



GENDER DIVERSITY AND ITS IMPACT IN THE ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Organizations have to promoting diversity. The work force in all organizations consist of “ different” employees. This difference is interesting and adds value to the organization. This so called ‘differences’ is called diversity.

The benefits of workforce diversity are many . Globalization has lead to a very mobile workforce demographics and these very factors provide a challenge, apart from benefits to the organization. Organizations need an innovative and dynamic approach so as to resolve the problems of diversity and also to harness the advantages of diversity.

Diversity can be observed everywhere, in all organizations and of course, in society, from where the workforce originates. Diversity is stated in terms of colour, race, nationality, gender, age, physical abilities/ disabilities and so on. Each kind of diversity brings something different to the organizational table, which can now be prepared by the organization to suit their own goals.

Gender diversity is , by far, the most common diversity factors and there has been an organizational and managerial bias against women. McKinsey (2018) report claims it to be the concept of ‘micro aggression’, (Mckinsey report 2018) which states overt and covert behaviours against women which gives them the push to leave the organization. Women face it on a regular basis and have to deal with it. Organizational support towards the same is less.

Mentoring, training and perhaps better communication can overcome this situation and efforts are being made to deal with the social isolation women have in the organizations with the help of mentoring and networking. (Kalev Alexandra et al (2006)

Diversity training can be used to sensitize employees towards bringing about behavioral changes. Communication and mentoring also play a critical role in retention of women employees.

This paper attempts to understand the role of gender diversity on variables like mentoring, communication, training, self esteem, job satisfaction and promotion.

KEYWORDS: Gender diversity, Mentoring, Communication, Training .

INTRODUCTION

Employees in organizations are from different backgrounds and origins . No organization has nor hopes to have homogeneity in its work force. Employees form a heterogeneous group , in such , that there are employees of different genders, sexual orientations, ages, cultures, sexual orientation and also with physical disabilities. An organization has to harness the potential of this diverse work group to obtain its objectives. As it does so, it is able to proclaim its position in the competitive market and has a distinctive edge over its rivals because of its sheer diversity.



It has been proved that diversity leads to improve market performance and any organization worth its salt will do well to consciously improve its diversity elements. As every organization improves its diversity ratio, they will find their diversity ratios would be a reflection of the society in which they reside or exist. That makes it more relevant to improve diversity.

Of all the diversity factors, Gender diversity is what stands out and is considered more relevant. Women have entered the workforce a long time back but their continued presence in the workforce and their opportunities for growth still remains to be seen. In fact, a recent study by McKinsey (2018) states that gender diversity is stalling in organizations in the US , which is a very alarming trend.

In India, the representation of women in organizations is improving but not as fast as one would hope. Recent guidelines which state that there should be atleast one woman in the Board of Directors of Companies, still await to be implemented. Many organizations missed the deadline for the appointment of women to the Board whereas some organizations are still trying to “find’ the right woman candidate. The reason there are so few women who are eligible for this post is that women dropped out of organizations due to family constraints (read : to look after their children or because of the mobility of their spouse’s job) or that the environment in the organization was not conducive for them to remain. Hence women reaching the higher echelons of management were rare . To break the perceived glass ceiling required a lot of grit and guts from women, most of whom just gave up.

But women potential cannot be ignored by organizations and the talents they bring to the organization not only enhances the internal environment but actually nurtures it. Women are said to be more supportive in the decision making process and better mentors. More softer but firm in communication . Hence the organization only stands to gain, if the gender diversity improves.

This paper attempts to find out whether there is any relationship between gender diversity has and any of the constructs in the organization. This paper also hopes that the results would enable organizations to understand and further, implement the same.

LITERATURE REVIEW :

Alexandra Kalev et al (2006) state that organizations that evaluate their training , mentoring and networking programs are more likely to see the positive outcomes of the same on diversity. If organizations can establish accountability for the implementation and evaluation , the efficacy of these programs will increase.

Singh Kavita (2003) states that there seem to be an expectation that women should play their “ traditional “ role in the organization ie to be more “ feminine” and therefore are given roles which are more submissive in nature. Men, on the other hand, being seen as “ aggressive” are given more leadership and dominant roles . This is a kind of stereotyping which needs to be addressed.

The emotional Quotient is more in women than in men, and organizations are realizing it and using it effectively. Revision of recruitment , selection, leave and training policies are advised.

Berry Priscilla (2010) is very eloquent when she objects to the segregation of jobs , jobs perceived as best suited for men or women. For eg, health care is associated more with women . she further objects to the fact that even in occupations which are more suited for women, the responsible managerial positions are almost always occupied by men. She suggests the reconciliation of work and family as a key factor in the retention of women employees. The organization’s role is crucial in creating an environment which supports flexi-time, which is more supportive to women, which provides training and development opportunities and mentoring , all of which will bring about gender equality

Armstrong-Stassen, Marjorie (2005) says that many women perceive that their careers plateau because of the lack of support from the organization in terms of training programs and no challenging assignments. They experience a sharp reduction in job satisfaction . this is more seen among older women.

Taneja Sonia (2012) is of the opinion that organizations have to work to retain their women employees. The rate of women leaving the workforce is more than the women entering it and this is alarming. Organizations should concentrate on making better and more women-oriented strategies and

policies and this requires visionary leadership. One approach is to have a good work life balance for women employees, which will empower them. The other is to have flexi-time policies, which enables women to manage both home and workplace better. And the third is to make sure that there are enough growth opportunities for women in the workplace. This will help organizations to move towards gender equality.

An-Ju R. Tai (2004) states that mentoring and counseling are effective tools to reduce the gender differences. Management should allow for more inter- gender communications to bridge the gender gap in communication. This makes mentoring more effective. She observes that men and women have the same performance outcomes in high technology companies. Women see themselves as being treated equitably. One obstacle women face, apart from the glass ceiling, is the women themselves. This paper suggests that women who were successful took charge of their careers and were willing to put in hard work. They should be proactive and take the lead whenever possible. They chart out their career growth roadmap. Women who are motivated, mentored, satisfied with career and remuneration, are provided with a supportive internal environment and who exert behavioural control, possess social skills- well such women succeed.

Deitra C. Payne (2005), in her study indicates that today's women see themselves as successful as compared to women ten years back. Women agree that the glass ceiling still exists but were more concerned regarding the lack of mentoring in the organizations. They opined that the representation of women in the managerial levels were less and has to increase. The women agreed that their organizations were supportive of the development of women.

Vernotto C. McMillan (2007), in his thesis states that corporate culture has to be improved in knowledge based organizations, if diversity has to improve. This helps organizations stand out with respect to innovativeness and competitive advantage. Culture is a complex amalgamation of values, norms, attitude and behavior, hence organizations have to consider all these factors while trying to improve corporate culture. Employees of any one diversity group tend to be clannish and this clan tendency has to be used advantageously for the organization. Cohesive teams which enrich organizational climate should be created. This cohesiveness among team members can be created via effective training, mentoring and enriched communication channels.

CONCLUSION :

From the above literature review, this researcher comes to a conclusion that gender diversity is here to stay and organizations will do well to accept it and cherish it.

However, women are still leaving the workforce and to plug this leak, organizations will have to allow women to get more opportunities for their professional growth. For these opportunities, organizations have to break this perception of the glass ceiling and provide adequate training to allow the women to get opportunities to move upwards in the organizational hierarchy.

To encourage women to stay back and not leave the workforce, it is imperative that the organizations create an environment which is women friendly. The creation of this environment requires effective communication and mentoring.

If all these parameters are taken care of in the organization, Gender diversity will thrive making the organization a successful one.

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