

A Study on The Workforce Diversities Found in Indian IT Sector- A Case Study on The Employee Diversity Among the Employees in HCL Technologies

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ABSTRACT

IT Industry is a swift growing industry in India with the capability to transform a developing country into a modernized global economy through the institutions, technology and infrastructure that it supports. To achieve success and maintain a competitive advantage in an Organization, we must be able to draw on the most important resource – the skills of the workforce. With the increasing richness of diversity in the world and in the workforce, we need to spread out our outlook and use creative strategies to be Successful. This study identifies best practices of managing workforce diversity in HCL.

Key Words: *IT Industry, Cultural diversity, Gender diversity, Ability diversity*

I. INTRODUCTION

Indian IT industry presents the case of an worldwide competitive high technology Industry with diversified workforce. The surfacing of India as a leading information technology destination has created tremendous job opportunities for the Indian population. India is one of the countries, which constitutes culturally rich and heterogeneous workforce, with the employees of different nations, languages, religions and different provincial states, working together to fulfill organizational goals. There are approximately 30% in total workforce of the female employees of IT industry in India. This has created cultural diversity and gender diversity in the workplace. Various diversity management practices have been adopted to manage diversity in organizations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Elizabeth Foma (2014) identified that a diverse workplace increases productivity, increases creativity and improves problem solving.¹

Barbara Mazur (2010) has found that Diversity management benefits associates by creating a fair and safe environment where everyone has access to the same opportunities and challenges.²

Ceren Ozgen et al (2013) have mentioned that the benefits of cultural diversity include trade facilitation through networks, trust and institutional knowledge and also knowledge spillovers from ideas and practices.³

Laura Velten et al (2017) have reported that Cultural diversity is linked to an employee's motivation since teamwork and atmosphere, which also includes cultural diversity, are the most motivating factors.⁴

Vandana Madhavkumar (2017) commented that organisations in order to enhance their performance by employing more women employees need to focus

on a work environment with a culture that is supportive of women.⁵

Naima Bibi (2016) proposes that Proper implementation of Gender Specific policies should be done and continuous monitoring.⁶

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To explore and understand the concept of Workforce Diversity.
- To study the Workforce Diversity in HCL.
- To identify the measures taken in addressing the diversities found in HCL.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is based on secondary data. It analyses the available literature on Workforce Diversity in HCL. The information has been collected from Websites, Journals, Newspaper reports and blogs.

V. WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Diversity is a dimension that can be used to distinguish groups and people from one another, in which the dimensions can be visible or invisible. The existence of workplace diversity, within a workplace, indicates that the workplace is heterogeneous in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity, in which employees hold diverse elements and qualities, differing from one another.

Benefits of a Diverse Workplace

- increase in the pool of competent personnel from different backgrounds
- recreation of a sense of Harmony
- foster productivity
- enhances creativity
- improves problem solving through novel ideas⁷

Negatives of Diverse Workforce

- Communication Barriers
- Cultural resistance
- Discrimination Issues
- Increased Costs⁸
- Overcoming Negativity

VI. SAMPLE EMPLOYEE DIVERSE Organization-HCL Technologies

HCL Technologies is a next-generation global technology company that helps enterprises reimagine their businesses for the digital age.⁹ **HCL Technologies Limited** (Hindustan Computers Limited) is an Indian multinational technology company, also a subsidiary of HCL Enterprise, headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India. From a research and development division of HCL, it

emerged as an independent company in 1991 when HCL ventured into the software services business. HCL Technologies is found on the Forbes Global 2000 list. It is amongst the top 20 largest publicly traded companies in India with a market capitalisation of \$18.7 billion as of May 2017 and as of May 2018, the company had a consolidated revenue of \$7.8 billion, along with its subsidiaries. HCL Technologies operates worldwide in 34 countries.¹⁰

Workforce Diversity in HCL

HCL Technologies believes in ensuring respect for each individual and creating a sense of ownership among employees across the globe. Our 'Employees First, Customers Second' (EFCS) guides all our actions. Diverse employees at HCL Technologies score the company a 62/100 across various culture categories, placing HCL Technologies in the Bottom 35% of companies in the United States with 10,000+ Employees for Comparably diversity score. The Diversity score provides insights into how diverse employees feel and rate their work experience at HCL Technologies across various culture dimensions.¹¹ They ensure equal opportunities for gender, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion or ethnicity for recruitment and retainment. They have a dedicated Diversity team that works with multiple stakeholders to implement various diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives across the organization.¹²

The prominent Diversity among the employees of HCL are discussed as follows:

• Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity is an over-riding imperative of an organization that requires the mentoring of individuals from different backgrounds so that they can effectively contribute to the organization. Given the complexity of distributed work locations and multiple cultures that the organisation needs to embrace, the diversity and inclusion journey has been a progressive one.

• Gender Diversity

Gender diversity is, achieving a balanced ratio of men and women in the work place while building an ecosystem within the organization that is conducive to the growth and development of women managers on the other. Gender neutral organizations are particular about providing equal opportunities to men and women.

• Age diversity

Age diversity is defined as the capability to accept different types of ages within a business environment. However as compared to gender

diversity, age diversity has been unpopular at the workplace. Organizations are now making an attempt to maintain a fine balance between different age groups. They are also facilitating better interaction across generations. Generational Diversity is here to stay in India. Before a decade, the average age of an IT worker in India was 23 and now it is 29 years. As industries mature so will the workforce from the generational diversity perspective matures too.

