word spreads like wild fire about which companies are the best way women for people with disabilities, for gays, etc. the grapevine also spreads information about which companies are known to be tough places for women, for blacks, for parents etc.

- Better morale

Employees who work in an organization that is homogeneous in nature say all white or all men or women frequently tell us that as work place becomes more diverse the ambience becomes livelier.

- Heightened creativity

Creativity of the people working in an organization tells about people's background and how they are different from each other along many dimensions. They are therefore typically extremely successful in coming up with solution to long standing problems.

- Improved decision making

The decision to go ahead with the invasion of the Bay of Pigs in Cuba was made by group composed entirely of white men. Social psychologist Irving Janis, who coined the term group think, believes that decisions are improved when the decision makers come from a variety of different perspective.

### 1.3 THE CHALLENGE OF MANAGING DIVERSITY IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Successful management of today's increasingly diverse workforce is among the most important global challenge faced by corporate leaders, human resource managers, and management consultants. Workforce diversity is not a transient phenomenon. It is today's reality, and it is here to stay homogeneous societies have become heterogeneous and this trend is irreversible.

The global economy moves diversity to the top of the agenda immigration. Worker migration and gender and ethnic differences continue to dramatically change the composition and for other groups like older workers with disabilities and gays and lesbians. Even without globalization, population

projections suggest that the trend to a diverse workforce will be amplified in the coming decades.

Most large corporations in today's global economy are international or multinational, and even those that are not rely on vendors to sell customers located outside their national boundaries.

### 1.4 DIVERSITY AND EXCLUSION: A CRITICAL WORKFORCE PROBLEM

One of the most significant problems facing today's diverse workforce is exclusive-both its overt practice, as a matter of formal or informal policy, and the perception by employees that they are not regarded as an integral part of organization. Though diversity groupings vary from culture or country to the next, the common factor that seems to be transcend national boundaries is the experience of social exclusion, particularly in the workplace individuals and groups are implicitly or explicitly excluded from job opportunities, information networks, team membership etc.

Inclusion in organizational information networks and in decision-making process has been linked to better job opportunities and career advancement in work organization, job satisfaction, job performance and organizational commitment. Employee's experience of exclusion therefore may play a critical role in explaining the connection between the lack of opportunities for members' diverse groups and their discontent with their roles as employees in organizations.

## 2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This paper broadly frames out and covering almost all issues of workplace diversity, the main objective of this research paper is to understand the diversity issues prevailing at workplace. This paper showcase to deal with different diversity issues while at workplace and overcome it. This paper also emphasis on the issue to deal with sensitive and crucial matters dealing with workforce diversity for good organizational outcomes.

## 3. DIVERSITY AT WORKPLACE FOR MANAGEING PEOPLE AND PROGRESS OF ORGANIZAION

A diverse workforce is a reflection of changing world and marketplace. Management tools should be used to educate everyone. Diversity benefits by creating a competitive edge and increasing work productivity. Organizations need to learn how to manage diversity to be successful said by Green (2002) et.al. Martin (2014) also contributed that, there are both positive and negative impacts diversity at workplace. With proper strategic planning, top management can enhance the positive effects and minimize the negative effects of diversity at the workplace. Nairand Vohra (2015) say diversity at workplace is leveraged by inclusion. To maintain the diversity and the productivity of the organizations the managing

authority should take appropriate steps. The employees need to feel included in the organization, beyond limited service.

Bank of New Zealand (2014) said that, women are participating in high numbers in the workforce. The key benefits of diverse cultures are getting the most from our people, recruitment and retention of top talent, increased creativity and innovation, access to a changing marketplace and improved business resilience and flexibility. Gender equity delivers significant gains to any of the organizations. Nathwani (2010) said MNCs in India have shown an upward trend towards leveraging the benefits of diversity and inclusion. Gender diversity is the key focus of many diversity and inclusion activities. Diversity related to socio-economic status and disabilities are also being addressed. Senior leadership commitment and drive is vital if organizations are to fully leverage the benefits of their investment in diversity and inclusion.

### 3.1 WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND REVENUE

Catalyst Information Center (2012) said, diversity helps companies increase revenue by attracting new customers, identifying new markets, improving success in cross-cultural negotiations, stimulating innovation etc. By expanding the pool of eligible candidates, Indian companies gain access to the top talent. Catalyst also that, Promoting diversity helps companies increase revenue by attracting new customers, identifying new markets, improving success in cross-cultural negotiations, stimulating innovation, and boosting growth potential through non-traditional hires.

