

Inclusion in India Inc.

Diversity, the core of our cultural fabric



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Introduction

As a nation, given that diversity has been the core of our cultural fabric, one often finds a naturally created diverse workforce in India Inc. Therefore, as several large and small countries in the developed world have been working on creating diverse and inclusive workplaces over the last four decades, India Inc. never had the need to focus on diversity. Globalization and glocalization have changed the context for businesses all over the world, including India, leading to a shift in discourse among Indian businesses and discussions about diversity. For India Inc., the imperatives for diversity have been a need to attract talent to meet the demands of an expanding knowledge industry sector, creating competent teams for the Indian operations of MNCs, and the ambition of Indian organizations to go global.

Merely pushing for diversity through, most popularly, gender, or age or geographies is clearly not adequate to reap the benefits of having a diverse work force. The clincher is, given a diverse workforce, how are organizations today striving to promote quality, respect, and trust across multiple teams and geographies composed of heterogeneous people in terms of age, gender, sexual preferences, physical abilities, and national cultures? What does it take to go beyond the tokenism as necessitated by social or legal demands, and to create a culture that celebrates diversity in its truest essence? What is India Inc. doing today to create not just a diverse but an inclusive organization?

These were some of the questions that this research proposed to investigate further. The research had modest aims:

- Collate the practices of various organizations in the space of diversity and inclusion
- Understand why they were doing what they were doing
- Share pointers with new entrants in this journey on diversity and inclusion about the dos and don'ts in the field

We wanted to develop a collective understanding of how diversity and inclusion are in India Inc. and share our understanding with organizations across different industries.

Our Framework for Defining Diversity & Inclusion (D & I):

For the purpose of this study, the definition of diversity we adopted was ‘the varied perspectives and approaches to work that members of different identity groups bring’¹. While diversity focuses primarily on the demographic makeup of groups and organizations, inclusion emphasizes encouraging participation and moving beyond merely appreciating diversity, toward leveraging and integrating diversity into everyday work life². Simply put, inclusion is ‘the degree to which an employee is accepted and treated as an insider by others in a work system’³.

Another definition of inclusion is ‘the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness’⁴. Therefore, inclusion is viewed both as a process and a condition⁵. Defined as ‘an active process of change or integration, as well an outcome, such as a feeling of belonging’⁶, inclusion is thought to incorporate both an active process of change (to include) and an emotional outcome (I feel included).

Context of Inclusion in India

The Constitution of India⁷ prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment is also laid out as a directive principle. The Constitution, as a protective measure to correct age old social, economic, political and economic deprivations, lays down that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the scheduled castes and tribes. This allows for reservations in educational institutions for the socially and economically marginalized segments, much akin to the affirmative action route in the United States. For example, Indian laws offer women workers maternity benefits, equal pay as men for similar work, and protection against sexual harassment. There are also laws for protecting against other forms of exploitation and discrimination at work. A recent move by India’s Supreme Court in April 2014, accorded legal recognition for the first time to transgender people as a ‘third’ gender, by classifying them as ‘Other Backward Classes’, thereby allowing for their reservations in education and public employment⁸. It marked one more step towards creating a more inclusive climate.

While the Indian Constitution has created the platform for access without discrimination, through laws to safeguard and protect the interests of minorities, our own patriarchal/traditional ways of thinking and being seem to be the biggest roadblock in fully achieving inclusion. As one participant said,

“The legacy of the caste-system, growing divide between urban and rural areas, mean that gross inequalities exist in terms of access to opportunities, including education, employment, health and wealth. At the same time, deeply entrenched cultural beliefs – whether it be about women, those with disabilities or the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, have prevented huge portions of the population from participating in social or economic development” (P21)

Moreover, even in terms of guidelines, while there are some policy guidelines for inclusion in education⁹, there isn't an equivalent guideline for inclusion in the workplace.

Also, though Indian Inc. operates within the geographic boundaries of India, given the rise of global work teams and millennials constituting a large part of the ground force, organizations are no longer looking at inclusion as dictated by the laws of the land. Operations in multiple geographies, greater mobility of individuals and interactions in global markets, legal considerations in other nations, all warrant India Inc.'s sensitivity to global practices in ensuring inclusion. A research study by Catalyst research centre¹⁰ across different countries (Australia, China - Shanghai, Germany, India, Mexico, and the United States) highlighted an interesting difference in how a sense of inclusion is experienced in the other nations surveyed as compared to India. In all the nations except India, inclusion was seen as an outcome of both uniqueness and belongingness. Although somewhat counterintuitive, these findings have shown that people have two opposing needs in group settings - the need to belong and the need be unique. When people feel too similar to group members, they try to set themselves apart, to feel unique. When people feel too different from group members, they feel as if they don't belong and may try to assimilate and become more similar. Many experts believe these needs for uniqueness and belongingness are in fact universal. Unlike the pattern observed in other countries, among Indian women and men, uniqueness and belongingness were not distinct contributors to inclusion. Those who said they felt unique in their workgroups were equally likely to report a sense of belongingness. They seemed to view the concepts of uniqueness and belongingness interchangeably. India Inc. thus needs to approach inclusion possibly a little differently when promoting diversity and inclusion at a global level.

Trends from other countries¹¹:

Some organizations in the UK, have come together to create benchmarking tools or some form of standards. For example, there is the Equality and Human Rights Commission, a government agency, in the UK that promotes and monitors human rights and tries to enforce, through a code of practice and guides, practices for equality and inclusion.

There is also a newly created organization in the UK, called the National Equality Standard (NES) with Microsoft and Cisco among its 20 founding organizations, that attempts to create benchmarks for all legally protected diversity forms and conduct diversity audits. Independent auditors assess each organization that wishes to be audited for diversity. The organizations are in turn provided detailed reports on the extent to which their policies and activities fit with best practices.

There is unequivocal evidence that increasing diversity leads yields much advantage to an organization. On one level it helps organizations to reach out to diverse customer groups and markets, and on another level by allowing for a variety of perspectives, it promotes innovation and superior work outcomes and performance. However, to reap some of the benefits accruing from diversity there is a need to create inclusive environments.

The pairing of diversity and inclusion at times leads to the misunderstanding that these are related and similar. It is argued that while diversity can be achieved by hiring different people in the organization, inclusion is a process and involves change in mindset of all the people in an organization. Achieving diversity is a technical and complicated problem but experiencing inclusion is an adaptive and complex problem. Diversity is an outcome and inclusion is a process. At the end of the day, a diverse organization in all countries and contexts will have more or less the same look and feel. An inclusive organization will only be reached through an emergent contextual involvement of all employees and thus each inclusive organization will look a little different.

One of the participants in the study said, "Creating diversity is one of the biggest objectives for us today. So all of the practices that we have around focus on diversity, including hiring and at leadership levels, growing internally, creating leadership pipelines.... The other is how do you create inclusion, once you have the diverse talent inside the system, how do you retain them and create an environment for them that is nurturing and will help the individuals succeed" (P33)

Given this differentiation between diversity and inclusion, and the lack of real understanding of inclusion, we decided to paint a picture of how, an ideal, truly inclusive organization might be seen or experienced.



A Fully Inclusive Organization – An Ideal

An inclusive organization would be one where:

- The climate is characterized by transparency, fairness and there is focus on skills and competencies of employees rather than in whom the competency resides.
- The labels of skills, competence, citizenship, roles can coexist with identities such as gender, regions and special needs.
- Inclusion efforts are not directed towards one particular community or group but are reflected in respectful and supportive practices towards all individuals irrespective of gender, community, age, sexual preferences and unique needs.
- Leaders demonstrate through their actions, belief in and commitment to diversity, creating opportunities for dialogue about differences, and when required even alter rules and norms to accommodate differences¹².
- Employees are able to bring the whole of themselves to the organization, expressing and giving voice in an unhindered way to ensure effective problem solving, decision making, creativity, and enhanced performance in multiple ways.
- The policies and processes bear a stamp of the diverse needs and perspectives that exist in the organization.
- The employee is seen as a whole person with a life outside the workplace as well.
- It is explicitly recognized that all employees have peaks and troughs – in some cases it is predictable (as seen often in the case of women employees) and at times is sudden (as can happen to anyone – man or woman – given their own personal responsibilities, needs and aspirations). Recognizing this, the system extends empathy and expected support rather than imputing motive to the person going through the trough about their commitment and abilities.
- A sense of belonging is created and experienced not by dismissing but by celebrating the uniqueness among individuals.
- Where there is an active checking of a predominantly dominant (in most cases masculine) discourse for example, “I know everything, I need no help, I can win if I try hard, I need to compete to get ahead” –and alternative discourses are encouraged, for example, “I do not know everything, I may need help, I can win if we all try hard, I need to collaborate to get ahead”.

- Where the focus is to be natural rather than correct. For example, it is natural to be curious but correct to not show curiosity.
- Where the merging of being natural and respect creates an environment of joy and exploration rather than a climate of being proper and constrained as created by correctness and rule obedience.
- Where there is a willingness to accept openly the presence of biases and shortcuts in judgments and recognize when it comes in the way of limiting another person’s potential and capability.
- Conflicts and complaints arising out of perception of biases of others are openly discussed and not hidden under the carpet.
- Inclusiveness is a way of life and not something nice to do when the going is good for the organization and put on the back-burner when there is a crisis in the organization.

Table 1: Values/Knowledge/Skills found necessary for creating inclusion



*Common across all levels of hierarchy within an organization (Adapted¹³)

Methodology

The study was designed to bring together individual opinions, organizational contexts, actions of those driving the diversity and inclusion agenda, stances of business heads/line managers, and experiences of employees of various minority groups working in 21 organizations with respect to inclusion in organizations. The study captures trends, stories, best practices, and challenges in fostering inclusion in Indian organizations. The research aimed to paint the state-of-art inclusion in Indian organizations.

The study was undertaken to understand:-

1. The reasoning behind increasing diversity and creating inclusive environments
2. Identification of which minority groups are being focused on for diversity and inclusion and why? Challenges that are faced with respect to inclusion of those minority groups within the organization
3. Practices that Indian organizations have taken towards including minority groups

The study was conducted in three steps. First, the authors read the extant literature on diversity and inclusion and wrote a review paper distilling trends. Second, a group of practitioners and academics met to discuss the challenges and the issues in creating diverse organizations and understanding the processes of inclusion. The third step was in-depth interviews with 75 professionals working in 21 different organizations. Within each organization, people holding multiple roles were interviewed. To add the perspective of the practitioners, the leaders of organizations working in the space of supporting and consulting for diversity and inclusion were interviewed. Specifically organizations working on the issues of women representation, persons with disability, and LGBT were interviewed.

Steps in research maybe summarized as-

1. **Writing a Position Paper** -Curated theoretical and empirical research available on diversity and inclusion.
2. **Seminar at IIM Ahmedabad** - Meeting of diversity and inclusion leads and support organizations working in this space to share their views, experiences and inferences with respect to creating diversity and inclusion within organizations
3. **In-depth Interviews** – Conducted interviews with four groups to understand state of inclusion in Indian organizations from multiple perspectives
 - Diversity and Inclusion/HR Lead – practitioners perspective
 - Business/Line Head – operational work environment perspective

- Minority Member – user perspective
- Practitioners working in the domain of diversity and inclusion

Method for the Study

Given the objectives of the study and the nascent state of knowledge about diversity and inclusion in Indian organizations, it was decided to use the qualitative method to answer the research questions. Semi-structured interviews with D & I practitioners was a natural starting point for collecting data. To add richer perspectives, data was also collected from the business heads from the organization and from a few (2 or 3) members of the minority groups represented in the organization.

Design of Interview Schedule and Generating a List of Policies and Practices

The interview guide and a number of quantitative questions were compiled based on the literature and discussion with the diversity and inclusion practitioners during the seminar. The questionnaire was first designed by a core group of researchers and then shared with three experts in the field of research. The experts commented on the content, tone, and the adequacy of questions. One diversity and inclusion practitioner was shown the interview schedule to test for face validity.

The interview schedule was designed to capture the following

- o **Identification:** To understand the focus areas and business imperatives behind driving diversity and inclusion in the organization.
- o **Policies & Practices:** What was put in place by the organization to drive the inclusion agenda? These questions focused on practices that ensure fairness in recruitment, progression, development opportunities, promotions, and performance management of minority groups.
- o **Monitoring Inclusion:** What was done by the organization formally and informally to monitor inclusion in the organization.
- o **Behaviours:** These questions focused on behaviours of business leaders in driving inclusion and diversity in their function, e. g. creating an inclusive culture, collaboration styles, encouraging use of diverse talent or specific measures taken not specified in policy or practice.
- o **Views:** Primarily aimed towards the interview with minority group members, the questions focused on alignment of the diversity strategy and plan being run by organizations e.g. capturing feelings of inclusion, say in decision making, execution or policy/process making.

As part of the interview there were five questions that were asked which included quantifying various aspects of diversity and inclusion within the organization.

The aspects for which quantitative data was collected included

1. Identification - Who were the minority groups the organization was focusing on?

2. Policies/Procedure – What was the reflection of diversity and inclusion agenda in the

a. Mission & Vision?

b. Values?

c. Policies such as

i. Equal Opportunity?

ii. Equal Pay for Equal Work?

3. Practices – What were some of the practices that helped furthering diversity and inclusion agenda

a. Audits & measurements?

b. Support groups creation?

c. Communication & messaging?

d. Celebration and acknowledgement of main festivals and important days?

e. Monitoring bias?

f. Physical place accessibility?

g. Performance conversations?

h. Mentoring and sponsorship?

i. Involvement of middle management?

j. External messaging?

k. Diversity training (what kind and to whom and how frequently)?

4. Measures taken and individual feedback on levels of inclusion

5. Perceived commitment towards inclusion of –

a. Top team

b. HR department

c. Supervisors

d. Minority group members

Organizations or groups working in the domain of research, advocacy, and support of diversity and inclusion were interviewed to get their perspective about the patterns and state-of-art of “inclusion thinking” in Indian organizations. The key person in each of these organizations was interviewed with focus mainly on:

1. Identification: i) Focus and areas of consulting ii) Minority groups that they support

2. Organizational Practices: i) Practices that organizations have adopted ii) success rate of the practices iii) Seriousness of the organizations towards those practices

3. Commitment: Their rating of the commitment of top teams and HR teams, supervisors and minority groups in organizations they have consulted for.

Process of interviewing

In most cases the organization was reached through the diversity and inclusion head or the HR head. Permission was sought to conduct interviews with the person driving the initiative, one business head, and two or three members of the minority group in the organization. The choice of who would be interviewed within the organization was left to the individual who agreed to be the principal contact in the organization. The interviews in most cases were carried over telephone and permission was sought to record the interview. Except for two organizations, permission was given for recording the interview by all participating organizations. There were 5 researchers who interviewed, and each one on an average interviewed four companies. From among this team, three researchers and one additional researcher who did not interview formed a part of the core research team.

Informed consent was obtained from all those who were interviewed for this study. To enable informed consent, the interview schedule was sent in advance and it was promised that no data would be shared without permission and broad trends will be shared in aggregate form so that a company or individual would not be identifiable. In presenting the findings, wherever permission was sought or given, we have quoted the person and shared the name of the organization. For other views that we included in the report, anonymity was maintained by using codes to represent the participants.

