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Managing Diversity at the Workplace in India

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Abstract

Diversity is very sensitive topic. All human organizations have differences. People are different not only in gender, culture, race, brings to an organization, social and psychological characteristics, but also in their perspectives and prejudices. Managing diversity is an ongoing process that unleashes the various talents and capabilities which a diverse population, community or society, so as to create a wholesome, inclusive environment, that is "safe for differences", enables people to "reject rejection", celebrates diversity, and maximizes the full potential of all, in a cultural context where everyone benefits. Some studies suggest that it means approaching diversity at three levels simultaneously: individual, interpersonal and organizational. The traditional focus has been on interpersonal and individual aspects alone.

1. Introduction

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual

2. Objectives

- To explain the concept of diversity.
- To study the impact of diversity
- To study about managing diversity at workplace.

3. Research Methodology

The study is purely based on secondary data related to diversity in the workplace and diversity management articles in journals, internetetc .review of pros and cons of diversity and managing diversity at workplace was done through the articles published in journals.

3.1 Diversity: Dimensions

The highly descriptive model of the "4 Layers of Diversity", based on Gardenswartz und Rowe offers a widely used formula for attributing diversity factors:

3.2 Personality (Inner Circle)

"Personality", the dimension which constitutes the core of this model, covers all aspects of a person that may be classified as "personal style".

3.3 Internal Dimensions (2nd Circle)

"Internal dimensions " or "core dimensions" are considered to be dimensions that may not be easily changed by individuals and are thus taken into account by the relevant equal treatment acts.
- Gender
- Nationality and Ethnicity

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- Social Class Background
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Mental and Physical Capability
- Religion / World view

3.4 External Dimensions (3rd Circle)

"External dimensions" are characterised by their variableness. "Religion" or "worldview" are exceptions, which is why they are highlighted. They could be regarded as "internal dimensions" for two reasons: Firstly, religion and worldview cannot always be chosen freely and secondly, discrimination as a result thereof is legally forbidden.
- Geographic Location
- Income
- Personal Habits
- Recreational Habits
- Religion/ Worldview
- Educational Background
- Work Experience
- Appearance
- Parental Status
- Marital Status

3.5 Organisational Dimensions (Outer Circle)

"Organisational dimensions" are defined by corporate or institutional affiliation.
- Functional Level / Classification
- Work Content / Field
- Research Interests / Field of Study
- Faculty / Centre / Department / Branch of Study / Services and Facilities
- Work Location / Study Location
- Type of Employment
- Duration of Employment / Duration of Study

4. The Effects of Workplace Diversity

The workplace is constantly changing. It changes when people of different cultures, religions and sexual orientation assemble in a single arena to earn wages. It changes because of diversity training. It changes when diversity training succeeds in making the workplace better. Diversity affects

each member of the work group in ways positive and negative.

Programs aimed at helping workers understand and tolerate differences for the common good of the organization raises company morale.

5. Positive Effects

1. Understand Different Perspectives

There are different ways to get answers. Each person sees things differently, sometimes because of culture, gender or age group. For example,a young female president of a corporation wants to tell the stockholders that the company is losing money in a straightforward manner. However, the company's chief financial officer, an older man, thinks a softer approach works best. Rather than dismiss him as out of touch, the president listens and decides to try his suggestion. Different age groups in the workplace can help you to better understand older and younger people.

6. Appreciate Differences

Working with people from different customs provides an opportunity to learn new attitudes, beliefs and values. All help to dispel prejudice. Performing one's duties alongside an employer, co-worker or subordinate who is different can increase understanding. The workplace is the most common arena to learn to understand another's values and beliefs.

7. Learns Tolerance

Working with someone of a different background, skin color, education and values presents an opportunity to exercise tolerance for difference. For instance, one group may talk or laugh louder than another. Rather than attribute the behavior to uncouthness, raise the subject with the group's leader. After working and talking to the leader, you come to understand the behavior is acceptable in that community or culture. The result? You stop judging.

8. Negative Effects

1. Stereotyping

Of course, working with people from different backgrounds can cause issues. For instance, a woman may feel uncomfortable or grow suspicious if a multilingual man begins to talk in his native language with another person from his culture. Not knowing what's being said makes her feel uncomfortable, believing she's the object of negative attention. Anger, unfortunately, may result, causing a stereotypical belief to grow, rather than diminish.

