

# Equity & Inclusion in Organizational Set-up Brings Unity in Diversity

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## ABSTRACT

Today's organizations are the happy blending of diversity and unity. The workforce consists of employees of different age, gender, colour, race, religion and region. It is a very challenging task for the managers or leaders to maintain harmony across different generations such as: Baby Boomers, Gen-X, Gen-Y and Gen-Z along with cultural diversity and difference in adaptability. At the same time the knowledge, skill and ability differ from employee to employee. Similarly, the culture and religion builds the personality of personnel working in the premises and their belief, thought, ideology and perception are varied which sometimes create conflict across employees. It hampers organization's peace and invites discrepancies. Therefore, the managers or leaders focus on the principles of equity and inclusion. Equity ensures each and every employee the right of equal opportunity to perform and present his or her talent without any discrimination. It believes in providing equal chance to personnel who are from different race, gender, religion and disability. Inclusion refers to include and respect each and every employee in organizational setup irrespective of their socio-economic status, cultural background, education & ability. Organizations are now very focused to capitalise the competency of diversified workforce by applying the basic principle of equity and inclusion.

**Keywords:** Workforce Diversity, Principle of Equity & Inclusion & Reverse-Mentoring

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## INTRODUCTION

In the competitive environment, the organizations are operating to enhance profit and increase market share by applying different strategies with competent and diversified workforce. In the globalised world, many MNCs are operating without any barrier. But so many times they face issues like cultural incompatibility, goal incongruence, disharmony among employees, high labour turnover, discriminations, disintegration and dissatisfaction among personnel which create hindrance in growth and development of companies (Saxena, 2014). All these issues are being invited because of lack of inclusion. So in any type of organization a leader or a manager must know how to manage both diversity and inclusion perfectly. It can be possible only when the strategist considers both as strength and accordingly motivate personnel to capitalize opportunities (Brustein, 2017).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Management Gurus, Leaders and Employees have recognized the importance of diversified workforce with principle of inclusion. Literature is reviewed on diversity and inclusive work environment. The purpose of literature review is three fold:

- To make researchers understand the term diversity and inclusion.
- Benefits and importance of diversified workforce.
- Values related to principle of inclusion.

Riley, A. (5<sup>th</sup> May, 2021) has focused on the racial diversifications like: in-group and out-group relationships, and diversification on the basis of colour like: black complex and white complex. The author has also stated that many conflicts occur due to misunderstanding and difference in attitude. The dominant group sometimes start exploitation which hampers the peace and unity. Both diversity and inclusion are fundamental to the culture. To nurture any organization is very important to manage diversity and inclusion simultaneously. Inclusiveness through multiculturalism or diversified cultures provides competitive advantage to the organizations. Creative thoughts and innovative ideas can be empowered from persons of different age, culture, gender and religion (<https://www.thesca.org/justice-equity-diversity-and-inclusion/>). Pedulla, D. (12<sup>th</sup> May, 2020) has focused on both racial discrimination and social inequality are big challenges while dealing organizations. Similarly, technological

discrimination and political changes create another hurdle for organizations dealing with diversified workforce. In solution the author has focused on organizational culture of equity and inclusion. Calica, A. (5<sup>th</sup> May, 2021) has put significance of both diversity and inclusion in technical era along with the specific meaning of both. The author has also focused on hiring process, promotion, leadership position and overall management decisions taken by the organizations by considering different aspects of diversity and inclusion. Bush, M. (30<sup>th</sup> April, 2021), focuses on the principles of inclusion and diversity are more than organizational programs, policies and procedures. It is very important to give respect to the unique needs of diversified team members as it will enhance organizational truth and commitment. As a result the organization's profit, growth, innovativeness and goodwill will be increased and the employee turnover will be reduced. Satpathy, I. et.al. (2019) has focused on age diversified workforce and its importance in different service organizations. The authors have a positive look towards different ages and their knowledge sharing concept. Tynes, B. (3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2022) has agreed that the healthier and happier employees are found in the diversified organizations which focus on the principle of inclusion. The organizations earn heavy revenue with their diversified integration. The principle of inclusion provides more innovative ideas than a normal organization. Olzmann, J.A. (1<sup>st</sup> December, 2020) gives stress on the principles of equity and inclusion which rules over all the inequalities or diversities regarding institutional, workplace, political, technical and engineering. The equitable culture provides inclusiveness and erases cultural barriers and provides equal opportunities for all. Palai, D. (2019), has studied on Multi-generational workforce and its competitive advantage. The author has suggested that the workforce of different ages can easily capitalise their diversified talent and use in multipurpose activities.

### **Scope Of The Study**

The scope of study includes:

- Components of diversity and inclusion.
- How both are inter-related.
- Effective management of diversity in workforce and inclusion principle in workplace.