Though there was an interview schedule, it was in most cases only used to guide the conversation with the interviewee. The interviewer made sure that all the major points were covered before closing the conversations. To remain consistent, only one researcher led all conversations held within an organization.

The five interviewers generated close to 74 hours of interviewed material. This included 25 hours of interviews with diversity and inclusion /HR Leads in the 21 organizations, 21 hours of interviews with line managers or business heads (preferably not HR), and 25 hours of interviews with 50 members of minority groups spread in participating organizations. In addition there were three hours of interviews with practitioners from supporting organizations.

After the completion of all interviews from a company the researcher used their notes, impressions, intuitive sense of what was being said by the various members to write a memo capturing their impression about inclusion in the company.

After each interviewer had completed one set of interviews and written a memo, another researcher read through the transcripts and the memo to help improve the interviewing process and the writing of in-depth reflexive memos. The memos were then shared with the core team of researchers. The quantitative data was transferred to a spreadsheet.

Sample

It was envisaged that the study includes organizations diverse in as many ways as possible. Attempts were made to contact large and small public and private sector organizations, organizations in the field of media companies, telecom, retail, information technology, financial services, research and analytics, pharmaceutical, education, sports young, transport and infrastructure, and other established organizations. Indian-owned with multinational presence, multinational with Indian presence, Indian organizations with pan-Indian presence, and Indian organizations with regional presence were considered. More than 150 organizations were contacted. Many did not respond or took a lot of time to understand the purpose of this study and when they did they said they had not done much in the field, and therefore did not wish to participate, others said that they duly followed the government regulations and that was the extent of their journey in diversity and inclusion. Some agreed but could not participate because they could not make the time commitment to participate in this research. With repeated follow-ups and reminders the final sample included 21 companies that represent 8 industries (as shown in the graph).

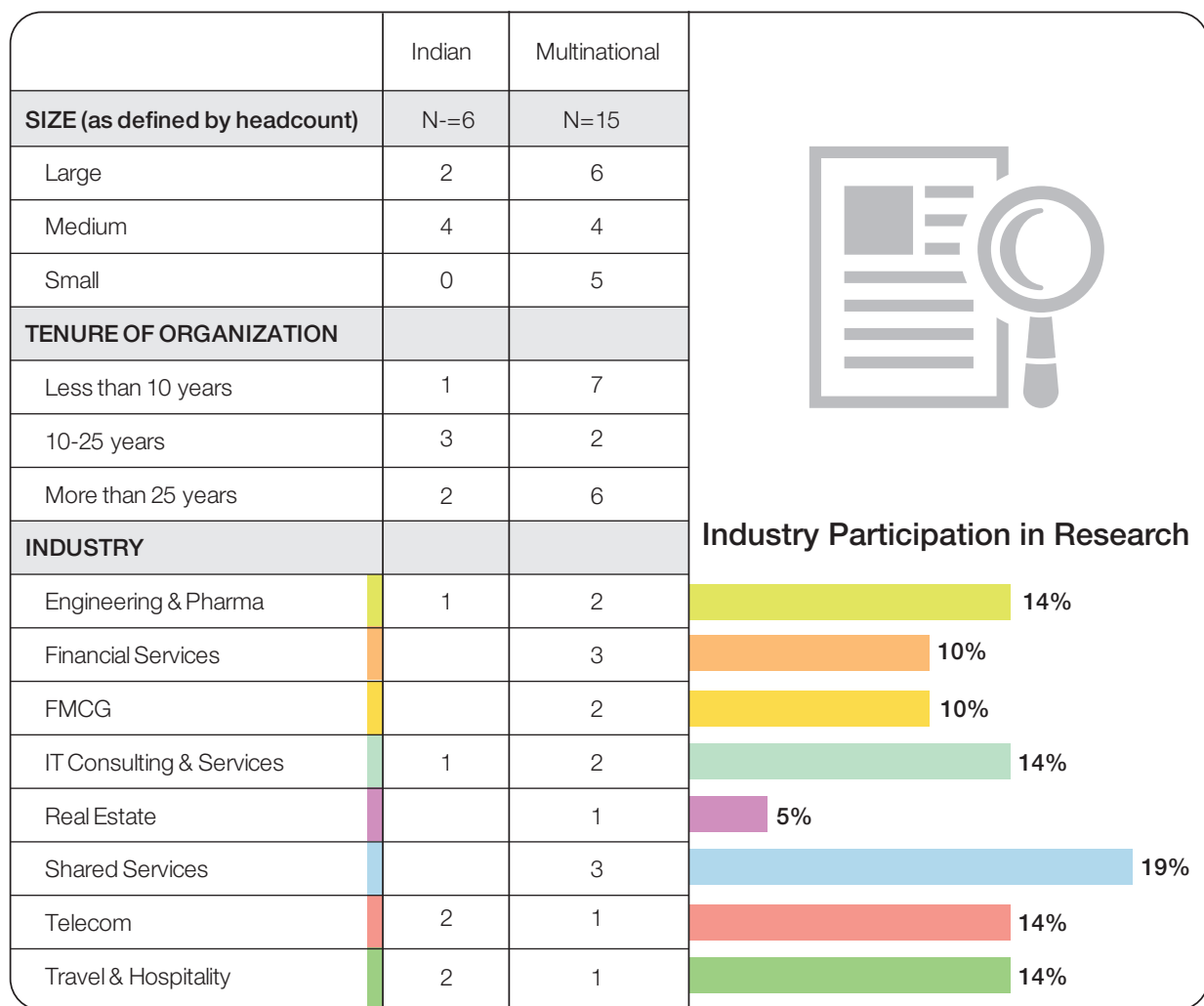
Eight organizations both Indian and multinational have had operations in India for over 25 years with one of them having its presence for approximately 90 years. There are 5 organizations having their presence between 10 to 25 years in the country and there are 8 organizations with a tenure of less than a decade. There are 15 multinational organizations (referred to as MNCs or Multinationals in the report) and 6 Indian origin organizations that may or may not have international presence (referred to as Indian organizations in the report). Of the 6 Indian companies, 4 of them are in industries such as telecom and hospitality, and two are in

manufacturing. The largest organization in terms of headcount is 56000 and the smallest has 260 employees. To categorize organizations on size, the following cut-offs based on headcount were used-

- o **Large** (headcount of 10000 and above). In our sample there are 6 multinationals and 2 Indian organizations
- o **Medium** (headcount of 2000 and 10000 employees). In our sample there are 4 multinationals and 4 Indian organizations in this category.
- o **Small** (headcount of less than 2000). In our sample we have 5 multinational organizations in this category.



Fig: 2 Diversity of organizations included in this study



The three practitioner organizations that were interviewed included one that worked primarily in the domain of gender equality and women representation in the workplace, one which worked in the domain of rights of persons with disability, and one that worked for the awareness of issues and rights of LGBT.

Analysis of Data

All interviews were transcribed and read by at least two researchers to generate codes from the interviews. The codes generated were then checked for consistency. In case of differences of opinion (happened in less than 1 percent of the cases), the two coders discussed to resolve the coding.

The codes generated were then analyzed in conjunction with the accompanying memos written by researchers to list broad findings, trends, and patterns across organizations included in this. Three of the researchers met together to generate insights, share and corroborate them. The insights were captured from their reading of the transcript and memos. One of these researchers had not been involved in interviewing and thus was neutral towards interpretations, trends, and insights discussed. Discussions among the core group of researchers and linking with the literature and position paper written by the authors earlier helped structure findings.

OUR FINDINGS

a. The D & I Journey for Organizations:

Several factors have made diversity discourse find a foothold in organizations. The search and induction of talent in large Indian IT services firms such as Wipro has brought trainees from 15 to 20 nationalities to the training institutes located in India. The recognition that the median age in organizations is changing and shifting down, creates the necessity to modify existing policies and processes to meet employee needs and aspirations. The glaring absence of women in the middle and senior positions in all industries irrespective of what the numbers were in the early stage careers is being looked at seriously.

The D & I journey for most organizations surveyed in this study seems to have started a maximum of 5 years ago.

There is growing momentum among practitioners and researchers to point out that bringing people in is not sufficient. It is necessary to make people belonging to minority groups to feel included.

Our study found that the focus from ensuring diversity to focusing on inclusion seems to have happened only in the last two years for most companies.

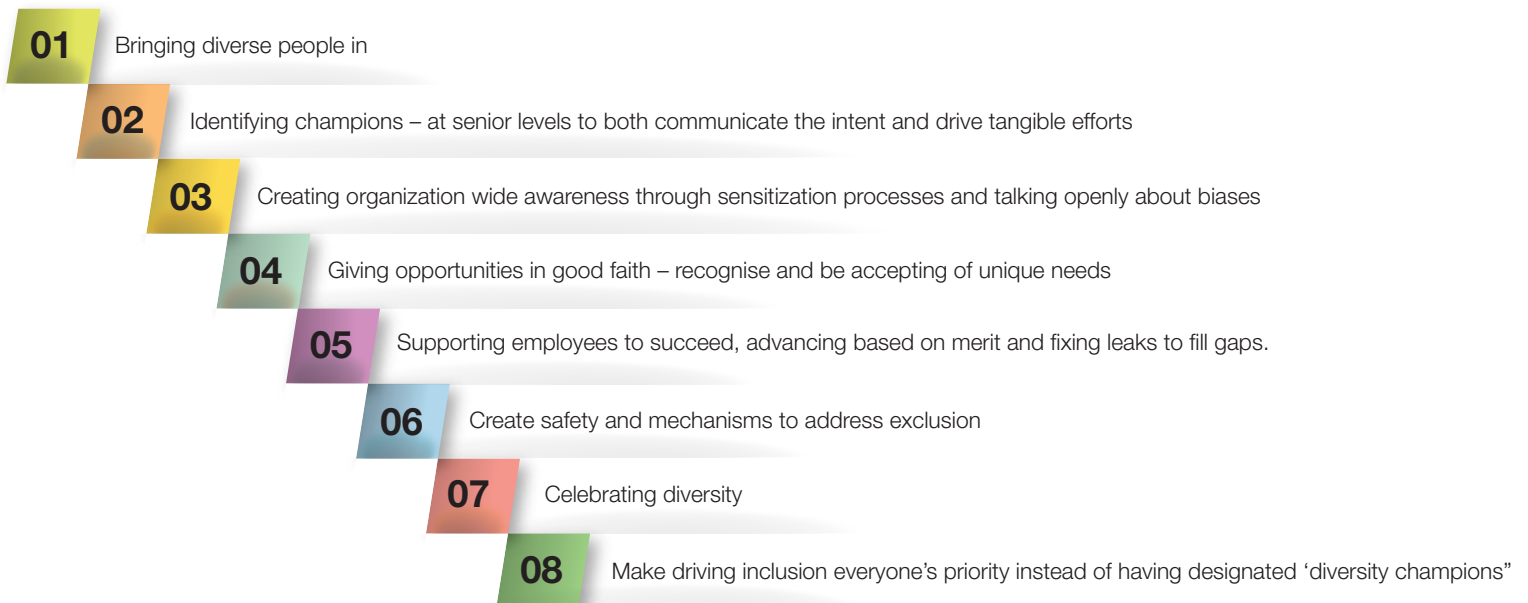
In almost all cases, the diversity effort focuses on ensuring a certain number of women become a part of the work force. Few of the organizations have started asking questions on what it might mean to also have an inclusive environment for women. Going beyond ensuring diversity to creating an inclusive workplace means:

- o Fundamental respect for all
- o Trust and belief that given the right opportunities anyone can perform

Though most organizations are just about starting their D & I journey, when we put together the various viewpoints and opinions the collective wisdom shows us, there are several milestones that the D & I journey needs to pass through on its way to reaching inclusiveness which are listed below:

In subsequent pages, each of these points have been further elaborated with reference to our findings, and some of the best practices that were collated across the interviews.

In several of the organizations interviewed – there is a global D & I agenda which is then customized to specific geographies. Best practices get shared. If one specific country is creating an inclusive environment mandated by the law, the same practice is promoted to other geographies where it is not yet a legal requirement.



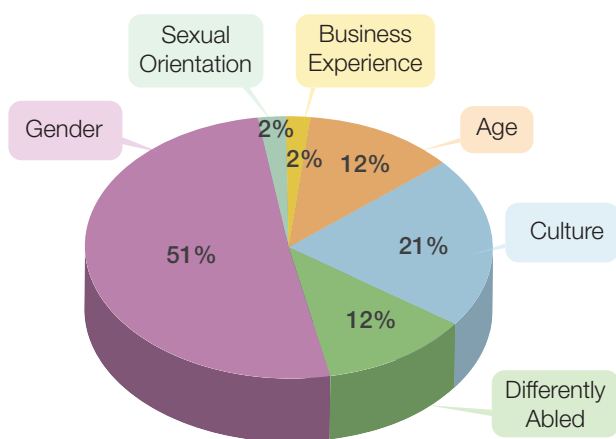
b. Bringing Diverse People In:

The society is diverse in many ways. What are the parameters of diversity that would be necessary to acknowledge and adopt consciously is an important question for organizations to dwell on. Organizations could choose to focus on sex, age, sexual preference, physical and mental ability, regional, caste, socio-economic status, and nationality as various parameters to introduce diverse groups.

- In our study it was found that 51% organizations have consciously chosen to bring more women into the organization to start their diversity and inclusion journey. While the most obvious reason for this seems to be that women represent 50% of the available talent pool, there were many other business imperatives (shared in subsequent sections) that seem to present sex diversity is an idea that needs to be promoted seriously. Diversity initiatives on women as a workforce include ways to attract women at the workplace, retention efforts, and in addressing the leaking pipeline.

“Over the past two years we focused intensely on becoming gender balanced and moved from having 14% women in our workforce to 20% today. This focus will continue in 2015,” says Ashok Ramchandran, director, HR, Vodafone India. “The company’s Discover Graduate programme, under which it hires from business schools and technology institutes, focuses on 50% women hires at the entry-level. This, too, will continue,” he adds.

Organizational Focus



- Regional and cultural diversity is the next most mentioned focus for increasing diversity in the organizations

A Rural BPO

Wipro’s rural BPO center was launched in Manjakkudi in 2011 as a Back Office to Back Office Model as the result of a tie-up with Swami Dayananda Education Trust. The trust strives to provide quality education to the economically backward regions of Tamil Nadu. The center completed 3 years in 2014 and from an initial strength of 50 employees, it grew to 100 employees in year two, and year 3 boasts of around 150 employees. The center has enabled creation of job opportunities and in turn reduced the migration of youth to urban areas.

