

Study of Human Resources initiatives aimed at increasing Diversity and Inclusion in workplaces

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ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed at the study of the various Human Resources initiatives focused on Diversity and Inclusion taken during Talent Acquisition, Employer Branding, Onboarding and, Training and Development to attract, recruit, develop, retain, and motivate workforces. Research methodology follows secondary research to study existing Diversity and Inclusion practices followed by Convenience Sampling combined with Snowball Sampling to conduct a study among employees using an online survey to determine the actual implementation of D&I practices, challenges faced and their impact. The results were analyzed to determine the most used practices and effectiveness of such practices. The positive impact of having a diverse and inclusive workforce nurtures empathy, collaboration, creativity, and an increase in perspectives. These factors are incentives to make effective changes in processes in HR towards Diversity and Inclusion. Through this study, we can learn the best practices, recognize the impact and the challenges, and come up with recommendations to amend HR practices aimed at D&I for better results. This is where this study could be useful.

Keywords

Talent Acquisition, Diversity and Inclusion

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Introduction

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) defines diversity as “the collective mixture of differences and similarities that include, for example, individual and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences, and behaviours” [1]. They have further categorised it as visible diversity traits and invisible diversity traits [2]. Visible diversity traits could be race, gender, ethnicity, physical abilities, body type, age, educational/professional background and socio-economic status. Invisible diversity traits include sexual orientation, religious beliefs, political beliefs, marital status, etc.

Inclusion is the environment created in a workplace and adopted by people in that environment to grant and accept inclusion. It is the mindset of accepting existing differences and enables organizations to reap the benefits of Diversity in terms of business goals, productivity and creativity of employees. It is the ability to be sensitive of others beliefs, behaviours and diversity traits and incorporate this into each aspect of business right from values, mission, vision of the organization, business goals, customer base, structures, process, business strategy, people strategy, employee branding and employee engagement.

Diversity and Inclusion have been often used interchangeably though they have different meanings. As suggested by [3] “diversity and inclusion characterize different yet related approaches to the management of diversity”. These concepts are closely related where in diversity focuses on the demographics whereas inclusion forms a framework for people to accept the differences and work without barriers.

Diversity could mean recognizing the diversity traits and representation of such traits in the organization and inclusion would then be giving a voice to such

representations and inviting their opinions into forming business decisions. They both go hand in hand in developing a diverse and inclusive workforce. Recruiting people from diverse backgrounds and genders to meet a business target for hiring without training wouldn't have the same benefits as a wholesome diversity and inclusion program. There are various initiatives and structural, cultural and process design changes needed to achieve a truly inclusive and diverse workforce. Trainings and sensitization sessions by the HR function alone cannot bring about such a change in an organization. It is a part of change management and has to be done gradually. Support from the C-suite and upper level management is important to drive such a change which has to be done in systemic, cultural and behavioural aspects [4].

The latest problems observed in terms of diversity is gender pay gap, differences in benefits based on genders, allocation of responsibilities, job roles based on gender, introduction of biases during recruitment and selection, meetings, selection of leaders, succession planning, difficulty accepting changes and giving respect, absence of proper infrastructure for persons with disabilities, no recognition of same sex partners, no representation and recognition for LGBTQ employees and those from minority groups, generation gaps, harassment and discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religious/political beliefs.

Diversity and Inclusion shouldn't be only for employees in the workplace but should be extended to external stakeholders as well. Keeping it within the limits of the workplace wouldn't help foster the essence of diversity and inclusion. This way we can experience of benefits of mutual understanding of thoughts, behaviours, diversity traits in business aspects in terms of extending the customer and stakeholder base, reaching new markets and communities and expansion of business in new regions.

One-size-fits-all initiatives by the HR can't fulfil the needs of the hour to increase diversity and promote inclusion. Diversity could refer city wise, country wise and such an approach throughout the organization would massively fail. Hence a data driven approach which is custom made after reading the room would be the best way to plan initiatives. Only the true voices of the employees would help figure the reality gap between expected behaviours and those observed in the work environment. The school of thoughts, the conservative and patriarchal mindset, socio-economic backgrounds, special needs of employees are taken into consideration before setting priorities for diversity and inclusion initiatives.