- **Ability Diversity**

It is really noteworthy that the organization here is trying to recruit more number of people with disabilities and is committed to provide an inclusive work-environment to accommodate them. All these organizations are providing the necessary physical infrastructure and have undertaken measures to ensure work-place diversity. However, there have been mixed results.

Nature & Purpose of Diversity & Inclusion in HCL:
HCL's Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) vision is to reinforce the "Employee First" philosophy by building an inclusive organization that fosters respect for individuals and celebrates differences among them. HCL makes a conscious effort to support and promote non-discriminatory practices for people from diverse background to participate, contribute and develop equitably.

Every phase of talent management, from assessment and acquisition, to growth and retention, incorporates elements of diversity and inclusion which are all part of the planning and monitoring process.

Culturally inclusive

A culturally balanced environment encourages diversity in thoughts and therefore innovation.¹³They help in working across borders and help in assimilation. The following tools are used in addressing cultural diversity.

- **Global Smart Tool**- Learning Tool used for around 45 languages.
- **Culturatti**- Idea exchange events
- **Symphony**- Blog Forum
- **Ask a Diversity Coach**- 24/7 Coach (8 languages)

Gender Neutral

Global technology firm HCL Technologies has taken a three-tiered approach to improve gender diversity and inclusion outcomes. This has resulted in a number of positive outcomes across the business and benefitted widely.

The three key elements of HCL Technologies' gender diversity strategy are:

1. Leadership commitment and extensive ongoing advocacy to tackle the unconscious bias in the workplace
2. On-boarding multiple stakeholders and driving the agenda based on diversity and inclusion goals of the respective unit, wherein the framework is global but the implementation is global to suit varied business and location needs, 55% of women workforce are hired as freshers and
3. Two enabling programs for women leadership development which are based on formal mentoring to fetch more attention.

The first program is named '**ASCEND**', which mandates increases in the representation of women in senior management by way of multiple ways, including support programs, peer mentoring and coaching at all levels, which provides platforms to enable women leaders to learn and exhibit transformational leadership.

The second program is called '**Stepping Stones**', which is a focused career development program to enable mid-level female employees to realise their career aspirations and potential and help them in their developmental journey. It focuses on coaching new mothers who require help to manage the new expectations at work and home. On an average 160 women enrolled for stepping stone counselled every month.

'**iBelieve HCL Women Connect**' aims to engage and advance women through development programs and advocate a gender neutral work environment by suggesting appropriate policies. Here the group coaches and counsels aspiring young women professionals by sharing experiences on work/life priorities and includes life coach support, daycare in office premises, concierge services. The policies such as extended maternity leave, work from home, flexible careers and flexible work hours are also included.

The scheme '**Feminspiration**', is a platform facilitated by the HCL Women Connect Affinity Network in which successful women leaders are invited to address employees and provide insights into successful leadership as well understand perspectives on gender matters.

Another internal programme is called '**BlogHer**', which is an internal platform where many aspects of gender-neutral policies are discussed. These discussions are productive, non-hierarchical and help both HCL and employees to throw light on workplace myths and stereotypes on gender, culture and other issues.

All these have helped young women, especially those who take maternity breaks to pursue or resume their careers and in FY16, around 8023 employees were covered through such sessions.¹⁴

24.5 per cent female workforce is a significant achievement. It is a tipping point. About 80 per cent of the women who work in the company are at entry level, and the other 20 per cent are spread through the ranks. Within this 20 per cent, about 15-18 per cent are first or second level managers; the rest are senior managers.¹⁵

Closing Generation Gap

The Organisation is investing in sponsoring and facilitating employee resource groups, where no matter the age is, exchange of ideas happen because of certain interests that are common among the group. Interactions between different generations of workers may sometime be very rewarding and serve as avenues for sharing of experience and knowledge. It is often natural that these companies would have a larger number of younger employee population because of the demographic dividend one finds in India where the employable population is mostly from the below 30-year range. However, without retaining experienced workforce at the top, it is difficult on the part of the organizations to inculcate and nurture the right organizational values.¹⁶

Ability Sensitive

Ability sensitive helps us to stay progressive in creating alternate work arrangements and reasonably accommodate employee requirements.

- Disability awareness training for management and co-workers
- Training the recruitment team that hires PwD from time to time based on the business needs
- Basic infrastructure assessments / audit to ensure barrier free work environment

Companies must understand that the market for products and services for people with disabilities is over \$200 billion. Hence getting PwD employees could be a unique window or perspective on marketing for this customer base. Moreover the PwD recruits often have a great motivation to succeed. The area of concern here is how to help the differently able people to be employable. Organizations recruiting them need to take necessary measures for skill enhancement.

There are 50 differently abled employees in the Organisation including War Veterans.

Vendors have been identified to facilitate enable recruitment of PwD and provide special trainings when required.¹⁷

VII. CONCLUSION

Workplace diversity is very important in every business. It is essential that management in any business focus and prioritize diverse hiring due to the numerous benefits that diversity brings. Although there are some minor setbacks, the impact of diversity in every organization is more valuable. While the organisation has been able to focus on some of the key areas such as gender, culture, disability, work life, and age, there is also a need to focus on multiple other aspects of diversity and inclusion as well to have the journey ahead look interesting and productive.

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