- “We go to all colleges from Jammu & Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Assam to Mumbai is, we visit every single state, for example, we visit the Regional Engineering College in every state and at least a few people from every state. The reason is we want diversity of culture, we want diversity of thinking, we want diversity of religion, caste, everything because we don’t want people belonging to one place to be recruited” (P54)
- Age draws a third in the list with 12% organizations mentioning it as a dimension that defines diversity for them. Maximising generational diversity in terms of addressing the issues of millennials and the older generation simultaneously is also an area of focus.
- Tied at the third position is diversity arising out of hiring persons with disability (12%). There seemed to be different ways and different levels of comfort that people seem to have in labelling someone as “differently abled” or “having special needs”.
- Diversity in terms of LGBT was a language that only 2% of the organizations surveyed (only MNCs) seemed comfortable speaking about. Else, it tended to get completely dismissed. Like a participant accurately explained the situation, “Exclusion is usually unintentional because of lack of exposure to the LGBT category. People do take a step back the moment they hear the word gay or lesbian or bisexual or transgender. As a culture we haven’t evolved so much that it is easily spoken about.”(P39)

Bringing new types of people and having them perform in an organization is akin to bringing about change in an organization. Studies have shown that in most organizations only 54 percent of changes are successful¹⁴. Proposed change efforts fail because of many reasons of which the key one is, resistance to change by the existing people, not enough communication to the people who are affected by the change, not getting buy in of the key people, not investing in culture change and not enough managerial attention to change^{15 16}. To sustain any change effort and get results from it requires dedicated high quality change leadership¹⁷.

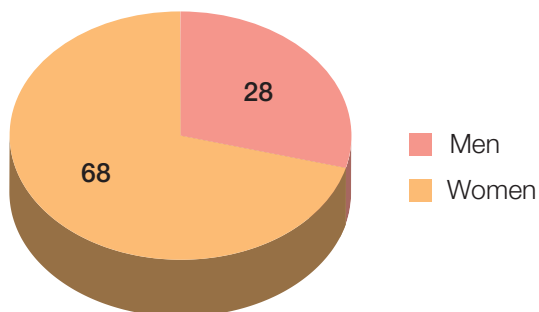
c. Identifying Champions:

It was found in our study that identification of champions of diversity and inclusion, gives D & I efforts the much needed focus and sustained implementation. As a participant shared, “You need commitment at an organizational level if you want to make significant progress on this journey, you need to have one person managing this and thinking about it morning, noon, lunch, in the middle of sleep and working on it constantly because you know how diversity work is, it is like climbing up the Himalayas every morning and coming back down in the evening. It is management to such an extent where we don’t see change immediately” (P30)

In the organizations surveyed, we only found that 24% organizations had a designation and sole responsibility to drive the D & I initiative

- In the absence of that, one of the members in the HR function had been designated as the diversity champion in organizations.
- In one organization, two people have been asked to handle D & I in addition to their other function.

Gender Mix of People leading D & I agenda



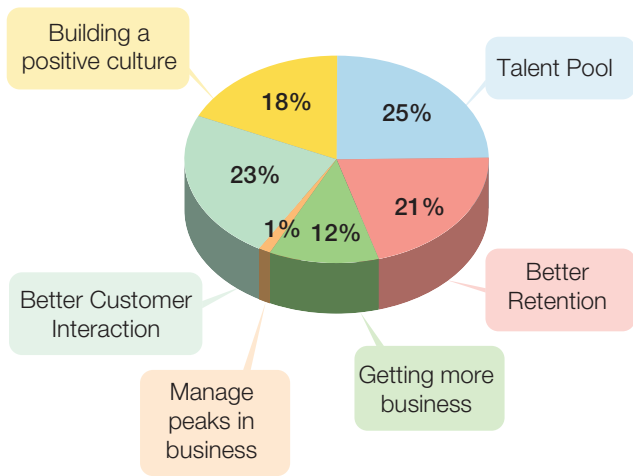
- Interestingly in 68% percent of the cases women are leading the D & I initiative. Women we guess are assumed to understand and identify with the issues of diversity and inclusion better having been on the minority side for a long time.
- At one of the participating companies, they have put a practice of identifying a woman manager in the HR team in each location. “Every region we have a lady HR manager who interacts with all the women of that particular region once in 5-6 months to understand what are their needs and any issues are there or any problems are there and all that and those things are taken care of” (P10)
- Another perspective that emerged was that the diversity and inclusion efforts need to be driven by a diverse group. As shared by a participant, “We created a diversity champions group some time ago and I attended a meeting, I think just two weeks ago and the first thing I noticed was that this particular group was gender heavy in terms of more women. I think there were 80% women in this group than men and I told them that this can’t work. This is a diversity champions group. This is the first group that needs to be balanced.”(P12) Diversity of perspectives like for everything else would ensure that there is sensitivity to different groups of employees (and not just those seen to be a minority with respect to numbers) and the organization would be able to take a more holistic approach when planning inclusion strategies.
- All the D & I leads (irrespective of whether it was their primary or secondary role) were passionate about the issue and were not looking at it as an additional burden. They were totally convinced of the need to drive diversity.
- In some of the organizations where the D & I journey is at the conception stage or has just begun, the people we interviewed displayed enthusiasm and curiosity to learn about how to achieve an inclusive culture.

Though women and HR seem to be driving the D & I initiative, we believe that for a change in culture and mindset of the entire organization there is greater need for men from different functions to be part of the team driving the change. In successful change efforts the change initiators find allies and use them to get people within their circles of influence to buy in and change. Bringing about change of mindsets is akin to leading a peaceful non-violent revolution. People need to see why the current needs to change and what is in it for them in the change.

d. Highlighting the Business Imperative to Support D & I

Some of the business reasons that were explicitly stated as the underlying driver for D & I:

What Prompts Organizations To Make D & I a Priority?



– The most commonly cited reason - Attract resources from a wider talent pool

– Second most common reason: Better customer retention -consumer purchasing behaviour is women-led and it helps to have women having a clear say in designing products and services

– This was followed by higher retention of those supported when they had specific and special needs

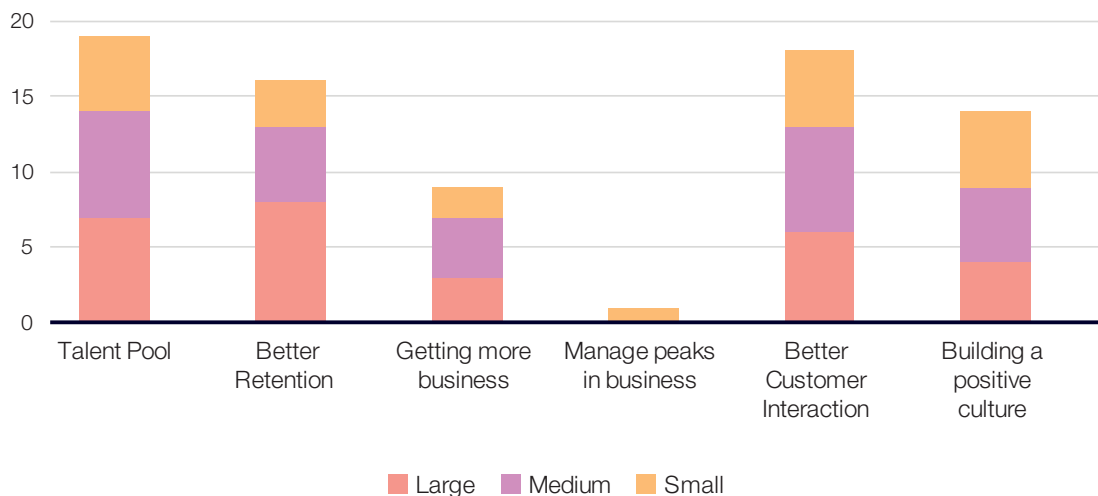
“In IT, ITES sector anybody in HR understands how difficult it is to retain people especially after you have spent time with top talent, after you have spent all your resources on training them, coaching them and so on, after 2-3 years they start looking out. That is what this sector is all about, but if you are able to look at diversity from that perspective, if you are able to turn into your advantage, if you are able to give people from disability or even older people a chance and mainstream them, then you have actually solved that retention problem because these people will stay on and they will be loyal and you can build your business...”. (P12)

– Other reasons:

- o Manage cost of resources during peaks and drops in the business cycle (having part-time staff)

Business Imperative for D & I

Reasons mentioned - classified based on the organizations' size



- o Clients across the globe valuing working with diverse teams
- o Innovation is supported when diverse views and approaches are given voice to
- o Better adherence to policies and procedure
- o Better productivity (data-specific jobs)

“One aspect that everybody has seen within the organization is amount of meticulousness of our women employees and discipline they follow for those 8 hours is commendable....The efficiency rates in transaction processing as well as reporting and analytics team has been phenomenally good particularly when it comes to having a woman employee. This is not subjective content, it is the numbers which are talking” (P64)

- o For sourcing and procuring in different countries – government regulations around diversity need to be followed
- o Special skills brought in by women:
 - Women bringing in empathy as an inherent factor in decision making – shows the organisation is a positive light.
 - Conflict handling ease and range of style adopted by women a key strength. Women are able to handle interactions with others more smoothly
- o In customer interfacing role, having resources who can speak in a range of languages
- In 90% of the organizations interviewed, it was high level of commitment of the senior management which was giving the D & I agenda the much needed support.
- Commitment was shown by both a range of actions of and communication by senior leaders as elaborated in the next section.

VIN - Vodafone Inclusivity Network

FOUR C' S model for valuing diversity and promoting Inclusion involving

Customer, Communication, Colleagues and Community. There is a VIN chapter in each Circle. The Circle Chapters take the onus of creating the D & I agendas and creating quarterly calendars for activities under the 4 C Model. There is a semi-annual meet of Circle senior sponsors to share Best Practices.

The entire network is driven by the business circles – 23 Circles across India

The Focus is Gender and all activities of 4C's around that agenda.

- To inspire and empower women to maximize their potential for both individual and business success
- To promote cross-gender understanding and an inclusive culture wherein people get a safer environment to communicate thoughts and views specifically on any cultural or policy barriers
- To support the creation of a consistent Vodafone employer brand that is attractive to women
- To provide insight into the requirements of female customers to inform the development of Vodafone products and service
- To encourage the involvement of network members in Vodafone Foundation or local community initiatives that benefit women in

What We Get If We Diversify: View from Research¹⁸

Diverse organizations offer opportunity for greater creativity, innovation, financial performance, organizational adaptability, better problem solving and information processing, employee retention and enhanced profit and corporate image

- In one study of Fortune 500 companies, it was found that the top 25% of the firms in terms of women in senior management, actually yielded returns to their stockholders that were over 30% higher than those of their peers¹⁹
- A survey in the United States²⁰ found racial and gender diversity to be associated with increased sales revenue, more number of customers, greater market share, and greater relative profits.
- A Deloitte report observes that if just 10% more employees feel included, the company will increase work attendance by almost one day per year per employee, show greater ability to innovate, be more responsive to changing customer needs, and team collaboration²¹.
- A catalyst report found that in India, employee perceptions of inclusion accounted for 43% of team citizenship behaviour²².
- Using the top Indian 100 companies listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange, a study commissioned by the Times of India group²³ reports a positive impact of women representation in top leadership and as board members, on return on investment. Another study on 2500 Danish firms found very similar results²⁴.
- A Forbes report²⁵ found that diversity was a key driver of innovation and is critical for success of organizations on a global scale.
- A study of 800 business units across two organizations showed that gender diversity independently predicted financial performance at the business-unit level²⁶.
- The link between heterogeneity and desirable work outcomes has been shown to be even more important when the work involves tacit knowledge such as those of knowledge workers²⁷, given that the possession of knowledge is not the privilege of any one group/race/individual.

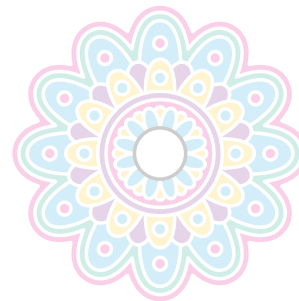
e. How Senior Management Champions Diversity & Inclusion:

Playing an active role in disseminating the message and the efforts towards building diversity and inclusion:

People we interviewed in the organizations at different levels (from head of D & I to employees in the diverse groups) spoke about the ability to talk about tangible efforts being made by the senior management in this regard. Some of these were:

- Highlighting the D & I agenda in town halls and organization-wide gatherings.
 - o “...once in a quarter I make sure that out of 90 minute meeting that I have there is 10-15 minutes slot on diversity, so that we are focusing and we are saying what is the purpose...”. (P22)
- Some managers also make it a point to mention it informally in team meetings and casual interactions with managers.
 - o “...in most of our department head level meetings, this message is shared informally that we should not have same set of people together, etc for different reason but actually it helps in diversity” (P71)
 - o “During all the collective meetings our CEO would tell the then manager of e-commerce, ‘I am still waiting to see women employees in your team’. Essentially it was the CEO’s way of directly and yet subtly communicating the importance of diversity in that team. The manager understood the message and subsequently made efforts to action on it.” (P26)
- The CEO or the members of the top management team make D & I visible by spearheading D & I councils that are set up within the organization
 - o “In addition to that, there is communication which goes out from the HR head giving an update of the key initiatives that we have taken in the D & I to the entire organization. On these specific days, which fall in the people culture initiative, there is again communication going out from the leaders talking about the programs that we have done and programs that we plan to do”. (P17)

- o “A National Executive Committee which is made up 6 senior members - I am the woman there, so the whole company sees that a woman is at the senior most level. Then we have our India Leadership Council which has about 25 members and we are about 4 women in that. So there is inclusion right from the senior most level”. (P45)



- A visible way in which the D & I initiative is made salient is by specifying goals that will help support the D & I activities within the organization. Research has shown that just setting up goals can improve performance by as high as 25 to 30 points. In our study we found that at least 20 percent of the companies explicitly had goals around D & I.

Ensuring Decision Making is an Inclusive Process:

- A way of projecting serious focus on inclusion has been to create mechanisms to ensure diverse views are taken into consideration for decision making. 90% of the organizations spoke of having this in place. The involvement of diverse groups was seen in a range of situations including very critical decisions (firming on the vision and values) to decisions in everyday operations.
 - o “One area ... is our mission vision values articulation. ... what we did was we created a task force for around 12 people and then they took feedback from around 900 associates what the mission and value of the group should be and finally it was like a roll up vision which of course was further refined and fine-tuned at the board and at the senior management level (P1)



f. Creating Organization-wide Awareness through Sensitization & Communication.