Harold Andrew Patrick and Vincent Raj Kumar also said that, If an organization is able to manage diversity in a positive manner then it can lead to more committed, better satisfied better performing and potentially better financial performance for an organization. Whereas, Susan E. Jackson et al contributed that, having diverse workforce in terms of sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, area of expertise, organizational affiliation, and many other personal characteristics are increasingly common. It may lead to a variety of different consequences for decision-making teams. Byeong Yong Kim also says something in context to that, hospitality firms have become increasingly characterized by diversity with respect to their workforce. It is contended that hospitality firms that want fresh ideas, strong growth, a positive firm image, and an enhanced ability to hire qualified workers should be proactive with regard to workforce diversity.

### 3.2 WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND PERFORMANCE

Diversity issues at a workplace effects the sale performance and the pay of the employees. Ethnicity based earnings with proportionately more people of color, gender and inequalities and partial mediation by performance was found this said by Liao & Jackson (2006). Prasad P. and Mills (1996) also said that, workplace diversity is understood well, depending on culturally relative, historically changeable, social interactions

that are developed within contexts of political Interaction and struggle.

### 3.3 WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND OUTCOMES

Ahu Tatli and Mustafa (2012) state that, study of diversity at work through a bourdieuan framing. It states diversity at work in the business and management field, identifying this issue is the epic perspective proposed identifies emergent and situated categories of diversity as embedded in specific time and place. Whereas, Ely and Thomas (2007) explains the relation between cultural diversity and work group outcomes and identified three different perspectives on workforce diversity, the integration and learning perspective, the access and legitimacy perspective and the discrimination and fairness perspective. Harrison Price and Bell (1998) also said that, the composition of workforce today and its projected future composition, understanding and predicting employee reactions to all levels of diversity is critical.

### 4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Coca-Cola – A leadership in Diversity. It is a world renowned company. Diversity is at the heart of their business. An inclusive and fair workplace is build which provides their workers equal access to information. Feedback is garnered, formal and informal surveys are conducted.
- Kaiser Permanente – Company follows diverse culture. It is a leadership in diversity. Reducing health disparities and using advance workforce diversity agenda the company aims at growing the supplier diversity program. The company achieves market growth and serves a vast multilingual population.
- Sodexo – Company is a leadership in diversity and follows a systemic culture. Employee engagement is increased there by leading to included diversity into the fabric of the organization and expanding business development.
- Dell – Dell is a world renowned company. The company aims at increasing diversity at the work place leading to professional and talent development of an individual. The group includes women, LGBT employees, employees with disabilities, veterans, remote worker and younger employees. A diverse pipeline is being build by Dell for its future.
- Johnson & Johnson – Company hires executive sponsor for employee resource groups aimed at the demographics and holds senior executives accountable for diversity and inclusion results. Cross clitoral mentoring initiatives, web enabled service called Mentoring Works allows the company to maintain a diverse work force.
- Deloitte – Over talent strategy and approach to inclusion helps the company to maintain diversity. Also, fostering a

holistic environment helps the group to maintain diversity at workplace. The company has achieved many inclusion milestones.

- Merck & Company – Merck has made tremendous strides in its employee resource groups. He has also been at the forefront of companies that are making an effort to reach out to veterans. A number of veterans (in hundreds) are employed in the company in areas such as research and development, information technology, finance and manufacturing.
- Kellogg Company – Company has strong employee resource groups. Strategic planning, its influence and cross-cultural mentoring program help it to retain diversity.
- Coca-Cola and Kaiser Permeate are the leaders in diversity. Sodexo and Kaiser permeate aim at achieving market growth and expanding business development. Jhonson Jhonson and Kellogg Company indulge in cross cultural mentoring initiatives. Deloitte and Dell are aimed at talent development of an individual.

## 5. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Limitations help us to understand the proper perspective of the study. This helps in generalizing the study in an appropriate manner, considering the reliability of the study. As every study has certain limitations, this research work was also not free from limitations which are as follows –

- The scope of study was limited to diversity at workplace only. The diversity issues besides in workplace were out of scope of study.
- The present research study was limited to employee engagement level only. Other dimensions apart from diversity issues in a workplace were out of the scope of study.
- The sample selection might not be accurately correct because the survey done included a list of companies and not all companies.
- Limited sample size was also a limitation of the study.
- As no primary data collected through the sample survey is free from bias and inaccuracy in one respect or the other, the data collected and used in the study might not be free from certain errors due to limited knowledge of respondents.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

An organization's success depends upon its ability to embrace diversity and realize its benefits. Employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands. A diverse collection of skills and experiences allows a company to provide service to customers on a global basis.

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