A study conducted by Deloitte by Bersin found that "Among more than 128 different practices we studied, the talent practices which predict the highest performing companies are all focused on building an inclusive workplace" [5]. McKinsey's research shows that "racially and ethnically diverse companies outperform industry norms by 35%" [6]. Having facts and actual data regarding the effectiveness of HR initiatives aimed at increasing Diversity and Inclusion at workplaces can pave a way for more organizations to take up best practices shared by other organizations who have already begun their journey towards having a diverse and inclusive working environment.

Having metrics to measure the impact of diversity and inclusion initiatives will not only help track the progress but also help prioritize initiatives, set goals, help having a good argument for continuing the initiatives and garnering more support from the upper level management and external stakeholders [7]. It will also show the financial return on investment made from such initiatives as it can be a long-term investment showing growth in the long term.

There is a major difference or a reality gap when such initiatives are rolled out and the actual impact that they deliver. Along with the HR representatives and higher-level managements, the employees too play a major role in incorporating changes in their daily professional lives, decision making, listening to varied opinions in office meetings, sharing experiences and learnings related to diversity and the role it plays in the overall development of the company culture.

With this research paper, the aim is to study various initiatives taken by HR functions of organizations aimed at increasing the diversity and inclusion and gauge whether the initiatives undertaken are according to the need of the hour or according to the latest trend among the organizations. This study will bring to light the employees' views and perspectives on such initiatives, their participation in building a diverse and inclusive working culture, environment and workplace, their level of awareness of such initiatives in their organization, amount of work put in making these initiatives available for all employees throughout the organization.

The literature review will shed light on why Diversity and Inclusion is important and needs to be under the spotlight, the various initiatives undertaken by organizations, its impact on the organization's business goals, company culture, diversity targets, etc. Through the primary research we will know more about employee perception on such initiatives and its impact, a check on expectations versus reality and their feedback on the same.

Literature Review

A. Diversity in India

Diversity in India is different from the western countries. India has an additional diversity trait of caste though it might not be visible but the last name of a person might create assumptions of the socio-economic background of said person. Casteism may not be prevalent in Tier 1 city workplaces but in the lower tiered cities this could be a major concern. Biases based on caste could hinder a person's chance to get hired or reduce the number of opportunities at a workplace. There are reservation policies for women as well [8] who are underrepresented or not given the same opportunities as men due to cultural mindsets, patriarchy and conservative mindset [9]. A study by Namrata Gupta through discourse analysis showed that the interviewees shifted the blame for the ongoing gender inequalities from the organization to the society at large [10].

India's archaic British era law section 377 on LGBTQ individuals and their freedom to identify as homosexuals made progress of this minority group slow although India is now catching up to speed with reforms in laws and inclusion practices. India is gaining speed to working moms who were before expected to be stay at home moms and look after their child. But with maternity benefits, work from home and flexibility in timings, working moms or new moms can recover at home or take care of their child without worrying about loss of jobs, opportunities at work and instead focus of achieving professional goals with the additional support of their managers and understanding teams. Though paternity benefits and adoptive parents' benefits are still to catch up in all organizations, recognition of the same in large platforms are nudging organizations to consider these new aspects of parenthood while making and implementing benefits for their employees and their well-being.

Although provisions and changes are being made, diversity challenges as well as violent attacks on marginalized groups in terms of gender, religion and caste are still increasing. The #MeToo movement has brought to light workplace harassment and the dread with which women have to live even at workplaces. These incidents have highlighted the amount of work we still have to put in, in terms of making the workplaces safe for everyone and not just women. Employees belonging to the LGBTQ community also continually face harassment, discrimination and exclusion due to their gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientations [11].

In public sectors there are also reservations for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Some private companies hire PwDs to just meet the diversity target whereas some invest in infrastructure, design job roles and responsibilities suited for PwDs and aid them to be included at workplaces so that their diversity trait can be used to make a better difference to teams and the business overall.