“If you look at my team, may be because I am myself a woman, so I see that commitment a lot within my men force; however, there is another department where a man is leading and I see much lesser commitment out there and the issues also that get reported to me are more from that area. So, there is a difference between the two teams where a man is a leader and a woman is a leader”. (P13)

The commitment shown towards forwarding the D & I agenda is highest among the D & I professionals and the lowest among supervisors (signifying the commitment of middle managers). Average commitment index (rated on a scale of 5 with 5 being the highest) given to the supervisors tended to be lower (3.6) than that given to HR teams and senior management (both scoring 4.3)

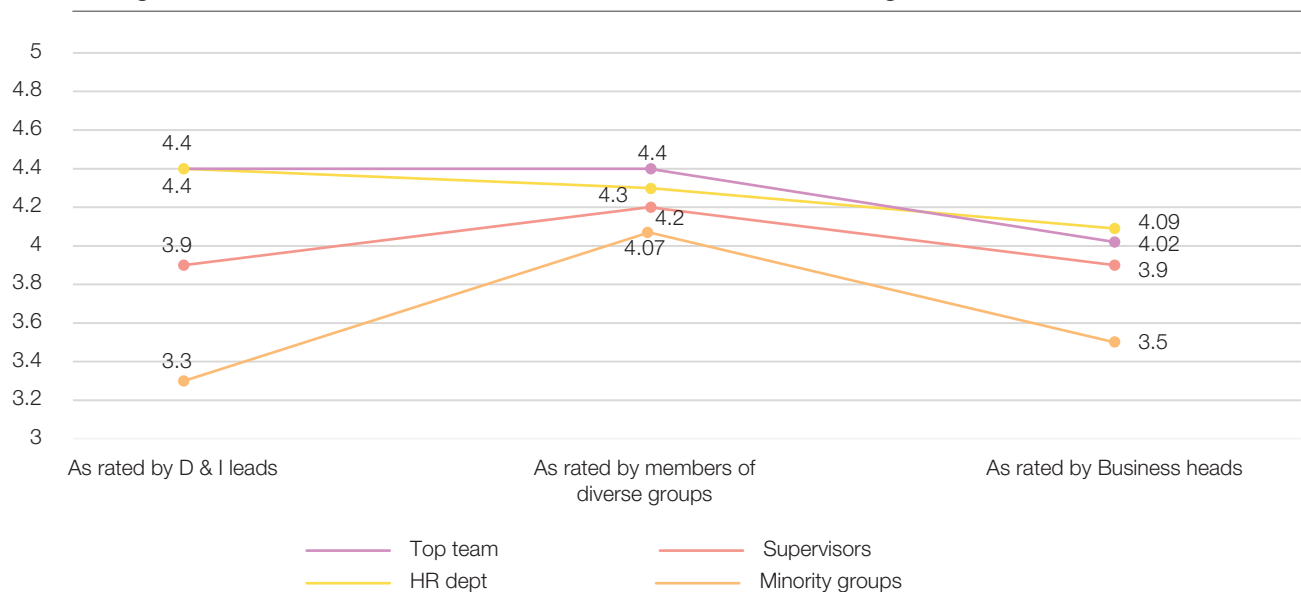
Biases and Social Pressures that Come in the Way of Inclusion

As one of our participant eloquently shared, “inclusivity and diversity is not a very narrowly defined thing, in fact it is really broad and touches upon many things and it doesn’t appear different on the surface and the kind of things that one holds in mind is fundamental to the way in which people are and people’s emotions are” (P69)

Hiring people from different walks of life is part of the challenge but to get them to perform up to their potential is another level of challenge. The block comes from many sources including biases and expectations and their interplay in all the employees albeit majority or minority.

It has been amply established that as a rule, we are wary of someone who is different and people in majority have established patterns of power distribution which they want to maintain. There are also preconceived notions on who can do what and must do what. There are norms mirrored in the society and the organization that keep the current social order going. Hiring somebody different and making them part of the organization is essentially disturbing the status quo.

Average scores on Commitment Index for Different Stakeholders in the organization



In this study, participants spoke about established mind-sets and conditioning as blocks to the inclusion agenda:

- Patriarchal biases
 - o Women are fit for specific roles and are not capable of doing all kinds of work like their male counterparts
 - o "It is like a mixed kind of thing. People would still prefer a male candidate over a female candidate; let's say for a finance kind of a job. Acceptability is there but there are people who don't take chances." (P3)
 - o All said and done, there is something in the mind including mine saying that the mechanical work will be a bit difficult after a few years, may be once she gets married and has kids. (P10)
 - o Tendency to consciously or unconsciously lower expectations when it comes to specific groups (women, differently-abled people)
 - o "You are hiring and employing ability. You are not hiring disability and the person might have disability, which is no relevance to the job that he or she is performing. So that is the mind-set change which is essential and at the mid management level, at the execution phase, I can honestly tell you we face challenges". (P16)
 - o Normal thing is our typical area managers they will want the women to work exactly like the men. They want them to travel up and down. For example, a sales person, someone who is selling AMC, they would want them to go to each customer and each dealer and make some 10 calls a day and produce the results ...however they do not think women will be do it their way so they given them different less demanding roles (P10)
 - o "Even I have seen NGOs going and speaking to the corporate saying that if you have these data entry kind of jobs then give it to us, this is what our people can do" (P29)
 - o Organizational leaders feel men deserve growth given the personal responsibilities they shoulder as primary breadwinners and the women's income being supplemental. The other bias at times could be that, men who choose not to get married perhaps don't need to be treated the way men with families are.

“There exists an unwritten discriminatory reward system in some organisations around appraisals and bonuses against single people. A lot of LGBT people who do not wish to get into trouble are unable to explain that the marriage is never going to happen. Does that mean ~ ‘I am going to get a horrible posting and am I going to get a sad bonus, because somebody out there doesn't think I really need it because I am not married and I don't have children'? I think somewhere it breathes into you and you may probably look at alternate careers, you might look at better options or you might just leave that organization because there is something out there which is unfair and I think that needs to be addressed with a lot of organizations. Sadly I find a lot of HR professionals totally clueless or insensitive to this reality.”

Pallav Patankar, Executive Director of Pallav trust,

- o Pressures from the family in de-prioritizing professional growth when personal responsibilities increase
- o In case of married couples, the husband's professional choices gets higher weightage in deciding geographies and the need to move when required. Similar weightage is either not being asked for by women or given to women when it comes to moving for professional reasons.
- o Self-imposed limitations from members of the minority groups especially women. In most cases women do not want to step beyond traditional roles and they have very few role models to show to them that their being ambitious professionals is acceptable.
- o "We went for adventure camp; generally women would say that we do not want to participate in activities where you have to do some mountaineering or rappelling or rope exercises and those kinds of things". (P13)

- o “It frustrated me as a woman rather than the organization because I could not think like a man and leave the child behind and go and do my job.” (P4)
- o “Most of the women, especially the young women, they do not get the right kind of support from home so that is something that gets difficult for us to manage.” (P13)
- o “Challenge is in terms of attracting the right candidate, for example if the women candidates during an internal promotion don’t come out in open and apply or if they are not willing to advance, then it becomes difficult for me to recruit. If they don’t raise their hands, how will I know that who are interested and we don’t want to pressurize anyone to join us”. (P26)
- o There are prevalent biases in decision making:
 - o As one of the D & I professionals shared, “We have to constantly address our biases, reflect on them and overcome them and this has to happen at every level. That would be the biggest challenge, there is no other challenge that will be impediment other than our own inability to look into ourselves, self-reflect and behave”. (P16)
- o Some of the biases that are common in decision making include-
 - o People like people who are like them
 - o “There is a strong contingent from one state, a lot of people and we realized that these people are very comfortable with each other and they formed about 50% of the team. Then we realized that this is not very healthy. They are sub groups within the team itself and that sub groups only hang out with themselves and they talk local language”. (P27)
 - o So, to me that was the first step in this journey in terms of personally becoming more sensitive and aware that the world around as much as we would like it to be similar, it is just not that way and there are different strands which make the world and possibly the society and the set of customers that we serve are very different. (P69)
- o We decide based on quickly formed impressions, categories, and stereotypes and then we stay with them and often believe that our heuristics are correct.
 - o “In a chat link there was a complaint of regional discrimination that came up. That was happening amongst some employees and they were talking disrespectfully about a group manager who comes from the northeast. They were calling him names” (P33)
 - o “The amount of hand holding they may require as visually impaired person in terms of moving around within the premises and to do certain activities, efforts required by others in the team or others in the company are quite high and the way the people are running today, every group and every department is running around their goals, it is not the intention, but people just do not have time to spend more time for them” (P71)
 - o “It will require some amount of intervention and continuous guidance to make people stay focused on our objective. So lot of times I have seen unconscious biases creeping in. So it is not that people have bad intentions or anything but people are sometimes not even aware of certain ways in which they are behaving”. (P31)
- o We get used to being a particular way, and change is not possible without sustained effort and constant awareness
 - o “I think people’s perceptions, their paradigms, the way they think, it is very difficult to change personalities and behaviours very quickly. Say for example the case of that line manager who abuses in front of female colleagues in a meeting, how do you change that behaviour? It is very very difficult” (P12)
 - o “During performance reviews posters are put across all along the facility reviews to make sure that there is fairness when evaluating people. The posters help to make managers as well as the HR person in the room are clearly aware of what they need to watch out. The posters tells you clearly what do you need to be thinking about before you rate somebody e.g., go on statistics, the factual, don’t go on hearsay. Also tells everyone to be aware of biases that could creep in.” (P30)

- o Disturbing the power balance is met with resistance from those in power and they will unconsciously or consciously try to conserve power for themselves.
- o “Just having sensitization sessions will not change a man’s perception. It will take time; however, I think slowly things should change”. (P13)

Ways to address biases and overcome normative pressures

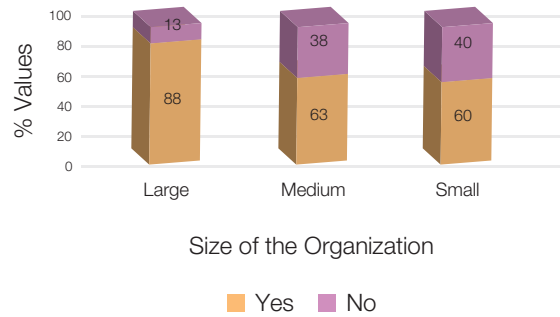
The first step to inclusion, is acknowledging that inclusion requires work at the level of uncovering biases and changing accepted social norms. Most organizations start by creating organization-wide awareness through sensitization and communication.

Organizations included in this study tried to address biases through arranging a host of sensitization programs at different levels and with different focal points. The aim of many of these

interventions is to help organizations to ensure that there is a common understanding of what inclusion means, discuss and reflect on relevant issues.

Of the organizations surveyed, a total of 71% had some form of sensitization training. Larger organizations (88%) were more likely than the medium sized (63%) or the small organizations (60%) to have sensitization programs.

Conducting Sensitization Training



The different kinds of sensitization trainings were categorized into three groups:

1. Mandatory sessions (as enforced by law) – mainly done for awareness around sexual harassment
2. Generic sessions – to communicate broadly, what inclusion and exclusion means, as well as common behaviours, beliefs and practices that contribute to inclusion/exclusion
3. Special sessions – focused on specific issues such as biases (for e.g. during recruitment and performance appraisals); help being sensitive when working with differently abled groups.

Building Bridges across Generations

We did a project across the company. We called it managing multiple generations. We did a study internally and we find that the profile of our employees also is changing dramatically. If somebody looked from outside they will say Siemens average age will be 40 plus, but our average today is 32 and actually it is going down every year. The population of Gen Y which is below 35 is more than 60% and in some areas it more than 70 to 75%. So what we have done is we have done sensitizing workshops in all locations with multiple generations. We got generations of generation X, generation Y, generation Z, millennials, everybody and we got them together in a workshop and we facilitated and we did this study across the organization and this we did internally. We looked at what are the types of expectations and what are the limitations and challenges that each of the generation faces and what are the difficulties they have in working together collaboratively. This was very much welcomed, thinking level has improved and people have started realizing that each generation has something to contribute and everybody has to work together to make the organization successful.

Ramesh Shankar, Head HR, Siemens

The different kinds of sessions are listed below:

Types of Training		
Mandatory	Generic	Special
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevention of sexual harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Success stories of people with disability - Global dignity at work place, training on unconscious bias, gender sensitivity training, Sensitivity workshop for men and women on women going on maternity - Gender intelligence workshop (the science of why men and women are different) - Module on minority groups as part of induction training, Business ethics & conduct, Culture sensitization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitization sessions for the recruitment panellists and for the recruitment team, as in dos and don'ts while interviewing - Diversity considerations at the time of promotion, inclusive leadership for line managers - Understanding expectations and work styles in an intergenerational work team - Micro inequities – how simple gestures impact people - On boarding person with special needs

A range of methods are used to reach out to members in the organization, including disseminating internal newsletters, to getting people involved in theatre.

Methodology

- Theatre
- Online video on company intranet
- Films
- E-learning modules
- External agencies working with people with special needs doing the sessions
- Talks by achievers from the minority groups
- Displaying posters during appraisal, recruitment
- Internal newsletters to share success stories

A good example of the process and method followed by an organization to start sensitization training was to conduct surveys for giving anonymous voice to instances of discrimination, disrespect because of their gender, age, region, or colour. The data generated was used as starting point for the sensitization training.

What our data additionally indicated was that:

- Sensitization sessions are currently skewed towards gender sensitization.
 - o “There are our internal diversity and inclusion training modules that all employees have to compulsorily go through, and there is also prevention of sexual harassment training that happens. These are two separate modules around gender sensitization that are undertaken and there is rigorous follow through to make sure that everyone has attended these sessions. There is certification at the end. These are available as online modules so people can do it at their own time and pace but they have to complete it before a certain time after they join the group” (P71)
- There is very little use of presenting the “other side of the story” to help ensure that people act empathetically and not sympathetically.
- While 15 of the organizations spoke about monitoring biases during recruitment and appraisals, only two explicitly spoke of having sensitisation sessions to address this.

- At times of sudden growth in the size of the organization, it becomes a challenge to sensitize everyone given the limited resources available for sensitization interventions.
 - o The constant cycle of attrition and recruitment gives the sense of being persistent and in an incessant process of building commitment and sensitivity towards diversity and inclusion. Like a participant shared, “...but because we have so many new people, we are growing all the time, we have attrition, and it takes time and those people somehow don't imbibe culture in such a hurry.” (P45)

“It is not possible to generalise the attitude of managers/supervisors, etc. We are here dealing with lack of awareness and mindsets. We have to get the right kind of perspective when it comes to disability. There are supervisors who will say certain things which are very charity based. So a lot of effort goes in sensitization, sometimes one to one. It is a continuous effort in terms of breaking mindsets. Certain times you do have success stories and certain things take time that is how it works. Even in an organization which is 100% committed, individuals are individuals at the end of the day.”

Rama Chari, Head - Diversity & Equal Opportunity Centre

- Organizations that have invested significantly in sensitization have seen results.

“As Nisha Verma (Head – Diversity and Inclusion) of Vodafone shares, “Unlike any other organization, we dedicated a year and a half in terms of speaking to our line manager and our people manager so that they understand the business case for diversity. They then start playing an active role in the entire thing. We have travelled well compared to what we were say 2 years back. Today we are sitting at 20%, and we moved up on these numbers very quickly. We were able to do that because of the initial investment in time in building the right environment. So for me, an advice to any organization who is on this journey is to get the inclusive efforts right and only then start off on what you want to promote with regards to diversity or building a diverse organization.”

To fully accept inclusion as a way of life would mean to create spaces where people have a chance to express, challenge and modify their beliefs.

g. Having a Mechanism to Handle Issues on Exclusion/Discrimination:

Biases, attitudes, stereotypes, prejudices are hard to dispel. Education is one long term way to help change mindsets but it is not sufficient to ensure immediate well-being of the individual/group that is targeted or perceived to be wronged. Thus policies and mechanisms to handle complaints are necessary. Most organizations included in this study had in place, mechanisms for employees to report cases of exclusion or discrimination. Our observations around this process were:

- 86% of the organizations had an appointed ombudsperson to deal with issues being raised. In some cases, HR leaders were also accessible for people to raise their issues
 - “There is this ombudsman that we spoke about. People can call up anytime, so there are numbers which are published there. Anything that they are not comfortable with, they can email the ombudsman. As HR, my effort is that all the problems should first come to my table. It is only when I am not able to sort it out or give resolution; he should be escalating it to ombudsman. Otherwise also if somebody wants to directly write to ombudsman, nobody will say it is not right.”(P3)

“Diversity is celebrated at Make My Trip be it religion, gender or nationality, I have never been made to feel different. Though it’s common in some places internationally but I wonder how many girls in Indian Corporates would sport their individual choice and risk ‘possible’ prejudice, look different & earn the dignity deserved. I think sometimes you have to be a little stronger, little more performance oriented & amiable because the expectation from you is higher or I would say the prejudice could be something difficult to break, but here I had no challenge. It was extremely smooth sailing.”