2. Communication Problems

If you're concerned that feelings may be hurt or you may say the wrong thing to a co-worker who is Hispanic, African American, Caucasian or another culture other than your own, you may opt to say nothing rather than risk a disagreement. Therefore, the issue isn't resolved. When relationships in the workplace corrode, withdrawal occurs.

3. Misunderstandings

Working in an environment where diversity is the rule can help you better understands others. Sometimes, though, it doesn't. When misunderstandings between co-workers interfere with finding out the facts, mistakes in judgment thrive.

9. How to Manage Diversity in the Workplace

Diversity involves more than just race, culture and gender. It encompasses each person's uniqueness, experience and personalities that are different but have to be dealt with in the workplace. Diversity affects performance, so it is important to manage any issues that may result from personality conflicts. Diversity also determines how an employee interacts with other employees and the type of motivation involved in the job performance.

The Process

1. Communicate to employees the issues that relate to the organization or company, such as goals and objectives, policies, corporate culture and common practices.
2. Make any changes that will positively affect the needs of the various diverse groups in the organization. Discuss all issues related to policy, practice and culture and maximize them to extract the full potential of each employee in a consistent way. This can be done through teamwork.
3. Create teams of employees to work together. Give each employee her job description beforehand what the penalty will be.
4. Make each person accountable to the team leader, supervisor and company. Give each person different responsibilities to complete to finish the project. This means that each person will be able to contribute and feel that he is valuable to the company, the team and himself.
5. and the skills required to complete the project. Mix the teams by involving an employee from each group that fits the necessary job description and skills. This will provide an opportunity for each person to learn from and try to understand one another. Assign a team leader to each group as well as one other person to help the team leader mediate if problems arise.
6. Create a company employee handbook and give one to each employee to read and sign. Emphasize respect, tolerance and patience and clarify that nothing less should be accepted by any employee. Penalize employees who don't follow the guidelines

10. Business Strategies For Managing Diversity In The Workplace

Individual appraoaches to managing diversity: individual approaches to managing diversity involve two interdependent paths which are as follows:

1. **Learning:** Most of the managers are often unprepared to deal with diversity because of their inexperience, they are unsure of how to react. For instance, one recent study revealed that those with low competence in the diversity domain were unaware of their deficiency and, therefore, were not motivated to participate in diversity training, while those who were relatively competent were more interested in additional diversity training
2. **Empathy:** It is the ability to put oneself in another's place and see things from that person's point of view. This is particularly important in managing diversity, because members of diverse group often feel that only they can truly understand the challenges they are facing.

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Organizational approaches to managing diversity: Organisational approaches to managing diversity involve techniques which are designed personel effectively balance their work and family lives such as:

1. **Testing:** Today, organisations are encountering problems with the use of tests for selection and evaluation, since they may be culturally biased. Most of the traditional tests are not suitable for a diverse force. As a result, there is a great need of developing tests which are valid for selecting and evaluating diverse employees.

2. **Training:** Diversity training can play an active role in managing diversity. one way is by offering training to members from a diverse group on how to more effectively do their existing or future job. The other way is to provide training to managers and their employees who work with diverse employees.

3. **Mentoring:** The purpose of the mentor programme is to help support members of a diverse group in their jobs, socialize them in the cultural values of the organizations, and pragmatically increase their chances for development and advancement.

4. **Work / family Programs:** Now a days, in order to meet the need of dual-carrier families, there are several programs, which can help in balancing their home and work demands.

11. Conclusion

At the core of managing diversity lies not only respect for the significance role of the others but more importantly, a closescruitny and examination of the basic presuppositions assumptions, values, and world views that the dominating group holds about itself.

Further, we need to understand that only innovative ideas are likely to create new wealth for corporations, and the fountain of those innovative ideas is a diverse workforce. Furthermore, diversity can't be used as a competitive organizational strength unless it's managed effectively.

Thus, the key dynamic in diversity management then is to maintain the two dimensions of unity and diversity in balanced tension, without erring to either side. Unity is not synonymous with uniformity, either is diversity synonymous with separation. The solution of the tension is to respect and value diversity while working for unity, otherwise, exclusion is the result. Therefore, the strength of the nation or an organization lies in unity in diversity (Celeb Rosado, 2006).

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