MNCs have a major hand in bringing global diversity practices in India. The best practices adopted in other countries paves a way for same to be adopted elsewhere along with data proof of it being integral in forming better work culture. MNCs give local companies push by setting

trends. Even before the revisions in the archaic British homosexual law- section 377 was made, few Indian companies had begun fostering inclusion towards LGBTQ groups owing to the influence of their global counterparts [12]. Findings also suggest that the Indian subsidiaries of MNCs adopt more gender diversity initiatives than Indian owned organizations due to the backing that they receive from the parent company.

Women representation in Company Boards is majorly lacking. Even if women are allowed in higher level meetings their opinions aren't taken into account or aren't given their due credit owing to male dominated workplace. There is legislation in India requiring appointment of Women directors but patriarchal ethos in business brings down the idea of gender equality. Women having human capital in terms of talent, skills, experience and educational background aren't enough, their social capital also matter and what they bring to the table in terms of social connections [13].

B. Best practices in Diversity and Inclusion

Identification of best practices can be viewed from the life cycle of an employee right from recruitment to succession planning. It can be viewed in the recruitment and hiring practices and process, branding, training, learning and development, performance tracking, promotions and health and welfare. Aim of recruiting and hiring of diverse talent is for internal and factors, that is, internal development of the organization in terms of varied opinions and perspectives of employees in decision making and externally in the terms of customer and market expansion [14]. The recruitment strategies are devised in such a way that there is a talent pipeline of diverse candidates who are attracted to the organization by creating positive impression through employer branding.

The finding from the report from [15] showed that 41% of organizations right now offer specific benefits/support to their LGBT+ workers. 24% state they are assessing how they can do as such. 97% of the participating organizations has an equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policy but only 35% are localised for Indian employees. 77% and 65% have dedicated diversity and inclusion resource and budget respectively. 97% internally communicate to promote D&I culture. Only 44% use analysis to realise unconscious bias in talent management, 35% conduct audit for equal pay. Female representation at senior levels was found to be less. Only 56% have disability awareness training for Indian employees, 38% have appointed a liaison officer to look into PwDs recruitment, mere 9% have products/services developed for Indian disabled customers.

C. Impact of Diversity and Inclusion initiatives

Diversity can be a step towards inculcating innovation in terms of ideas, perspectives, opinions, reach to a bigger and diverse customer bases, their thoughts, opinions and perceptions [16]. It helps accommodate everyone's physical abilities to use the product or service. Having diversity can help avoid mistakes and product design flaws that might be overlooked. It can also help financially by avoiding legal lawsuits and other financial Liabilities.

Based on the social exchange theory by [17] that people connect with one another over some stretch of time, they experience the prerequisite of responding the help they got from different people. Similarly, when an employee feels being acknowledged and accepted at their working environment, they build up a special bond with the organization because of which their performance increases as well as display the conduct that is in congruity with company culture. This theory helps in anticipating the effect of inclusion on organization's results [18]. Social exchange relationships include common trust and worry of interest of both the parties; such connections, produce a commitment to keep away from damaging activities and leads to better job performance.

Having diverse talent also helps build a better employer brand and invites potential diverse job candidates to apply for positions and experience a diverse and inclusive working environment, thus helping the candidate develop their career path without having to worry about loss of opportunities being a diverse employee and simultaneously also help the organization in building a better place for the employees to do bigger and better things. Different researches reasoned that diverse teams outflank homogeneous groups as they will in general be increasingly innovative and compelling at critical thinking. Also, representatives who feel included, esteemed and compensated are increasingly drawn in to the organization and persuaded to stay on board.

Along with recruitment of diverse talent, there should be initiatives to develop and retain diverse talent within the organization, maintain a pipeline of diverse talent, include them during promotions and succession planning. Having diverse set of teams shows the brand of the company as accepting differences, catering to individual needs of its employees as well as the customers. Creating diverse teams also allows the organization to integrate local teams with global teams without having to worry about communication or thought gaps, culture fit, accepting and respecting varied opinions.