Aliya, Make My Trip

- “We have that for the prevention of sexual harassment part but for the rest we are essentially saying that managers are custodians of our diversity charter and the HR persons. So we encourage people to reach out to these people in times when they are conflicted or they have clarifications to seek....or are encouraged to reach out to should there be perceived discrimination”. (P70)
- “We have an internet tool where a person has direct access to me as HR head. He or she can write to me and I respond to them. I also take action on whatever feedback they are giving. It will not be shared with their manager or anybody else. People want to make any confidential feedback or any general suggestion also, they can write to me.” (P54)
- In several of the organizations, the existing processes used to report unethical actions are also used to receive complaints on exclusion. These were being used by men and women
 - “There is the (organization’s) ethics hotline which is a global ethics hotline. It is accessible to anyone”. (P30)
 - “There are (name) mail boxes that are there on all floors where people can write a note and just drop a note”. (P33)
 - “We have opened one of those anonymous mail boxes, and this is one of the line items because of the POSH awareness and POSH program in the system. This is one of the mail box which you can report into” (P37)
 - “This forum allows you to actually go online and register a complaint anonymously and the (name of the forum) committee will take action within 48 hours. But that is not necessarily only gender, racial, this could be anything. This could be bribe, this just could be anything, any kind of complaints.” (P40)
 - “We have a whistle blower mechanism in place. We have consciously taken a call that we won’t keep it anonymous. (P9)

- Given that a common channel was used to raise issues on any count, and often it was anonymous, participants interviewed in this study were unable to say how many issues raised were around exclusion
- Only in some of the organizations, there were separate forums / tools created especially for women to raise issues that they faced at the work place. Analysis of these needs and concerns, helped organizations decide areas in which efforts needed to be shared.
 - So at each business we have people with HR head, and Legal Head and someone from the business comprising a small committee which has been designedAnything which comes up, and say the female is not comfortable talking to the manager about it, this is a group of people she can either write to or speak to or somehow convey her concern. This group has a mandate to come back to that person within 48 hours.....We also provide enough flexibility if the female colleague insists that she remains anonymous in the process". (P42)
 - "There are a lot of initiatives that are there across the organisation. They are not only creating awareness of the policies that exist, but also asking all the women employees across the organisation what is more that we can do? What is that you would want? That is a proactive connect for an employee. Tell us what you feel....Are you feeling safe and secure to be coming to work? We also do is this to be filled in later? Which is like calling about 20 women across the country and having a talk with them and see what comes out". (P55)
- There also was one case where POSH was used not only for women to have an avenue to complain (as per the legal requirement) but it was extended to men as well.
 - "We have a mechanism by which they can complain and then it is enquired and report is given and action is taken based on that. It is beyond POSH. POSH primarily requires you to have only for women, nothing to do with men. Men cannot complain in POSH, whereas in our policy both men and women can complain and they are given equal weightage or equal respect if they make any complaint. The mechanism is similar and actions are similar". (P54)
- Where there had been a proven case of harassment or exclusion, there was clear and strict action taken, as shared in one of our interviews,
 - "For any drastic things that happen, we have a speak-up line where a woman can raise her concerns around inclusion or anything else, anonymously again and the organization very transparently looks into it and we have seen cases of people even being dismissed due to behaviours which were not appropriate" (P53).

Having mechanisms of listening to voices of those feeling excluded/discriminated/harassed has many functions. It signals to the minority group that the organization is sensitive to their needs; it establishes that misbehavior or insensitivity on any count will not be tolerated, it will be heard and addressed promptly and appropriately; it educates people of what behavior is acceptable and what is not.

h. Communication & Messaging

In addition to the sensitization efforts mentioned above, the other aspect of promoting inclusion is to have communication around it. Signals of what is acceptable and what is not, are sent by the messages and internal communication of the organization. Employees are signaled about inclusion in several ways in the companies included in this study.

Communicating through vision and values

One organization level practice of powerfully communicating the thrust on diversity and inclusion has been to make it a part of the vision and values of the organization.

One participant said in favor of making diversity and inclusion as part of the mission and vision; "The story here is that if the intent is there you can mobilize all the resources in your organization to go towards that goal". (P16)

There was a range of terms that were part of the vision statement to highlight focus on building a diverse and inclusive place. While some of the organizations used a broad term, namely, 'inclusion', others seem to use specific groups which will be included. In the data there seemed to be a bias towards inclusion of women, given that in most organizations there was an attempt to improve the man: woman ratio. Larger organizations were also more often simultaneously looking at more than one under-represented group for increasing diversity.

In many cases organizations had not changed the mission and vision statement but supplemented it by adding a diversity charter or such documents.

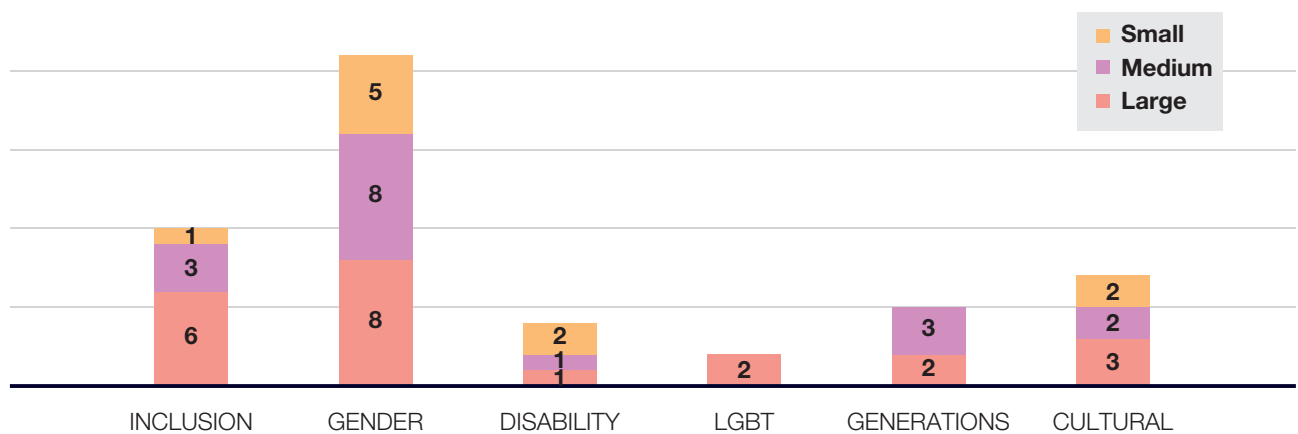
"We have a diversity charter, we believe our diverse culture and society in India is our mirror for being diverse at work". (P54)

"As an organization, we have a diversity policy and inclusivity policy and these initiatives are driven across the groups and functions". (P71)

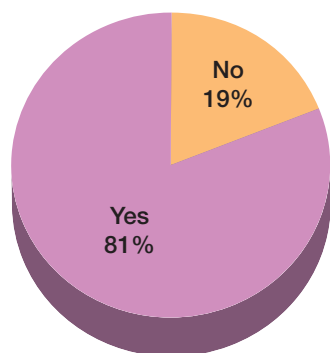
Additionally, organizations had modified values to reflect focus on diversity and inclusion. 81% of the organizations surveyed also had values reflecting the diversity and inclusion agenda. A comparison between Indian organizations and MNCs revealed that more MNCs had diversity and inclusion reflected in their espoused values than the Indian organizations.

- "The guiding values and beliefs wherein we have said that people who are capable, competent should be given a preference and priority for having a place in the company" (P9)
- "It is a very clear communication that equal opportunity and dignity of work, and no form of discrimination or harassment in terms of caste, religion, race, colour, creed, ethnicity, origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, preferences, disability status; everything is covered and it is very much part of our mission and values" (P16)
- "We are trying to build in a culture of inclusion, just like we do build in our values of respect, integrity and living by the code of conduct". (P30)
- "Diversity and inclusion talks about trust and respect, that is one of the core values" (P37)
- "We have our values defined and we have created inclusion messages linked through our core values, and we reiterate this in every session" (P33)

Vision reflecting Diversity & Inclusion-based on size of organization



Values

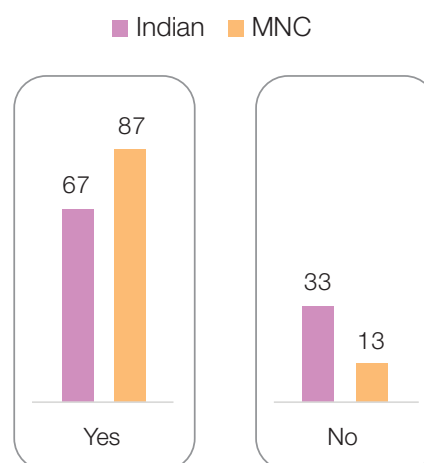


Communication by senior leadership team

The other channel of communication that was often used by the participating organizations was communication by senior leadership team/ the Diversity and Inclusion lead on significant days; e.g. International Women's Day, International day for people with specific disability and World autism day. To strengthen the messaging during such days, events were conducted across locations to create awareness; experts in this field were called for talks and panel discussion, fun and celebratory events were conducted.

- "We have quarterly women connect calls where all the women dial in. It is like a phone town hall where we discuss topics of common interest and hear inspiring leaders. Out of our 1100 women, may be 500- 600 dial in. Over the last 2 years, every woman in the company on Women's Day gets a call from country head and chairman to tell them how much he values the women and to celebrate Women's Day and to say thank you to them on Women's Day." (P45)

Values Reflecting D & I - Comparing Indian Firms & MNCs



Communication through intranet and newsletters

A third method often used is a dedicated webpage on the intranet talking about diversity and inclusion initiatives across the board. Employees can also access the webpage to get to know related information e.g. policies, crèche tie ups and other facilities that are being provided.

- "There are newsletters on diversity that go out, there are also internet pages dedicated to diversity and inclusion that talk about what are some of the activities, what are the news works both from India and global perspective" (P34)
- "Apart from the reserved parking space, we have medical wellness rooms across all the locations and we have also put up the details on the intranet, where employees can look up for the details and go and utilize these facilities". (P16)

Another way is to publicize non-stereotypical roles played by minority groups.

- “The ladies who do mechanical work like say climbing up the chiller and things like that, we broadcast that as well saying this lady worked on this chiller with a photograph; to spread it across to build up awareness levels. Those kind of things we do, so that more and more women are interested in mechanical” (P10)

Communicating to the external stakeholder and society

The other area with respect to communication was external messaging – this refers to the extent to which Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, values and efforts are explicitly projected to the external world. This could be in terms of the communication sent out to stakeholders and customers during recruitment drives or presenting in industry conferences to share best practices.

A survey revealed that compared to the 76% organizations that focused on internal communication, only 57% focused on external messaging.

Organizations mentioned that when they put efforts, there are results. For example one business head mentioned, “We have focused on hiring certain positions and ensuring that we have a good pool of gender diverse talent as we review candidates for those positions. Efforts around diversity hiring have actually shown us great results in terms of improving diversity in our leadership role. In 2012 we did not have any woman leader at our AVP and above role and today we have 5 women leaders in that group (P33).

i. Recognizing, Accepting & Accommodating Unique Needs

In this section, the focus is on how organizations address unique needs of minority groups through reasonable accommodation. While traditionally the term ‘reasonable accommodation’ has been used to refer to modifications made to support differently-abled people, we present it in the broader sense of the term – which is, to talk about adjustments made in a system to accommodate or make fair the same system for an individual based on a proven need.

In the organizations surveyed, reasonable accommodation was extended through:

- 1) Work place adjustments
- 2) Specific provisions and facilities
- 3) Creating special roles and work structures to support need for mobility
- 4) Policies around granting of leave and work timings

Work place adjustments:

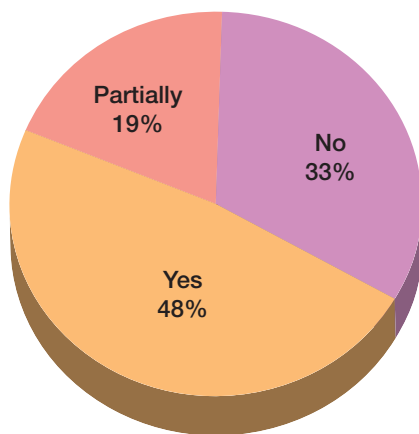
These included work place adjustments for differently abled. Among the organizations surveyed, 48% had facilities that took into account provisions to be made for the differently-abled. These included:

- Creating ramps at all access points
- Having slightly larger cubicles and restrooms
- Appropriate seating with ergonomically designed chairs
- Investing in hardware and software made for the differently-abled.

Best Practices: Accessibility of Infrastructure at Wipro

Accessibility infrastructure – A critical element of the diversity and inclusion program is technology enabled assistance for persons with disability, in terms of modified laptops, voice activated programs and other assistive applications like enabling infrastructural changes in existing and new premises, addition of hand rails, ramps, lifts, designated parking spaces, customized workstations etc. All our group announcements containing images, include a text- only attachment to facilitate our visually impaired employees to make use of the text-to-speech feature. Last year, a sign language expert helped in interpreting ‘Wipro Meets’ in sign language to facilitate our employees with hearing disabilities. We also launched a portal called ‘Wipro Kinesics’ which is a one-stop-shop learning medium on the basics of sign language in the Wipro IT business environment. The online portal is easily accessible to employees who are spread across the globe and includes typical terminology prevalent in Wipro environment.

Ease of Accessibility in Office Building



There were also examples of organizations that were sensitive to specific issues being raised by the differently abled and addressed it actively. One of the visually impaired participants shared, “I use earphones to listen to the software (JAWS) and because of continuous use of that my ears were paining. So one day I told my manager and within one week he arranged for better headphones and cost 3000-4000 rupees. He wanted me to be comfortable while working. Whenever I have any issues, he takes it as a priority and it is resolved the next day”. (P20). Another participant’s experience illustrating this is, “I have a problem in my leg due to polio. I had a request to provide me with a certain adjustment or a cab wherein I can travel less. This is a very unique need. So people here in the HR and transport helped me out to manage my travelling time. They have done an assessment; rather than having 4 or 5 people in the cab, there would be only 2 people with me to help me out to reduce the timing. Rather than travelling for 2 hours-2-1/2 hours, I have to travel only 1-1/2 going back and coming back.” (P14). The commitment to ensure that the needs of the differently-abled employees are understood and met is clearly seen in what one of the participants shared, “In India there is absolutely no mandate by the government or the law saying that the person with disability needs to disclose. It is totally the choice of the employee and we urge and request the employees to disclose so that we can be of support and ensure reasonable adjustment for their engagement and career in the organization.” (P18)

Special Provisions and Facilities:

Efforts in this direction mostly include creating a more comfortable work environment for women in the organization. Some of the special provisions include: reserved parking closer to the facility, ergonomically designed chairs for pregnant women, lactation rooms, and tie ups with crèches.

