

## DIVERSITY: EXPANDING HORIZONS OF THE WORKPLACE

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### Abstract

In the 21st century, people aren't working in an isolated marketplace, but as a part of the entire global economy. The era is of Globalization, of coming together of resources from the corners of the world and working together to produce the best possible results. A workplace which has employees from all walks of life, be it varying backgrounds and ethnicities or different sexual orientations and nationalities is called a Diverse Workplace. The present study is an attempt to bring to light the various nuances which come along with this Diversity and are needed to be considered by managers in stepping up their game to match with the demands of this rapidly changing corporate landscape.

**Keywords:** Marketplace, Economy, Globalization, Diversity

### Introduction:

Steven Covey once said, "The strength lies in variation and not in similarities." And this holds for the Modern Workplace as well.

When the world was still reverberating with the echoes of movements such as BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo, a vital concept re-instated its pertinence within the edifices of corporates across the globe. This was the social paradigm revolving around Diversity in the Workplace, shedding light upon its many contributions to the modern workplace and the possible catch it

might present in its management.

The term Workplace Diversity instantly draws an image deep in our minds, the dimensions of which can be assimilated together into the conclusive idea of incorporation of diversity within the employees of the organization. A workplace that is composed of employees from varying backgrounds, ethnicities, gender, sexual orientations, nationalities, age and so many other differences which make humans heterogeneous as they are, is called a Diverse Workplace. At the same time, it is imperative to

note that it is a workplace rich in diversity, not discrimination -

where differences are valued and celebrated, not biased or prejudiced against.

According to Bedi, P., Lakra, P., & Gupta, E., [2014], Diversity in the workplace has the potential to be both, the biggest challenge of the 21st Century and also, the biggest opportunity. It is entirely a holistic concept which defines the differences that exist in the modern workforce. Tamunomiebi & John-Eke [2020], has described the various cases that revolve around the concept of workforce diversity- The social justice case and the business case, wherein the social justice case brings to light the moral justification for imbibing diversity and the business case reinstates the many benefits that a diverse workforce can bring to the organization. The importance of the said concept can never be undermined in today's business, in which people aren't working in an isolated marketplace, but as a part of the entire global economy. The era is of Globalization, of coming together of resources from the corners of the world and working together to produce the best possible results. And thus, with this globalization, comes varied life views, perspectives, ideas, and notions in the abstract dimension. In the physical dimension, it can mean differences in appearance, cultural practices, and even organizational positions. Diversity has also been compartmentalized by many into personality, internal, external, and organizational characteristics of workplace diversity. By this division, personality includes the many traits, skills, and talents of an individual. Internal characteristics include aspects such as gender, age, or sexual orientation. External characteristics revolve around nationality,

culture, or religion, while organizational characteristics are basically about the placement or position within the organization [Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020]. Size of organizations, culture, and geography where they are situated plays a tremendous role in the diversity enhancement of the organization.

As stated by Meister & Willyerd [2010], the employer(s) themselves play an important role in the internal dynamics of the organizations. An employer should know the significance of diversity while recruiting, developing, motivating, and promoting employees. And for him to accomplish something so apportioned amongst the whole business he must prepare himself first.

As diversity management continues to be a rising issue and a major challenge for the organization, managers are required to improve management skills in accordance with a multicultural environment. Supervisors, administrators, and other people need to be trained to act and recognize ethnic variations between employees and customers. A clear understanding of the concept without pre-notional prejudice can uplift the position of the organization as well as the people depending upon it, starting with its employees.

One more highly regarded benefit from the viewpoint of Workplace diversity is Innovation. As more minds drive the vehicle of assimilation of ideas, the more they are likely to innovate. Along with Innovation, it shows the personalization of the idea and gives it a global feel by increasing its sustainability and giving it a tailor-made path. It is more likely to be acceptable with the great variants of the population in the global community.

For companies and organizations around the

world, workplace diversity has served to provide access to varied perspectives and thus varied solutions to a given problem. The role it has played in boosting the company's image and goodwill in the larger market for representation of different communities, the creativity and resultant productivity that has been added in the organization's ways is evidencing of its many benefits for any business.

With the given benefits, it does come along with various challenges in implementation such as the cost, recovery of which cannot be certainly measured and would show itself in form of long term advantages. Also, managers might be a bit reluctant and wary of contributing their efforts towards the implementation of diversity, and instead, prefer devoting their time to activities with results that can be measured in monetary terms. In such cases, managers must be shown the many advantages that diversity can bring to their organization to provide an incentive. Another aspect to take into consideration could be that with so many varied opinions and resultantly more ideas, it might lead to a delay in the decision-making process. Yet another face shows that it might make employees more prone to suspicion and stereotyping against their fellows due to their differences. But for this, a good diversity training program could come in handy, wherein employees learn to value the differences, about both personal and organizational growth.

While all these problems are discussed, a very important and volatile hitch in this spectrum comes up - Varying ethical values. The compass of ethical behavior relies on the direct reflection of the people working in the workplace, whether it is an employee or a director. Ethical behavior consists of doing the right thing

regardless of whether a person is being assessed or not. But the problem arises when there is a difference of opinions amongst the employees on what is right and what is not, whether it is a vice or a virtue.