D. Impact of Gender Diverse workforce

With the rise in demographic diversity, having and managing a diverse workforce became an organization task. Conscious efforts taken to maintain this diversity could have positive as well negative effects depending on the context of industry [19] [20] [21]. However, the positive aspects of such practices outweigh the negative aspects in terms of employee satisfaction, creativity, performance and communication among individuals [22]. The diversity management practices replicated by Global companies in their local companies may vary in terms of benefits, results and perceptions. Hence it is needed to modify the programs in terms of the local context and the way the benefits are required to reflect within the company and to the public's eye [23].

E. Barriers to Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

There are several visible or invisible culturally or self-constructed barriers when we talk about barriers to diversity and inclusion initiatives. Communication barriers in terms of language can hinder communication and exchange of

ideas and can exclude a person in team projects [16]. Voices of employees belonging to minority groups can be diminished in workplace where dominant groups suppress these voices. India is vastly diverse with diversity challenges differing from state to state. While some companies might want to adapt themselves according to the national culture, some employees would rather be employed with an organization that has its own culture different than that of the national culture [19]. Unconscious bias is suggested to be a systemic factor for exclusion in terms of diversity [20]. These biases could prevent HR professionals to recruit and select candidates similar to them and their colleagues. Any deviation from the normal is a step outside their comfort zone. Managers must take it upon them to understand the diversity existing in their teams, accept the differences and analyse how the diversity traits can be beneficially for the whole team to innovate, forms well thought opinions and make better and informed decisions. When the team has accepted and respects each other's diversity traits, it increases their interpersonal professional relationships, increases and promotes empathy, leads to rise in employee satisfaction as well as customer satisfaction, reduces customer churn, helps in retention of employees and reduces financial liabilities related to recruitment and hiring new talent, people listen attentively to varied perspectives, increased innovation, creativity and leads to flexibility [21], there is sustainable development and helps the team to efficiently adapt and work along diversified teams. Organizations have to go well beyond assigning administrative jobs to such employees and diversify the job roles by enabling them to work along with their peers with needed assistance and required infrastructure [16]. With the advent of technology, assistance provided need not be human based but automation tools and processes can be used as assisting devices for those in need. Thus, allowing such employees to work to their full potential and using their skills for growth and development of the organization.

Research Methodology

This study is based on a quantitative research where the experience of the respondents will be quantified using the Likert scale. The survey used for this study was prepared with the help of a sample survey prepared by AICPA. The survey was modified according to the nature and the objectives of this study. The survey contained 15 items, out of which 5 items were asked to ascertain the demographics of the sample population. The items based on demographics of respondents collected data on gender, age, marital status, industry and years of experience of the respondent. The items were divided and categorized into seven sub-scales. The sub scales were named Attitude towards diversity and inclusion, corporate culture, belonging, discrimination and harassment, talent acquisition, diversity training program, belonging, and communication and infrastructure. The items in these sub-scales were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Two additional items not belonging to any sub-scale were added. One was to know the frequency of discrimination or harassment faced by the respondent due to diversity traits and the second to know whether the respondent has attended a gender sensitization workshop in their organization..

This survey was sent to employees of various organizations through personal messages and emails. The sampling method used to select participants for this study was based on convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods. The survey was sent to approximately 200 persons and the number of surveys filled out by respondents was 152. Thus, the sample size was recorded as $n=152$, the response rate being 76%.

Results and Analysis

The responses were analysed using the SPSS tool. The profile or demographics of the respondents varied from gender, age, marital status, the industry they are engaged in and their years of experience. Based on the response received out of $n=152$ sample size 61.8% ($n=94$) of the total respondents identified themselves as male, while 36.8% ($n=56$) identified themselves as female. In the other gender category 0.7% ($n=1$) identified as genderfluid and 0.7% ($n=1$) identified as nonbinary.