### **Objective Of The Study**

- To be familiar with diversity related terms and inclusion principles and value of the both.
- To know the Diversity and Inclusion goals and its connection to the overall business objectives.
- To understand challenges and issues related to diversity and inclusion.
- To study the management of diversified workforce

### **Sources Of The Data**

The data are collected from the literature available for the companies on internet. These are obtained from secondary sources which consist of articles and journals related to diversity and inclusion in workplace.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **A. Inclusion Is Extracting The Cream From Diversity, An Inter-Mixture**

In the corporate culture both diversity and inclusion play very dominant role as diversity is an inter-mixture concept and inclusion is extracting cream from diversity. Diversity is a very broad concept which consists of people of different age, gender, culture, religion, region, education, ability etc. Inclusion is also very symbolic concept which focuses on giving respect and observing the principle of equity in all type of differentiations. There is not any type of discrimination on the basis of majority and minority concept. Diversity is more than just tolerating the differences. As everyone is unique, it focuses on the representation of fairness and protection to all regardless of culture, gender, race and ethnicity. Inclusion is complementary of diversity which integrates all personnel working in the organizations (Satpathy, I, 2019). In all the three organizational hierarchies both the concepts are utilised. All most all the strategists give emphasis on the principles of inclusion and diversity. On the basis of the global completion the practices of both the principles are different. For example in Asia and European countries the policies related to diversities and inclusion are more liberal than the North America which is much centralised. Similarly, many MNCs promote hiring of women and avoid gender discrimination. Women occupy a fifty percent of world-workforce and the organizations are benefited with their talent on the basis of inclusion principle. At the same time, the integrated workforce consists of personnel of diversified in age and also unique in physis. They give importance to all the religions and ethnic groups (Palai, D. 2019).

### **B. Leveraging The Diversified Workforce & Inclusion To Gain Competitive-Advantage**

It is always important for organizations to maintain a balance or leverage in between diversified workforce and principle of inclusion. Each and every organization dealing with diversified workforce should be visionary with goal congruency. As a result, the overall goal of the organization can be achieved with the practices of unity in diversity. The inclusive workforce which maintains a balance in all the differentiations on the basis of age, gender, culture, race, religion, ability and others can easily gain a competitive advantage. Because it attracts and retains employees of different backgrounds and utilities their competency. It enhances morale of employees and they perform at their best level. They feel committed towards the organization and the common culture of the

organization motivates them (Robin & David, 2020). The inclusive culture provides respect and equity for its members. They all are treated as equal rather than discriminated. Once the hiring practices run in a principle of inclusion there will be a better scope for career development, performance management, work-life-balance and stability of economically and socially. To lead a diversified workforce the leader has to follow the principle of honesty and integrity for diversified employees (Liu, 2023).

### C. Issues & Challenges Relating To Diversification & Inclusion Faced By Organizations

There are a number of issues and challenges faced by organizations while dealing with diversified workforce. These are discriminations on the basis of age, gender, culture, religion, race and ethnicity and abilities (Hussain, 2021). These basic points can be explained in the following manner. Today's organizations are dealing with **Age Diversified Workforce** which consists of Traditionalists, Baby boomers, Gen-X, Gen-Y and Gen-z. Every generation has its own ideology, attitude, thought, belief and ability. The traditionalists are not aware of technology, Baby-Boomers and Gen-X are technology users and the tech-savvy generation is Gen-Y and Gen-Z. Therefore, conflicts occur in between traditional thought and modern thought employees. There is always a clash on the basis of use of technology, attitude and way of life. Another big issue is **Gender Discrimination** in the diversified organisations.

In men dominating country like India even today women are struggling to get a better position in organisational hierarchy. They are facing the problem of glass-ceiling effect. In promotion, increment and other career development decisions they are in the back step. The **Cultural Discrimination** is another treat while dealing with employees of different culture. Companies hold employees from different cultures. Cultural discrimination exists when companies hire employees from various backgrounds, experience, language, personality, attitude and behaviour which create misunderstanding and disagreement among personnel. So organizations should focus on training related to cultural diversity, so that employees can understand, learn and give respect to each other's culture. **Diversified Religion** is a huddle while dealing with diversified organizations. The organization consists of employees from different religions like: Hindu, Muslim, Christian etc. They have their own beliefs and rituals. On the basis of religion the life style is different. Sometimes conflict occurs due to religious discrimination which demand quick attention. **Race & Ethnicity** create huddles in the way of leading a diversified workforce. In the workplace the racial and ethnic minorities have different approaches to communication. They have their strong customs and perspectives and they strictly follow their reference group. One example is given that Abercrombie and Fitch show extreme racial practices of recruiting white employees than black which has created different law suits. **Ability** of each employee is different on the basis of his or her uniqueness. Many times companies make discrimination among ability and different ability. Differently abled persons sometimes are being humiliated. Therefore, organizations should be empathetic or sensitive for physically challenging persons.