To be able to get a more inclusive idea, let us take an example of an employee who hails from a Colonist country and another who has his roots in the historical colony of the former. Since history cannot be separated from current politics, with both being a very common topic in day-to-day discussions in the workspace, it might bring up views that vary quite a lot ethically and ethnically. Similar would be the case of a German employee who adheres to a more stringent work code and on the other hand an American employee who maintains higher standards of work-life balance. Therefore, if the values vary too much, the decision-making process of the organization may result in a severe difference of opinion and may take the decision in a direction that might be completely off the tangent and be outrageously different from the social norms, notions of right and wrong of the native country. The right thing to do in this case would be to follow the social norms of the resident environment that determines whether the thing is socially accepted or not. It might be beneficial to put it under speculation again and the decision that is better accepted shall prevail. Taking an eagle's eye view of the situation might prove to be the key here. Heightened awareness of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds and their accepted practices would serve to develop a sense of understanding among the peers in the workplace. This could be incorporated as a topic in the Training programs, wherein employees are encouraged to put forward their

hesitations and misgivings in an open environment and communication helps in bridging the borders of doubt.

Yet there might be cases when it is inevitable to think of a solution that encompasses both sides of the coin. One of those consequences can be high turnover or mass strikes which might lead to fatal results for the business. Some sensitive issues might even lead to rallying the general population throughout the world. However, in such cases, it is imperative that the company maintains its demeanor and tries to think of solutions that reinstate the fabric of its workspace and image.

Inclusion, as said, is the link of connection between individuals of different worlds. It increases exposure to talent, better decision-making skills, more awareness and attention to problems at hand. It leads to the formation of a business-driven strategy and learning globally from the people well versed in the art of business and diversity.

Here, we can add yet another element to the larger picture - the element called Intersectionality, coined by Kimberle Crenshaw. Intersectionality explores the very real dimension in which individuals belong to more than one social community [McCluney, 2020]. For example, what being a woman from a low income or marginalized background could mean in the workplace. It delves deeper into the effects of belonging to a multitude of disadvantaged groups and how it affects the dynamics of the organization. The problems faced by individuals increase manifold because of the presence of intersectionalities. So, a woman from a marginalized community, would just not have to deal with glass ceilings in an organization, but also struggle with the stigma

imposed by the many prejudices around her.

At the same time, Intersectionality also provides a way to view the problems accompanying differences in a different lens and provide for more conclusive methods to help in mitigation of the inequalities within and beyond the office space. Firstly, the leaders of an organization and the managers can get a better idea of how various diversity policies affect people belonging to multiple social groups. A better evaluation would lead to better policies that tend to consider more aspects, bringing to light the second point. Instead of drafting single element focused policies, managers must broaden their horizons to take into account the holistic identities of the employees. So, businesses should try to address multiple forms of inequality at the same time, instead of separately. And lastly, Leaders must recognize their roles in diversity beyond the four walls of the office and just diversity training programs. According to Areiqat, A. Y., Hamdan, Y., Zamil, A. M., & Aldabbagh, I., (2020), organizations that succeed in leading the concept of Diversity could produce a robust company identity through employees, clients, vendors, investors, and broader neutral teams. An example of this can be seen in the roles that business organizations played in the #MeToo and BlackLivesMatter movement in the west. Promoting Diversity and Inclusion on the task will lead to continuous improvement. And for this, Sympathetic leadership is essential to the current transition. For a real amendment to happen, every leader should learn the importance of membership and DIVERSITY. Thus, an organization needs to keep in mind all these factors while imbibing diversity in its structure. A future aspect that remains to be

seen is the synergy that would need to be achieved by the company in terms of managing the sweep of employees hailing from different generations like Gen-Z, millennials, and Gen-X, and their expectations together. Moreover, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the working landscape has changed irreversibly and how this change would affect workplace diversity is ambiguous. Maximizing and utilizing organizational diversity has today become an important management issue [Areqat, A. Y., Hamdan, Y., Zamil, A. M., & Aldabbagh, I., 2020].

The utility of this article for the modern workspace is defining the new domains of a corporate environment that have transpired in the last two decades and are significant for the upcoming and prospective managers to understand.

#### **Objectives of the paper**

To define the new domains of a corporate environment that have transpired in the last two decades and are significant for the upcoming and prospective managers to understand.

#### **Methodology**

The type of research done here is purely analytical via taking knowledge from various textbooks and research papers and forming opinions and conclusions on such facts.

#### **Results**

This is the world where the influences of sophisticated technology and social media run amok the cognizance of the new generation and hence even a minimal error in building rapport with different communities on part of the company can end up in disastrous consequences for the image of the company. And this can be solved only through the medium of the variety

of the phrase, “Unity in Diversity”. When each day dawns with a new change in this dynamic environment, promotion of Inclusion and sympathetic leadership have come up as the indisputable need of the moment. Therefore, the need for premium workplace diversity is not just a want but a need for the present and future world.

#### **Conclusion**

To conclude this research paper, Diversity in Workforce is the proponent that accelerates the growth of a company and takes it to a better place.

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