It was found that majorly the respondents were married, where the breakdown being as: 90.1% ($n=137$) of the respondents were unmarried and 9.9% ($n=15$) respondents stated they were married.

The type of industry each respondent belong to as claimed by them is as follows:

TABLE 1 INDUSTRY

	Frequency	Percent
Automobile	4	2.6
BFSI	7	4.6
Construction	3	2.0
Consulting	6	3.9
Engineering/Manufacturing	19	12.5
Entertainment and Media	3	2.0
FMCG	1	.7
Healthcare	5	3.3
IT and ITES	67	44.1
Other	30	19.7
Telecom	7	4.6
Total	152	100.0

As per analysis majority respondents were found to be from IT and ITES sector while least belonged to FMCG sector. Out of the total respondents, 63.2% ($n=96$) respondents claimed themselves to be in the age bracket of 21-25 years, only few (7.3%) belonged to the age brackets of above 31 years.

Respondents claimed their work experience in following manner:

TABLE 2 WORK EXPERIENCE

	Frequency	Percent
Valid less than 1 year	35	23.0
1-2 years	50	32.9
2-4 years	44	28.9

4-6 years	8	5.3
more than 6 years	15	9.9
Total	152	100.0

A Reliability analysis was conducted for the 'Attitude towards Diversity and Inclusion and Company Culture subscale of the survey having 10 items to be analyzed. The Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.931 which indicates that the sub-scale has an adequate level of inter-item reliability.

TABLE 3 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Cronbach's Alpha		
Based on		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standardized Items	N of Items
.931	.932	10

The same analysis was done for the sub-scales namely, discrimination and harassment, talent acquisition, diversity training program, belonging, your manager, belonging, appraisal and promotion, and communication and infrastructure and their Cronbach's alpha values are 0.858, 0.632, 0.899, 0.813, 0.852 and 0.780 respectively. However, analyses revealed that by deleting the 17th item, the Cronbach's alpha for Talent Acquisition sub-scale could be raised to 0.731, deleting the 24th item the value of Cronbach's alpha for Belonging sub-scale goes up to 0.895 and deleting 26th item the Cronbach's alpha value for Appraisal and Promotion sub-scale increases to 0.871. For majority of the sub-scales this analysis shows an adequate level of inter-item reliability. From this we know that by deleting the 17th item the Cronbach's alpha value will significantly increase by a whole point, whereas in other sub-scales the increase is not significant.

TABLE 4 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR SUB-SCALE 3

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
C1	6.97	3.483	.437	.539
C2	6.88	2.971	.612	.286
C3	7.15	3.626	.303	.731

For the item 'Number of times you have been verbally harassed or have been passed mean comments based on your race, gender, body type, age, marital status, gender identity/ expression, sexual orientation, social background at your workplace' labelled as 'Frequency' the descriptive analysis is as follows:

TABLE 5 FREQUENCY

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	More than once	22	14.5
	Never	120	78.9

Once	10	6.6
Total	152	100.0

For the item 'Have you ever felt that due to your gender, background, or other diversity traits you haven't been given an opportunity to lead/voice opinion/ promoted/ taken seriously?' labelled as 'Opportunity' the descriptive analysis is as follows:

TABLE 6 LOST OPPORTUNITY

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Maybe	26	17.1
	No	104	68.4
	Yes	22	14.5
	Total	152	100.0

For the item 'There is proper infrastructure in my firm for persons with disabilities labelled as 'Infrastructure' and measured on a 5-point Likert scale, the descriptive analysis is as follows:

TABLE 7 INFRASTRUCTURE

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	14	9.2	9.2
	disagree	13	8.6	17.8
	neutral	43	28.3	46.1
	agree	41	27.0	73.0
	strongly agree	41	27.0	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	

Majorly respondents have a neutral stance but a close next are opinions agree and strongly agree having 41 respondents each. We can interpret that the respondents choosing neutral for this item do not have the adequate knowledge of the infrastructure required for persons with disabilities at their workplaces.