### D. Managing diversified workforce along with the principles of inclusion

Diversity refers to the quality of being diverse; difference. Similarly Inclusion refers to a state of being included. Both can be managed effectively to develop greater workplace productivity and enhance human relations. It is very important for every organization to manage diversified staffs positively to get the best result. Identifying and respecting unique values of each diversified workforce play very significant role in managing and leading the personnel (Pedulla, 2020). The basic guidelines which have been practiced by diversified organizations can be described in following manner.

**Focusing on Acquiring & Retaining Diversified Talent.** It is a challenging task for the diversified organization to hire and retain diversified talent ethically. The HR managers should take initiatives proactively without any biasness. They should practice the fair recruitment policies and selection procedures. They should be rational by thinking that any type of discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race, religion and ability may create harm towards the principle of inclusion. The innovativeness and creative ideas come from people of different talent and skill. The study has conducted in Harvard Business School by Boris Groysberg and Katherine Connolly on twenty four companies in 2013 that has focused on priority of diversified workforce along with inclusive work environment. The key finding by Paul Block, the CEO of Mersant is people with different life styles and different backgrounds challenge each other more as diversity creates disagreement and heterogeneity brings cultural differences. But both consists of diversified talent which helps to achieve overall organizational goal. There are varied solutions of a single problem which is easy to take decision in organizations. The Civil Rights Act, 1964 in USA has made it illegal of the practice of discriminating recruitment. The organizations should go against the practices of discrimination on the basis of age, gender, colours, religion, region and differently abled.

**Emphasising on Mentoring & Coaching and Training.** To integrate and retain a diversified workforce mentoring plays very vital role. It helps new employees as the senior employees share their experience and information. Such program helps the new entrants to be socialized with the culture of the organization, its values and expectations. At the same time, it creates strong inter-relationship and bondage in the members of the diversified organizations (Liu, 2023). The sensitive issues can be solved with the inclusiveness coaching platform. It creates awareness towards

inter-relation and inter-dependency of personnel of the organization. The coaching develops sensitivity and empathy for each religion and culture. As a result, employees feel the part of the entire organization and their morale will enhance. The inclusive training session provides certain basic guidelines by following which employees effectively deal in a diversified environment. It fosters a common culture of inclusiveness. To make the training session successful top management's commitment and a common fair culture both are important. By promoting a non-discriminatory workplace with the help of proper training facilities organizations enhance employee morale and efficiency.

### **Managing Workforce Culture**

It is a great challenge for every organization to deal with cross-cultural workforce. Because employees belong to different countries behave differently on the basis of their culture. Various factors which make every culture as unique and different from others are concept of time, physical contact and personal space, styles and pattern of communication, self-identity or self-orientation, dealing with conflict, cultural values and beliefs (Westover, 2020). All these differences can be converted into strength and opportunities in an inclusive work environment where there is the place for harmony, belongingness, loyalty and dedication among employees. The culture of a diversified workforce should foster on learning from mistakes rather than embarrassment. Employees from diversified cultures can be treated as one in the organization's cultural platform. They all should get equal chances in problem solving, decision making and planning path. Due to the diversification in age, gender, race or religion employees should not feel separated from the organization, its goals and achievements. The multi-cultural platform provides equal opportunities for minority, focuses on flexible work schedule and work-life-balance, major cultural holidays and international celebrations. Hence, open communication is important which helps to learn as much as possible and educate the workforce for inclusive work culture and diversified workforce. A fair culture treats employees in a way they wish to be treated and commit continuous improvements to learn, accept and use positive feedback. It drives positive changes in the organization so that both personal and professional development of employees can foster (Calica, 2021).

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The HR leaders who maintain a congruency between diversity and inclusion can easily capitalise profit, gain multiple talent pool and competitive advantage. The real understanding of extracting cream from diversified workforce can be possible while giving value to each diversification and focusing on autonomy of exposure. The success of both the organization and employees can be achieved with the help of diversified creativity and innovativeness.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the global economy workforce diversity and inclusion in workplace provides competitive advantage to the organizations who create leverage in both. Employees may be varied by their age, gender, race, culture and ability all are treated as assets as each and every person is unique with distinct talent. The organizations dealing with diversified workforce should value the diversity and be empathetic towards their feelings and nature.

### **SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

India is a nation with great diversity but believes in "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam". There is need for understanding for the Indian organizations about how to manage the diversity and including them in the main process of organisation to leverage its benefit. There is need to do empirical research specifically in Indian context to understand and teach the benefit of diversity and their inclusion at the workplace.

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