In line with assuring safety of women, special provisions that were shared by many participants in the study, were special transport arrangements made for women working late. These included easy inexpensive changes:

- Only using approved vendor for booking a cab
- Route being re-planned so that the woman employee is not the last one to be dropped off or to ensure door to door drop off
- A security guard accompanying the woman employee
- Having a designated person checking on the woman having reached her destination

Other special provisions that were made to ensure comfort for women employees included:

- Use of safety mobile applications
- Self-defence training for women, giving pepper spray cans for women staff
- Avoiding posting for women in locations which are not considered safe (for plants, sales postings)
- Making modifications to the uniform where applicable – for instance, if the women are not comfortable wearing t-shirts, allowing for kurtas

A small percentage of organizations in this study also talked of addressing needs of the minority religious community. Prayer rooms or meditation rooms are created within the office premises.

- “As part of its endeavor to make the workplace inclusive for its colleagues, Barclays has introduced designated Prayer/Meditation rooms”
- “Globally, we have prayer rooms but our infrastructure in India is not geared up to that. My COO is an Islamic follower and he needs to go for his prayer a few times in a day. We have actually made sure that especially during the Ramzan months he doesn’t have to go searching for a meeting room, so we’ve blocked out a meeting room for reading prayers”. (P22)

- “This is something we didn’t have on a large scale in the beginning, we were less than 200 people, so we didn’t have justification for a prayer space, but I think going beyond 1000, we might actually come up with it, but that’s like a special need and that is something where you want to make sure that there is enough inclusion and people are looking into it”. (P22)

Two of the organizations surveyed went beyond the office facility and addressed infrastructure issues in the extended work environment.

Breaking Traditions

Engineering Hangars are a fully 24*7 environment where technicians and engineers are working in shifts to do major aircraft maintenance for our well-known brand IndiGo. Engineering hangars are sited at an isolated location and are not publicly accessed.

All these years, this has traditionally been a male bastion. Until one day, the President while interviewing a lady with engineering degree for another position at the airport asked her as to why was she not being interviewed for the relevant position, the answer given was – “No ladies toilets in the middle of the ramp”. Needless to say a woman’s washroom was constructed and now we are very proud to have 16 women at the engineering hangar.

Appropriate infrastructure like setting up of washroom and change room facility has enabled us to achieve this unconventional hiring initiative.

We also see very less women at the ramp - the place where Aircraft is parked. The reason is that the job profile needs special types of shoes - ramp shoes - and the manufacturer in India only made men’s shoes. So, we looked for a vendor who made women shoes for the ramp. There were none. So we got a sample made and had women working at the ramp.

Physical Accessibility at Pepsico

“PepsiCo believes it is imperative to get the basics right in order to build a diverse and inclusive environment. On the basis of roundtable discussions with frontline we realized the need and importance of basic amenities like washrooms for our women in frontline sales roles. We selected the top 10-12 cities where we had the highest women population in sales and focused all our infrastructure efforts there. Distributor/dealer points were identified where we built 35+ washrooms for women on these premises with a plan to sustain them in partnership in the long term. And we will continue to keep building more. For new distributors we are ensuring that we already have washroom facilities available. This initiative has helped enable a conducive and inclusive work environment for our frontline women employees.”

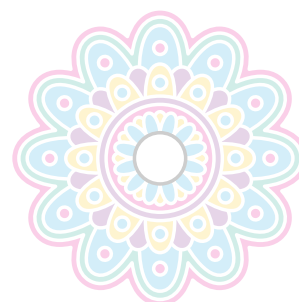
In discussing challenges to making reasonable accommodations participants mentioned:

- Higher Costs
 - o “Given the current way our offices are structured if we were to change to make it more amenable for differently abled it is going to cost a lot of money. Given the current state of businesses, unless things are back to normal none of the business managers would want to put their money into things like that which is not going to have an immediate impact or they see a tangible return to the business immediately”. (P9)
 - o “We have actually passed a rule now that women shouldn’t be working after eight if it can be avoided, if they are they’ve got to inform, and when we have to provide home drop, they shouldn’t be the last one to be dropped and all of that, but that cost is now obviously hitting the project. Project managers who have too many women in their teams are cribbing about those kinds of things. We understand safety is a concern, but there is a cost associated with it and obviously has got their cost pressures. (P19)

- No allocation for costs involved in budgets
 - o “Companies that have invested, have invested from their own pockets to see how they could retrofit. Retrofitting is always a bit cumbersome since after everything is constructed and plumbing lines are done, there is no space sometimes and retrofitting becomes a cumbersome and more difficult process.” (P29)

- Loss of ‘naturalness’ on both sides: Fear of being accused of positive discrimination or not being “politically correct”
 - o At times, participants (especially diversity and inclusion heads) felt that their attempts at bringing more women into the workforce may be seen as diluting the focus on capabilities and feel that they are bringing in a “reservation system”.
 - o Sometimes the person who is being supported feels like they are not being promoted for their talent but to fill quotas (extending to all irrespective of gender, age, nationality and sexual preferences)
 - “I am Indian and I have done a lot of work there and I know how things work. I am not judging anybody here but if I were a woman and people placed me on their board just to fill the quota it would still be the way it is for any other caste in India”(P72).
 - “I think there will always be corridor conversations about how a certain person got the role, because there is quota for women. It makes me uncomfortable though I understand that it is a journey.” (P51)

- Employees in the majority group are also not sure of what language to use because they fear they would be seen as discriminating while they might just be natural.



Supporting need for mobility:

In a culture where meritocracy and competence is valued, organizations are willing to stretch to accommodate a high performer. While this policy may not have been created keeping in mind the agenda of diversity and inclusion, it has an automatic impact on helping organizations retain some of the good women performers. At least three organizations interviewed explicitly shared examples of creating roles or work structured to enable a woman having to move cities to continue being part of the organization. The need to support mobility especially with women employees; and the business advantage was clearly shared by one of our participants, “I find that women leave because either they are getting married and relocating to another city or my family doesn’t want me to work for various reasons. If I am able to address some of these challenges, for example if I am able to give them location flexibility say when moving to another city, I will give you the flexibility to work from that location; or if the family commitment is increasing because of marriage, I will give you work place flexibility or flexibility in terms of the time that you can work, that can help in retention”. (P31). In another example shared, “We had a woman employee as part of the commercial function and when some restructuring took place, the entire commercial went with the finance team.So she came up and said that I don’t want to be in commercial even though she has worked in that team for 15 years. We took a decision, we created a new role saying business development manager. We know her. If we say no, she will quit and go. We didn’t want to lose such a good asset. We were selfish by that count.” (P10)

Policies providing flexibility:

Several organizations, have over the last few years, made changes to their policies around both work timings and leave policies to provide more flexibility to their employees. As shared by one of the participants, “because in 2006 we did not have flexible policies, it was in 2007, I think, that we created a women’s network and then we kind of looked into what are the emerging needs and some of the needs that came out were what we kind of did to start it off with, like flexi policies, sabbatical policy, so all that was introduced at that point in time.” (P51)

Examples of policies that support mobility or needs of employees include:

- For couples working in the same organization, creating options that appeal within the constraints. For instance, in organizations where the operations need to be managed 24 X 7, giving options to people to choose on which shift would they like to opt for, or choosing their weekly holiday
- Having a work from home policy for people having personal needs (for e.g. care for the elderly, child care)
- Extending the maternity leave beyond the mandated 3 months. Few of the organisations have made it 4 months on



Barclays has revised its Maternity policy from 84 days to 154 days, and has also introduced Adoption leave. Employee regardless of being natural or adoptive parent can avail this benefit. Moreover, any primary caregiver can avail adoption leave”.

Sumit Kumar, D&I Lead, Barclays

their own accord and some organizations also spoke about extending it beyond 6 months

- Introducing paternity leave
- Giving leave to adoptive parents
- Opportunity to go on a sabbatical – range has been from 6 months to 2 years
- During performance appraisal, having a different approach for women who had to go on maternity leave
 - o Consider their performance only for the months that they were there
 - o Not to normalize them across the team since the parameters would be different

In most cases, broad guidelines are defined and it is left to the manager’s discretion. However our individual biases do seem to play a role there. As one of our participants shared, “The work from home policy is published for both men and women. The moment a woman says she wants to take care of her child and that’s why she is going for work from home, the supervisor accepts it in a very easy manner, but when it comes to a male employee giving the same reason, that doesn’t get accepted. Hence he ends up giving some other excuse” (P64).

Extending this policy unequivocally to all employees does at times call on managers to act in good faith. As one of the participants put it, “the focus was clearly on deliverables and they were pretty neutral on the timings I keep and how I manage my work. And I have a team over here so it was very clear, as long as you are managing your team and you are managing your work, it doesn’t really matter whether you will come at you know, or leave at three or leave at four in the evening as long as your work is getting done”.(P6) . Sharing her own experience of being given flexible work from home arrangement, a participant said, “It was just that I had the flexibility to work from home when I had to. I would come to office on days and I would not be in office on days and nobody really questioned me there, so everybody was aligned, the entire system was aligned. It was not just for me, it was for many different needs that women have expressed over time” (P53)

Another participant shared that “What I have been very clear about, I don’t want wrong messages to go as a business leader that we are favouring women, the quota thing, and it just creates wrong vibes with the guys. I am saying that all opportunities are open to everybody. I give work from home as an option to the women in the organization. It is also available for the men. In my budget, in fact, I have actually put that, if I have 100 people, I will only have 93 seats which means that 7% of my people are free to work from home”. (P19)

Organizations measuring the trend of how these flexible policies are being availed of are noticing a trend that it is not just the women opting for it, but also the men given their own personal needs. As one of the business heads shared, “We have used sabbaticals and flexibility to make sure that women stay the course and make it to the ranks of the leadership because the biggest thing is supporting women during their most vulnerable period. If you offer them support during that time, then they stay, they grow and they beat the leadership ranks. If they do not then you have lost the battle right there. So, we do use sabbaticals and it is interesting that increasingly, men are using this facility as much as woman to pursue things. Maybe women use it much more for family reasons, men use it for much more of personal development but whatever, we do have the facility of sabbatical and it is a great thing to be able to tell people that you can take time off after discussion with your manager and the organization and you will still have a job waiting for you when you come back” (P52)

Making the policies implementable

Some progressive practices that we found were in place to minimize the impact of individual biases in implementing policies included:

- Establishing some of these policies as a right for individuals and not left to manager discretion
 - o “We did a diagnostic and employees said there is a policy for a cab of being available to me after a particular time, but I have to ask my manager for approval, my manager does not agree, does not give, all sorts of other issues we hear. So while policies exist, there is a bottleneck for execution of those policies. We said, then let us turn it around and let us say that there is no approval required.... You know your rights. So, we started this whole awareness session about know your rights. If you are going to be staying in the office beyond 7:30, you have a cab facility available. You do not need to ask anybody for approval.Obviously there are times when it can be abused but one can see the trend and one can exactly know who is abusing, if at all but the fact is that we eliminated that whole piece around approval”. (P51)
 - o “We have turned flex work policy on its head – in my organization, managers need to get permission from senior leadership if they want to refuse a request for flex work, not to grant it!” (P31)

Assessing Impact of Policies – Being Inclusive at BC Management Services Pvt. Ltd.

BC Management Services Pvt. Ltd, the Shared Services Centre of the British Council uses a tool (which the parent company, British Council also uses) known as ‘Equality Screening Impact Assessment’ (ESIA). As per the process, when any policy or a procedure having a wide impact on people is modified, a checklist is used to conduct an assessment to ensure we have considered the needs of diverse groups of staff. Equality Screening & Impact Assessment is the formal name given to this process of consideration, as we are assessing the impact of the change on people from different groups and trying to ensure equality.

In cases of different viewpoints, a meeting is organized with adequate representation across different groups to discuss and finalize the changes. For instance, when there was a change proposed in their international travel policy to manage the costs (increasing flying duration to qualify for premium economy class travel), a meeting with a randomly selected group representing the entire population was organized. A considerable time was spent reviewing the policy, understanding the impact and the group was able to identify a number of areas where this rule can potentially have a negative impact on people with special needs. As Pooja Malhotra, Head HR at BC Management Services says, **“It was quite an emotional debate whether we should have a flexible rule and allow people with physical disabilities to opt for a premium economy. Then there was discussion on types of disabilities, how do you categorize pregnancy, and so on. Finally, the group came up with reasonable adjustments. i.e. for such cases we will propose to pay an extra premium fee, which are emergency reclining in the economy section. Now that is a classic case of a win-win situation.”**

- Another challenge mentioned by participants is to constantly communicate that the policies are there for everyone to use and not just for women. This requires a willingness to challenge the patriarchal notions of gender-led roles. As one of the participants sensitively put it, “Another team member has 2 small daughters.....He actually does the same thing that most of us as women do, go back, take care of the family and then log in late at night, say around 10 o'clock and do an hour of email catching up, that is exactly what he does. He says he would have never done this if he didn't have a woman boss because a male boss could have never appreciated, which is interesting but I think, In today's generation; and we spoke about generational diversity, I don't mean about just the young women, I mean about also the young men who are struggling to commit into a family life because they know the issues..... There is a theme that is very strongly emerging for us in terms of preparing them to get into a larger personal commitment in life or becoming parents and so on” (P22)
- While most of the mentoring was directed at grooming women leaders, two organizations spoke of having mentors for all the new recruits at entry level and one organization spoke about a robust mentoring process for all functional leads irrespective of age, function and gender
- While there seems to be no specific tracking to assess effectiveness of the training programs, new organizations track the outcomes of the mentoring and sponsorship programs (detailed further in the section on audits and measurements) more diligently.

j. Helping Employees Succeed

One of the salient milestones in making diversity a reality is the support, training, systems, and processes that are set up by the organization to ensure that the members of minority groups are provided fair opportunity to develop and move ahead in the organization. It takes some balancing to not put the spotlight on the minorities always and yet not allow them to be lost in the oblivion because their voice is non-dominant. Support is needed to help the underrepresented group to break through the established networks and also to learn the ropes. The entrenched biases we mentioned in the earlier section can come in the way of natural progression of the minority groups. One male participant in the study expressed his view that training organized for women managers is being positively biased to the women.

Analysis of the data shows the following trends with respect to training programs:

- Building managerial and leadership skills, falling under the purview of learning and development function, is itself a commonly perceived tool to promote inclusion. Only three of the organizations interviewed mentioned leadership training for their women.
- Of these three, two focused on hi-potential women to be groomed for senior positions while one the organizations spoke about having a training program for women at the entry level.
- Mentoring seems to be a more popular tool to drive diversity with close to 52% organizations having a robust mentoring process in place

Best Practice - Project Shakti

(Vodafone)

A focused hiring initiative by Vodafone Tamil Nadu circle is to hire women into nontraditional roles by giving them exclusive one year support. They went to engineering colleges in rural locations and hired an all women batch of graduate engineer trainee or field trainees. The selected women are specifically hired to work in sales, and are assigned as a responsibility of senior people in the circle who are their mentors. The mentor doubles as sponsor as well by ensuring that the hired women are successful in their assignment and overcome challenges if any. The trainees are put on a year's rotation program focusing on understanding the product, market, customers and process. During the period of that year they are not given any actual responsibilities or a role. Post the first year they are transferred to territories within the circle as territory leaders.