For the item 'I have attended a gender sensitization workshop in my firm' and labelled as Workshop, the descriptive analysis is as follows:

TABLE 8 GENDER SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	111	73.0
	Yes	41	27.0
	Total	152	100.0

Majority of the respondents said that they didn't attend a gender sensitization workshop at their organization. Using Crosstabulation, the items 'There is a need for special recruitment drives/referral programs in my firm for women/ returning mothers/ Persons with Disabilities/ LGBTQ persons/ other minority groups' measured on a 5-point

Likert scale, labelled as C3 and 'gender' were cross tabulated and analyses shows that majority of the female respondents agree that there is a need for special recruitment drives or referral programs for women/ returning mothers/ Persons with Disabilities/ LGBTQ persons/ other minority groups whereas majority of the male candidates (n=34) had a neutral stance and n=22 male respondents strongly agreed for this particular need. As the percentage of male respondents is higher in this study, the overall stance is of neutral where n=52 and agree having n=40.

TABLE 9 CROSSTABULATION OF C3 AND GENDER

		C3					Total
		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
Gender	Female	5	6	18	20	7	56
	Male	8	11	34	19	22	94
	Gender fluid	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Nonbinary	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Total	14	17	52	40	29	152

Cross tabulating the items 'My firm is committed to diversity and inclusion' measured on a 5-point Likert scale, labelled as A2 and 'Industry', the analyses shows that majority (36.8%) of the respondents claim that their organization is committed to diversity and inclusion. 60% of the respondents agree and strongly agree on this statement. 26% respondents do not feel strongly or feel neutral about this statement. The point to be highlight is that 12% of the respondents have a negative response to this statement. As majority (44%) of the respondents belong to the IT and ITES industry we can interpret that majority of the companies in this industry are committed to diversity and inclusion as 62% respondents of the total n=67 belonging to this industry have a positive response to the statement asked.

TABLE 10 INDUSTRY COMMITTED TO D&I

		A2					Total
		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
Industry	Automobile	0	0	0	4	0	4
	BFSI	0	1	0	2	4	7
	Construction	0	1	1	0	1	3
	Consulting	0	0	2	3	1	6
	Engineering/Manufacturing	2	2	4	11	0	19
	Entertainment and Media	0	1	0	2	0	3
	FMCG	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Healthcare	1	0	2	0	2	5
	IT and ITES	4	3	18	23	19	67
	Other	1	4	10	8	7	30
	Telecom	0	0	3	3	1	7
	Total	8	12	40	56	36	152

The descriptive analysis for the item 'During onboarding, I was thoroughly informed of the firm's diversity and inclusion/ Anti-discrimination policies and grievance redressal committee' under the sub-scale Belonging was done. While half of the respondents were informed of diversity and inclusion/ Anti-discrimination policies and grievance redressal committee 21.1% respondents claimed they were not.

TABLE 11 INFORMED ABOUT D&I POLICIES DURING ONBOARDING

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	10	6.6	6.6
	disagree	22	14.5	21.1
	neutral	33	21.7	42.8
	agree	56	36.8	79.6
	strongly agree	31	20.4	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	

Relative Importance Index having the formula $RII = (5n_5 + 4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1) / A * N$ where nn stands for number of respondents in which n stands for strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively, A stands for highest weight which is 5 here and N stands for total number of respondents, was used to determine the importance of items and highest ranked item for each subscale. For each sub-scales the highest ranked items are: Attitude towards diversity and inclusion and company culture- 'Employees of different backgrounds interact well within my firm', Discrimination and Harassment - 'I believe my firm will take appropriate action in response to incidents of discrimination', Talent Acquisition - 'Within my firm, everyone has access to equal employment opportunities regardless of their difference', diversity training program - 'The firm has done a good job providing training programs that promote understanding and mitigation of unconscious bias. (e.g. Gender Sensitization workshop)', Belonging- 'When I speak up at work, my opinion is valued', Appraisal and Promotion- 'Employees of different backgrounds are encouraged to apply for higher positions', and Communication- 'During onboarding, I was thoroughly informed of the firm's diversity and inclusion/ Anti-discrimination policies and grievance redressal committee'. Relative Importance Index tells us which item did a respondent give more importance to under a sub-scale. Crosstabulation of years of experience of respondents and the item 'I have attended a gender sensitization workshop in my firm' was done.

