

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR DIVERSIFIED EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Inclusion of diversity, what started as an initiative to provide equal employment across the world has today translated into a wider industry wide policy of diversity. It is gaining a strong foothold within India Inc. demonstrating inherent benefits for both employees and employers. The paper attempts to throw light on the practices and strategies being adopted by companies which are honored by recognized bodies for their unwavering commitment to diversity & inclusion. More specifically, the study approaches this through exploration of HRM activities in managing diversity in these organizations by developing a framework from literature of HRM and diversity management (DM). The practices of these organizations have been traced from newspaper articles, surveys, diversity reports of companies, public websites of the companies, and interviews of company heads available in print and in electronic sources. The various practices, and strategies that are adopted by Indian organizations to leverage diversity, have major concentration on women and people with disability.

Keywords: Indian corporate, Diversity, Inclusion practices, Diversity Management.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of diversity which originated in U.S in the late 1980's has seeped into countries across the world. In the last two decades; it has been embraced by the organizations by realizing the strong linkages between the inclusion of diversity and business competitive advantage (Fluery, 1999). The concept that started as an initiative to provide equal employment has today translated into a wider industry wide policy of diversity.

II. DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Diversity can be defined as a mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system (Fluery, 1999). Diversity includes factors such as race, gender, age, colour, physical disability, ethnicity, etc. (Kundu and Turan, 1999). Companies have decided to incorporate diversity and consider it as essential part of their business strategy (Hayes and Mandez, 1997; Palich and Gomez, 1999) for keeping and gaining market share, reducing costs, increasing productivity and improving quality of management (Morrison, 1992) etc. as business case.

This inclination towards increasing diversity provides an impetus to recognize the need for “diversity management” in the organization. Diversity management (DM) is defined as; “planning and implementing organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while its potential disadvantages are minimized” (Cox, 1993).

III. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Diverse workforce is seen as competitive advantage to the organization as it brings diverse capabilities. But to achieve maximum benefit of this diversity, it needs to manage well. HRM is seen to gain competitive advantage through a well managed committed and capable workforce. It manages the diverse workforce striving to increase effectiveness by either changing organization practices or attitude of people.

IV. HARD APPROACHES TO DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

These approaches bring equality and fairness in organization by reviewing the existing practices.

A: Career Development

Diverse employees often feel neglected and do not perceive any career paths. Employee development programs can address this problem, by preparing employees for future promotions. Determining the personal development needs of each minority group and creating a development and progressive plan (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 2000) would help them to advance through their career. Women's Leadership Forum (WLF) is a

Broadbridge initiative that recognizes the need for a women's initiative based on feedback from their associates, their Board of Directors, and their clients. By better understanding the experiences of women, actions are taken to remove barriers for women's advancement (Broadbridge Financial Solutions, 2011). A forum of Conjoin, Women @ ConJoin organizes various events and focus group meetings for discussing issues at work regarding women and provide counseling and help in times of stress, emotional upheaval, pressure and conflict at work, etc (Diversity and Inclusivity-Conjoin, 2010). Under the development arena, Genpact has a suite of initiatives – a global affinity group for women— Genpact Women's International Network (GenWIN), whose mission is to foster the professional development of our women workforce (Joshi, 2012), Similarly Women of Wipro (WoW) an initiative of Wipro and Women's Leadership Council (IWLC) of IBM enhances the technical, professional and personal development of women. Indian organizations are strongly focused on disability as part of their strategy. They have included development programmes specific to people with disabilities. IBM India has undertaken several initiatives to increase visibility and access of PwDs at the workplace. In addition to providing accessibility products for PwDs, they have initiated Roundtable meetings with PwD employees to understand and address their unique concerns. They have established a voluntary PwD Network - EnABLERS at IBM- which is a great forum in which PwD joiners can participate, especially when they are new to IBM. Similarly Infyability at Infosys creates a sensitive and inclusive workplace for differently abled employees and help them in developing by regular accessibility audits are conducted to ensure that their infrastructure is accessible to differently abled employees (Infosys-Diversity, 2012).

B: Equal opportunity for performance

Furthermore, for the socially adequate management of a workforce organizations have policies to provide equal opportunity to all the employees and reward based on their performance. These policies based on the principles of respect, transparency, honesty, privacy, and freedom (Jabbour and Santos, 2008), all of which can provide more safety in the workplace, improve the Quality of life and help qualified candidates in advancing upward in the organizations.

C: Compensation and Rewards

A good remuneration system ensures that there is direct relationship between efforts and rewards. Performance -based pay would be effective in producing desirable results. Paying senior management on the basis of their performance in diversity recruiting and retention would enhance diversity initiatives (Tipper, 2004). Moreover, diversity put as a key result area for the business leaders would become a yardstick for their assessment. This helps organizations increase accountability for diversity outcomes and ensure that diversity objective is a priority (Carter et al., 2001). For instance, Microsoft India chairman Bhaskar Pramanik; Avinash Vashistha, Accenture India country managing director; Shantanu Khosla, P&G India M.D; Shanker Anna Swamy, IBM M.D and their leadership team have diversity on their performance scorecard. In a similar context Roopa Kudva, MD and CEO of CRISIL said "The word diversity was not in the vocabulary of companies when I started out 25 years ago. Today it is on the agenda of management and boards" (Bhattacharya, 2012).

V. CONCLUSION

Indian companies are quick to realize and value diversity and are continuously focused on creating a truly inclusive workplace to accommodate labor from diverse background. The Indian organizations are found to be making mark on the issue of respecting diversity and are going much beyond lip service or tokenism by reviewing their HR practices to derive the maximum from their workforce. They are managing and valuing the diversity by both the soft and hard approaches of HR and various programmes, policies and strategies are adopted to leverage diversity, with major concentration on women and people with disability

VI. REFERENCES

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