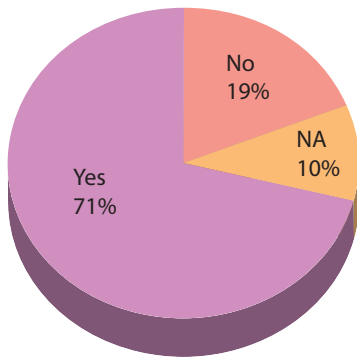
The project has been a success and the hired women are all performing well in roles which were predominantly done earlier by male colleagues. This initiative is now being run in other circles across Vodafone with every circle having its own name. The project is now currently running in the 2nd year with a third planned soon.

Mentoring & sponsorship as developmental intervention

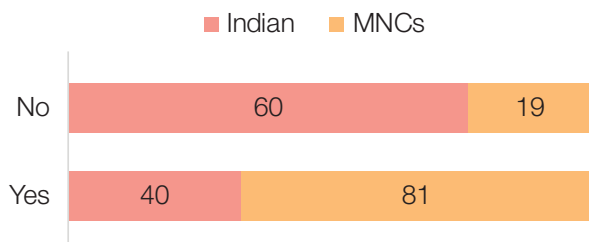
About 71% of the organizations interviewed said that mentoring was important, 52% (11 of 21) of them had robust programs on mentoring and/or sponsorship. The need for this strategy was clearly expressed by one of the participants, "It is easier to hire at a front level agent from the universities and campus and from the open talent pool available in the market and increase diversity numerically. However, as we move up the ladder it becomes increasingly difficult to increase the percentage at the higher level. For example, at the leadership level, it becomes increasingly difficult. So what is lacking? Is it the skill set, is it the business acumen? We thought at the end that somebody needs to be a sponsor in addition to the many mentorship programs" (P37)

In our data it was found that MNCs, as compared to Indian organizations seemed to be more focused on creating mentoring processes:

Do Organizations believe in Mentoring & Sponsorship

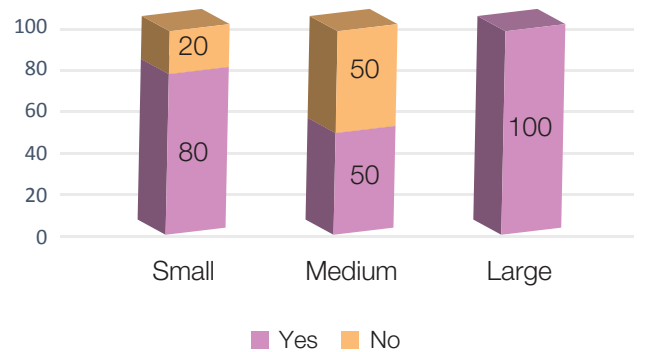


Mentoring & Sponsorship - Comparing Indian and MNCs Firms



Also interestingly, the size of the organization was not a determining factor in putting a mentoring system in place in the MNCs as indicated in the graph below

MNCs with Mentoring Programs - Size based comparison



Mentoring was done using different formats:

- Having senior leaders take on specific goals on coaching women across the organization
 - o I have also volunteered as a coach or mentor for women. So anything wherever they need me they can always contact me, touch base with me". (P11)
 - o "Apart from my direct leadership team from the broader managerial team, I have identified a set of women managers where I spent direct time with them coaching them, guiding them and because they are not direct reports to me, there is no perceived conflict of interest in terms of what I am telling them. But on an independent basis, I coach them, guide them on what they need to do differently compared to how they are working today, to go to the next level" (P31)

- Having channels (both formal and informal) that encourage young managers to reach out to senior managers to discuss both their personal and professional challenges;
 - o “We’ve enabled a mentoring system where we have mapped and paired any one at an assistant manager and above level to a mentor at the senior most level depending on the skills that they need to build up.” (P30)
 - o On the generational side, there is this entire “Grow your own campaign” that we run where each business leader has a target of the number of people that they can hire from a certain generation with a certain experience, and then how can we groom them to assimilate and grow within an organization. Some businesses carry a target of 50% to actually hire people with less than 2 years of experience, and then there are certain number of positions that can only be filled by these internal hires. We have training programs right from when people join us from the campus and we put them in these internships, then these 2-year training programs where we actually groom them to take on a bigger people leadership role and then follow it up in the next stages of their career”(P34)
 - o “I personally have 4 or 5 of these young talented women whom I mentor, not necessarily on a formal documented basis but on a very informal basis. We also encourage them to look at holistic living which is looking at yourself as an individual both personally and professionally. So we’ve been talking about giving yourself time, developing yourself personally and professionally, increasing the level of self-awareness in terms of what exactly is your goal, where would you like to focus, at this point of time? Because many a times if you are not feeling complete at a personal level, it is very difficult for you to come and give more than 100% productivity at the work place professionally. They are in some sense interlinked, so we have been doing quite a bit of mentoring around that with some informal mentor-mentee matching” (P22)
 - o “The other is that we have capability programs and workshops for women, specifically, in terms of the life space that they are going through and therefore the challenges that they are facing. We can thus equip them with some tools” (P51)

Mentoring Millennials – Beyond Boundaries

At Decathlon, age is not a restriction to hand over important responsibilities. Meritocracy is more important than experience. For Example, the store managers of Decathlon are really young with around 80% of them less than 28 years old. They play a very important role in shaping the future of Decathlon by being in-charge of hiring the right talent and taking care of customers, consequently, into a successful economic results. The senior managers play an important role in developing such talent and coaching them hands on. Geographic boundaries do not limit the interaction and developing potentials. In one of the instances, the group CFO visits India at least once or twice in a year to personally interact with young potentials and give his views to help them maximize their potential.

Ravi Sinha, Decathlon Employee Happiness Team

- Having a mentoring process for new recruits to feel included in the organization in a short period of time
 - o Anybody who comes in new, generally feels out of place at least for the 1st week, we have a kind of onboarding mentoring which lasts for 3 months where the person gets a mentor who is quite senior in hierarchy and experience, and is an old timer in (the organization)”. (P1)
- Running a sponsorship program to encourage women leaders
 - o “We’ve launched our sponsorship program, we have about 33 women who are high potential, identified across our businesses who are in the process of this sponsorship program. We hope to see that starting this year, we will see results in terms of numbers as well as in terms of culture that is changing when it comes to how we perceive sponsorship. What have we done differently? We have kept the process extremely transparent, we made it very clear of what the expectations are both from the sponsor and the person who is being sponsored and we monitor this heavily. We run a survey to see if the people who are being sponsored have met their sponsor often enough, are gaining from the program, have met their expectation, then we catch up with the sponsor one on one on a phone call and see if there is any additional help that they need throughout the year”. (P30)

- One organization participating in the study enriches the internal mentoring program with mentors from outside the organization.
 - o “We did this whole reach-out program, which was in collaboration with other organizations for our senior women. It was more mentoring where you are mentored by leaders from various organizations and of course also getting nuggets of learning through offerings given by different organizations and learning circles of people coming together and sharing. It was a nine month program with various nuggets involved” (P51)

Building specific skills to be more “Inclusive-savvy”

Given the universal human tendency to form in-groups and out-groups and be more positively inclined towards members of the in-group it takes specific efforts to learn to be inclusive. Two interesting programs among organizations we surveyed fell in this category.

Training all to develop disable friendly software: No big deal at Wipro

“The entire software development community that works in Wipro, need to know how to develop applications for differently-abled people. For example, if you develop an internal application for your payroll or anything or for our customers, they need to know how to make it or enable it for the differently-abled friendly. So we defined a curriculum of how to write such software. So, my team worked with another team and we defined the career path in terms of an assessment framework, how to write web applications and how to enable web applications for disabled people and that was included as part of mandatory curriculum for all the fresh joinees in the company. Any employee who joins as fresh from graduation from the college, they need to undergo this course and also take up simple assessment at the end of it to check whether they have learnt on how to do it. So basically thousands of people join in a company like ours on a yearly basis and all those developers undergo this training program.”

Inducting the differently-abled: Experiments at Westin

We have engaged with SARTHAK, an institute that trains the hearing and speech impaired and helps with employment opportunities in various industries. We went to the institute last July and took our first batch of students a month later. We took 5 students and trained them in various functions of the hotel. They have completed their training last month and we have offered employment to 4 students out of these 5.

We believe training and employment are the first few steps we can take to make them part of our team, however we wanted them to feel a part of the team. We wanted the students to be and feel ‘INCLUDED’. The institute did a sensitization workshop for associates. We asked the institute to send a sign language interpreter for few days till the time they settle in. We also asked for the interpreter conduct classes for associates to help them communicate with the students. Each student had a mentor in the department and they took extensive sign language classes. After the initial days, it was beautiful to see them interact, learn and crack jokes. This interaction helped many associates in various departments realize how different yet talented the students were. What everybody needs is a chance and compassion. After training and mentoring, two of the students were ready within few weeks to interact with guests. They engaged the guests with their smiles and were able to understand and deliver our guests’ needs. The guests were delighted to be served by the students, we had many who insisted to be served by them. This exercise has strengthened our resolve as a company to provide opportunities to differently abled persons and involve our associate and guests in this initiative. What we have got in return is immeasurable.

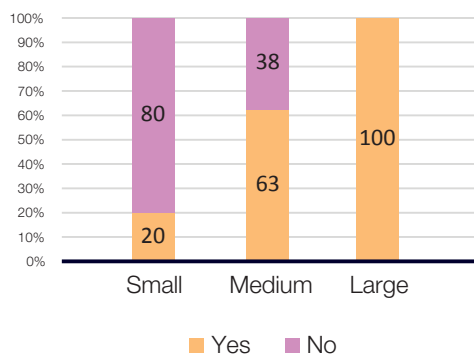
Sharda Fonia, Complex Director of Human Resources and Training, The Westin Gurgaon and The Westin Sohna Resort and Spa (A part of Starwood hotels pte. ltd.)



Creating Support Groups:

This has been seen as a powerful process to extend support to some of the minority groups. 67% among the organizations surveyed had this intervention. A comparison between organizations that had support groups vis a vis those who didn't based on size showed that while all large organizations surveyed (both Indian and MNCs) had support groups, it was mainly the smaller organizations that did not have the support groups:

Presence of Support Groups - Size based Comparison



Instance of support groups were:

- Women going through pregnancy – where the support was either from the older women who had gone through the journey themselves and also connecting them with professionals in the field.
- Young mothers support groups. Given the changes in their lives post child-birth and the need to balance personal and professional commitments.
- Supporting minority groups
 - o “Discrimination against northeast person had been in the news and we addressed that. We said we heard this, we will support you. We told any group that faces discrimination, it’s not to say we will come and fight or hit somebody, but we will protest with you, we will stand by you and with you when you address it with the judiciary or wherever required. We will provide you that support” (P34)
- Supporting the LGBT community
 - o The Ally Network: Ally network is a network where employees come out in support of LGBT issues and come up with a set of objectives to drive the case of LGBT in the organization. It has support and sponsorship from the organization to talk about it. The law does not say

anything about not talking or promoting LGBT issues at the workplace. The ally network believes in the value of being open to including people from diverse background into the organization. An example of this is the LGBT flag on your table saying that I am an ally and a supporter and you sort of actually vocalize and demonstrate support to a particular cause or to inclusion.

While not yet a widely seen practice, setting up support groups certainly has the potential. In the size based comparison, all large organizations seem to use the idea perhaps to ensure that employees feel a personal connect with their work place despite the largeness. Support groups are a tangible gesture by organizations to acknowledge that employees have a demanding life with its own set of challenges and pulls beyond the identity that the individual has at the work place.

Another variation of the support groups is having a volunteer program to support minority groups in issue they face. In one organization there are volunteers available for women in the organization to share issues that they might face. All issues personal or professional can be discussed with these volunteers. The volunteers act as confidants. In another organization a male employee has been designated in each location as the “go to” person for all issues faced by women or other members of the minority.

Benefits

There have been many tangible benefits of training and mentoring programs done with keeping in mind the diversity and inclusion agenda. Some of these are:

- Addressing specific skills of potential leaders in the organization, helping them grow and also build confidence to move onto senior roles. This was evident in what one of the participants who is currently a mentee said, “Currently I am mentoring with one of the really senior person in the organization, a VP who has helped me enhance the way I look at my career, the way I want to go, and the things or the measures or the steps I should be taking to get there. I am sure I would have got some of that from my boss, but I am getting a lot of focus on it right now as we have this dedicated time wherein I can speak with him on a regular basis. There are scheduled calls and then we monitor our steps. At the beginning of the program we agreed to an objective that this is what I want to achieve out of the program, and this is what I want you to help for and things like that. So it’s been working really well for me” (P72)
- Helping build a leadership pipeline within the organization – both in terms of gender, generational and regional

- Strengthening the existing leadership development programs
- Challenging mind-sets and breaking stereotypes by training the diverse population for non-traditional jobs
 - o “Normally we take on an average of about 200 trainees across the country for all divisions put together, close to 25% of these are women. They are given all work irrespective of whether it is for travelling, climbing in (specific equipment). We don’t look at the fact that it has to be a desk bound job. So we see beyond desk bound jobs; we look at giving opportunities”.(P9)

k. Use of Assessments to Reflect Diversity and Inclusion

“70-80% of our revenue from the organization is coming from there. In that particular pipeline we do not have any woman workforce. Are we by any chance signaling that a woman cannot be a good salesman? That is not the kind of culture that I would like to inculcate in our organization.” (P3)

“We tend to map out every business of ours on all the various dimensions of diversity so we believe that anything that needs to be get done needs to be measured, so we measure everything. Without that you are not going to know where you are headed”

Jaya Virwani, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, E & Y Global Delivery Network

Given the maxim in management attributed to Peter Drucker, “what gets measured gets done” there is a pervasive acceptance of the usefulness of measures and audits. Diversity audits, evaluations based on quantitative and qualitative information about the status of diversity in the organization, is a growing practice among organizations starting the journey of diversity and inclusion.

Of the organizations surveyed, 71% had periodic audits and processes to measure the impact of their diversity and inclusion interventions.

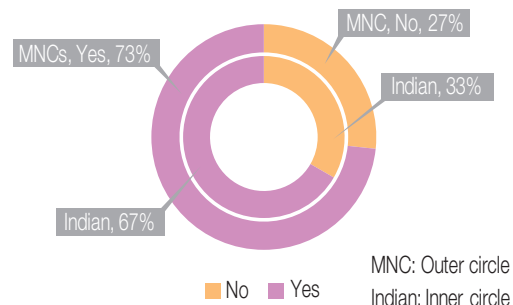
Of these organizations, 63% focused on internal benchmarking which was mostly to track their own metrics over a period of time or compare with their global offices in some diversity and inclusion metrics. As shared by one of the participants, “Diversity assessment framework that our parent organization does is very comprehensive. So, we have not yet felt the need to have any other audit, which measures inclusion, so that is one and the access audit is another. For the diversity assessment framework,

the focus changes every year. One year there will be around 9-10 focus areas, the other year there will be just 3 or 4 focus areas and so on”. Another participant shares, “For us measurements are key - how globally we are structured. ...We have mapping internally amongst our countries to understand where we are and where we are going and what the direction is. This also helps us understand how we can borrow best practices which have been deployed in other countries and customize it to a local country. It also helps us share knowledge and kind of look at common platform” (P16).