From this we can observe that even after being in the corporate for more than a year the respondents haven't attended a gender sensitization workshop in their firm. Even after having more than 6 years of work experience 8 respondents out of 14 haven't attended a gender sensitization workshop in their firm.

TABLE 12 CROSSTABULATION OF YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND GENDER SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP ITEMS

		Count
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Years of Experience		Workshop		Total
		No	Yes	
	less than 1 year	24	10	34
	1-2 years	40	10	50
	2-4 years	33	11	44
	4-6 years	4	4	8
	more than 6 years	8	6	14
Total		109	41	150

Conclusions

From secondary research the meaning of diversity and inclusions in India, best practices in various industries, the impact of diversity and inclusion practices and the barriers to it were studied in depth to understand the topic and gauge the gap between the practices at workplaces and the opinions of employees at workplaces. Through analyses it was found that majority agreed supporting the fact that diversity and inclusion practices were implemented at the workplaces but as per the assumption, they didn't strongly agree with the statements in the survey or didn't have adequate knowledge of the practices to answer the questions. This could be interpreted that there is a need for better communication between the management of the organization and its employees for better implementation and use of the existing diversity and inclusion practices or analyze the need for such practices and develop policies and framework to have a diverse and inclusive organization. Majority of the respondents didn't attend a gender sensitization workshop at their organization, this could be interpreted that their organization didn't organize such a workshop or the respondent didn't attend such a workshop when their organization had organized it. 54% respondents agreed that their organization had proper infrastructure for persons with disabilities, while the rest didn't feel strongly or disagreed. The need for such infrastructure is not only required for the PwD employees but also the PwDs visitors to such workplaces and potential PwD employees who would miss an opportunity to work in an organization due to inadequate infrastructure. 32 respondents reported being verbally harassed or passed mean comments at based on diversity traits at least once, this highlights the need for a check on the unruly and uncalled for behavior of the employees and the modes to address such incidents. This study has managerial implications of understanding the differences in perceptions of employees with respect to industries, gender and the perception of the company compared to the actual diversity and inclusion practices carried out within the company and the benefits they bring to the employees. It is also useful to gauge if the diversity and inclusion practices are up to date with the need of the hour which could vary region wise and with industries. It also highlights the gap between years of experience and the lack of gender sensitization workshop or the mandate of attending such a workshop.

Recommendations

As per the analysis done, the 21.1% respondents were not informed of the diversity and inclusion/ Anti-discrimination policies and grievance redressal committee during their

onboarding which is the initial introductory phase to the organization that helps understand the company culture and the organizational behaviour expected from an employee. Organizations need to include this topic in their onboarding process and make their employees well aware of important policies and inform them of ways they can report their grievances. Having an open communication and dialogue with the employees right from day 1 of their professional journey in the organization is essential, having the tough conversations, recognizing unconscious bias and eliminating it is the need of the hour. There has to be an ongoing dialogue between the management and the employees to make diversity and inclusion a part of culture, structure, processes and product design, to reap the wholesome benefits of diversity through inclusion. Organizations need to organize gender sensitization workshops and also encourage its employees to attend such workshops.

Limitations

The sample size could have been bigger for better analysis and interpretation. The neutral option in the Likert scale created confusion in whether the respondent didn't want to answer the question, didn't know well about the subject to answer the question or actually had a neutral stance towards the questions asked. The sample size doesn't have equal representation of genders hence the data becomes difficult to interpret. Having more data of respondents belonging to the different genders, as it is one of the major visible diversity traits, would have given a better and clearer picture of their opinions on the diverse and inclusive culture of their organization. There was no equal representation of respondents from each of the mentioned industries in the survey thus making it difficult to interpret which industry had more diversity and inclusion practices and a company culture geared towards the said cause..

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