In addition to internal surveys, 38% of the organizations also did external benchmarking which involved comparing their trends with other organizations within their industry or by participating in surveys such as ‘WILL forum’ or ‘Great places to work’

A comparison between Indian organizations and MNCs using audits; Indian firms using audits was lower than the MNCs that had such measurement processes in place

Use of Audits and Measurements



Benchmarking at Capgemini

One of their key towers - the people culture tower, has D & I predominantly as the active tower. There is mapping internally amongst different Capgemini based countries to understand their standing vis-à-vis each other. This helps them not only measure where they are and where they want to go but also helps understand how they can share and borrow best practices which have been deployed in other countries and customize it to the local country. It also enables them to share knowledge over a common platform. In 2015, they have taken a step beyond Capgemini and got themselves benchmarked globally with DV - Diversity Value Index. At India level, they have done it with Will Forum.

Capgemini believes benchmarking supports them in two ways, 1) understand where they are positioned as a country, globally and locally, 2) learn best practices that other companies across industries have done, which will enable them to observe the best for their own firm.

Uses of audits

The different audits by organizations were used to determine:

- a. Effectiveness of diversity recruiting and retention efforts
- b. Measuring the value of diversity training and
- c. Surveying employees on the success of diversity initiatives
- d. Dispelling myths on perceived high diversity of work teams

One of our participants shared, "I think there is a perception that because there are senior women in the financial services industry in the local banks in India, there is a feeling that gender diversity is not an issue. However, the numbers show that the absolute number of women working in at least (our organization) is pretty good at the junior levels but still not good at the senior levels". (P73)

Focus of audits

Given the dominant focus on increasing gender diversity at the work place, many of the audits naturally also focused on the same. Very few organizations tracked regional diversity or persons with disability.

Audits focusing on gender based issues were:

- Quarterly metrics highlighting number of women at work. Some of the metrics tracked were average age, number of women at different levels of hierarchy in the organization, women returning to work post maternity leave. Often these are done by the diversity and inclusion lead or HR and then shared with the global leadership team
- o Audits at the middle and senior management level seemed to give valuable insights to organizations on what measures need to be taken to fix the leaking leadership pipeline. Like one of the participants shared, "I think we do a great job when it came to hiring diverse profiles from campus in terms of gender. So we are almost like about 40-45% diversity but by the time we reach the mid-levels it droops to almost single digit - 10-12% at best. So while we start with recruiting, I think slowly the efforts are now how do we strengthen retention and ensuring professional development and ensuring that it doesn't leak". (P23). Another participant shared their challenge in this regard, "Many women give up their career after spending 5 -10 years with us because of personal reasons and therefore we don't have many women within (the organization) who have grown to senior leadership positions. So, that is a conscious strategy we focused on. The strategy that we

did is we provided a lot of support mechanisms. We also promoted dual careers, the husband and wife can work in the organization together, and we also support them when they have to be transferred, we support their movement together so that that does not result in one person leaving the job." (P54). Another strategy has been to look at very high diversity ratio during campus level recruitment, as shared by a participant, "we've been literally targeting 40% diversity ratios at the campus level so that when we filter out and when women leave after 5-6 years of work experience, we still have a healthy pipeline and we've been trying to build that for the last 3-4 years" (P22).

- Audit during recruitments – mainly to track how many women were applying during recruitment drives and how many were getting selected.
- Comparison between men and women availing the policies that are seen as contributing to supporting employees (flexi timing, sabbaticals)
- Random checks during appraisal and promotion decisions on how many women versus men are appraised favourably or not or being promoted or not

Some of the audits that went beyond gender and looked at other minority groups:

- During exit surveys – both internally or by using an external agency, specifically looking for impact of exclusion on the decision. Using external agencies seemed to help.
 - o Like one of the participant elaborated, "we spoke to people who exited us, women who exited us,That was a good platform because while we had done our own exits, the exits that (the external agency) had done for really gave us some indication in terms of biases in the system and therefore inclusion, and the need to dial up inclusion in a big way and to address the whole mind-set issue.there was a need to kind of attack that in a big way and that really gave birth to the entire piece that we have done around, the whole 'nukkad natak' that we did around gender biases".(P51)
- Diagnostic study to check how all employees are experiencing diversity and inclusion in the organization.
- Benchmarking against other organizations by participating in country-wide, international surveys on best employment practices and culture that contribute to diverse work groups
- Comparing number of homogenous groups and heterogeneous groups across the organization.

- Audits of recruitment trends which while mostly is done to track gender diversity as explained above, also could be used to address regional diversity. Like one of the participants shared, “when we started this journey, we realized that this skew was largely towards north ...and we realized that a lot of our recruitments, consultants and partners were essentially based out of north. So, that was something that we said we need to widen the net and look at consultants across the country and that will give you a better regional mix. While hiring we do keep that as an indicator and we do plug that in” (P51).
- Assessing accessibility of the infrastructure to ensure ease of access and use for the differently-abled people

Caution against audits

While audits were seen as being largely beneficial, there were also some fallouts and caution that need to be exercised to avoid overreliance on data or fallouts arising out of the way audit data could get perceived by the employees. The most prevalent fallout was the messaging that in trying to push the agenda for diversity the organization is willing to compromise on merit. One of the participants expressed this succinctly, “I wouldn’t be able to push it down their throats and say, now you need to get 20% LGBT and you need to get 5% disability, I think the number game doesn’t work anymore. It used to work at some point of time with the women quotas in some companies but I don’t think in a world like ours where human capital is the most important, meritocracy is primary, and I don’t think it will work out”. (P22). This was seconded by another similar view shared by a participant, “I am really not pushing the diversity agenda because then what happens is if I put it into the minds of my managers, that we need a girl in the team, then we forget to look at the CV objectively, then we look at the CV and as soon as we see it is a woman it automatically gets a +3, which I don’t want to happen. I want women on the team, but I don’t want to take women just for the sake of taking women” (P27).

Also given the dominant role that our conditioning and mind-sets play in supporting inclusion, there is a possibility that the subtler issues of inclusion will get missed. Like one of the participants admitted, “we conducted surveys and asked people questions whether they felt ever discriminated in the organization, whether they felt people were disrespectful because of their colour, gender, ethnicity and what have you - we did all of that. These audits showed there is nothing like that but when we scratched

on the surface we started getting some indirect feelers that indirectly people may have felt excluded or maybe discriminated to some extent”. (P34). As said earlier it is easier to measure diversity which is an outcome, measuring inclusion, which is a process, is another ballgame.

It is necessary to measure the outcome over a long period of time and if the diversity numbers keep looking better it may be possible to assume that the process ‘inclusion’ must be working as well. However, caution needs to be exercised in measurement as Einstein aptly said, “Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.”

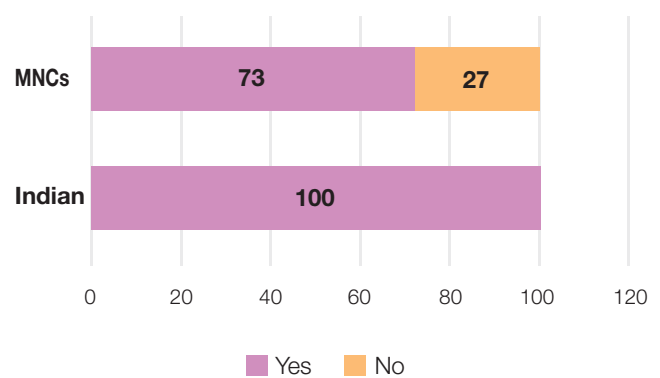
I. Celebrating Diversity & Inclusion

Celebrations are an integral part of any society. The same finds a reflection in the diversity and inclusion agenda of organizations in two ways:

- 1) Creating a holiday calendar which acknowledges the significant religions days of all important faiths
- 2) Celebrate the festival within the office premises

Interestingly, among the organizations interviewed, 81% celebrated the festivals of different faiths and religions. The 19% that did not were the MNCs. 100% of Indian organizations surveyed, irrespective of size had this practice.

Celebrating Festivals - Comparing Indian Firms and MNCs



A range of ways were used to mark these festivals:

- An email sent from the CEO and other senior leadership team
- Decorating work spaces to reflect the festival
- Having fun events organized for the employees
- Gifting
- Special food to represent the delicacies made around that festival

In addition to celebrating festivals, 90% of the organizations surveyed, in the recent past had begun marking special days such as International Women's Day and World Disability Day on their calendars. The events organized on these days focus more on enhancing awareness, or doing specific training (for e.g. self-defense workshop on Women's day) and only at times are celebratory.

"The annual event that we do for women is the Women's Day Celebrations. We use that as a medium to have messaging. What began around 4 years back as just a lunch for women then matured into policy discussion and so we took feedback from the women on what should be the part of the diversity policy last year and that is how we creating the diversity policy at the moment" (P1)

"One day we mark International Disability which is December 3rd. We have the Autism Day coming up in April. These communications are specific to an event or celebrating an event like we do for women on March 8th or just giving a broader picture of what is happening in the diversity space. It happens at multiple levels and it happens very frequently". (P17)

Some of the unique celebrations that subtly address inclusion and are worth mentioning include:

- One organization celebrates Men's Day where talk shows and health programs for male employees are held
- Being sensitive to the fact that many people belonging to a minority group travel back to their home town for Christmas and may not be available closer to the festival thus advancing Christmas celebrations by a week
- Celebrating a religious festival even when there is only one member from that group – clearly a heart-warming gesture as shared by the participant, "Before I came there was no Eid celebrationWhen I became a part of the team, they said that we don't do anything for Eid, so let's do something, - small things like there will be kheer kept in the cafeteria and there will be a congratulations emailer or greetings email to all the employees. These are very small things and not many

organizations do that. It really touches me that...happily I also celebrate Diwali, Holi" (P49)

- Celebrating National days (for e.g. Republic Day) which has no religious association
- Celebrating Parents' Day
- Having an event that celebrates the diversity of the customers that the organization engages with.

Given how ubiquitous this practice seems to be, some of the reasons that organizations seem to give celebration of festivals such importance are:

- Recognising it as a deeply ingrained practice of our social fabric, as rightly shared by a participant. "So if you look at the India community I think some of the festivals are celebrated in a certain manner which brings groups together and which everybody can participate and I think our organization pretty much reflects a larger India landscape (P23)
- Use it as a process to enhance engagement and connection with each other
- Acknowledging the regional diversity that exists in the organization. Like one of the participants shared, "A lot of occasions it has happened that we celebrate here in office. They always ask if you want to do something from your region, you are most welcome". (P61)
- Using it as a vehicle to reiterate organizational values." Say on a Dussehra, we ask people that on the occasion of Dussehra, which value of (the organization) do you recall and people get back saying integrity. We always try and link these celebrations and the messaging with our values" (P12).

Differences at the gut level evoke fear and anxiety given that we are programmed to survive and deviations can be threatening. However, through our capacity to reason, think, and know we as humans have also learnt that difference can be useful, non-threatening, and means to progress. In preparing to embrace diversity any method which not only highlights the difference but also accepts it and celebrates it is surely a huge step forward. It is a positive step by the organizations to create celebration around diversity.

In Conclusion

Having collated the findings of our research, having heard the different voices across organizations sharing stories of insights, dilemmas, pioneering efforts and hopes around their D & I journey, we revisit our ideal of a fully inclusive organization that was portrayed in the introduction. Over our interviews, the following seem to be coming through strongly and clearly:

- Given the legacy of reservation systems that we carry, the organizations we surveyed seem sensitive and alert to the fact of not projecting efforts towards D & I as yet another “quota”. There is a rightful and adequate focus on competencies –from recruitment to grooming people showing potential for senior positions.
- While occasionally some of the efforts do seem as tokenism (for e.g. representation of women in certain committees), senior management across most organizations are seen to be promoting diversity and inclusion in its true spirit and essence
- Organizations are looking at a multi-pronged approach to promote inclusion – be it through communication, policies, sensitization efforts and support mechanism to help people succeed.
- There is a recognition of inclusion being a journey and not an outcome – that it means staying persistent mainly by addressing the age-old biases and traditional ways of thinking in a largely patriarchal society
- All the organizations we surveyed are tuned into why D & I is a critical thing to look at and have put in place mechanisms to assess and communicate impact on the business.
- Gender does seem to be a primary area of focus across all the organizations interviewed.
- None of the organizations seemed to be focusing only on diversity i.e. bringing in the numbers be it in terms of gender or age or regions. The attempts at inclusion, however, have varying levels of reach and focus. At one end of the spectrum is perhaps finding occasions to represent that diversity (for e.g. ensuring representation of the minority groups in different committees and decision making processes) or celebrate the diversity (marking all religious events, ensuring policies are in place for maternity benefits, equal pay and equal opportunities). At the other end of the spectrum, one would find organizations broadening their understanding of diversity and differences beyond the labels of language, gender and

age and to ensure there is respect for all. This is reflected in the way policies are made gender neutral wherever possible and that facilities and benefits are accessible to those who need it most and not solely because they belong to a particular group.

- A recognition that while measurements are important, one needs to acknowledge that promoting inclusion needs to be done passionately and cannot be forced on people. Therefore having employees volunteer to lead or participate in different interventions is what would give the inclusion efforts the much needed momentum.

Aspects where we felt that there still remains a fair amount of ground to be covered:

- More open and tough confrontations of the biases that come in the way of inclusion. For instance, there seems to be an over-reliance on formal processes of sensitization training to counter the resistance that one sees among the middle levels in the organization. Organizations are yet to experiment with more widespread, informal and creative ways of having conversations around these biases.
- Using the language of D & I more naturally rather than feeling constrained. For instance, when talking about the LGBT community or the religious minority, the response of a large number of Indian professionals seem to be along the lines of, ‘those are not differences that we are still willing to recognize.’ Or when talking about ensuring that there is a minimum number of women applying for certain positions, several of the other participants are very quick to jump in with a comment emphasizing that the hiring decision would certainly depend on competency and not gender.
- Organizations that are focusing on D & I, could benefit by disseminating the positive stories and the challenges faced in pockets where D & I practice has reached a certain maturity.
- Organizations need to challenge the premise that D & I efforts are something that can only be focused on when the going is good. It may help to measure and highlight how inclusion has helped reap clear business benefits. Assessing the benefits in a consistent way and sharing those numbers may help in ensuring sustained focus on inclusion.

- Making inclusion everyone's priority and not just of specific individuals is definitely one aspect where a big shift is needed. While in several organizations, there is senior management commitment seen in formal and informal ways, D & I remains a pet project of a handful of people. Perhaps in getting people to recognize how inclusion (in the broadest definition of the term) is something that serves every single individual and not just a few, lies the solution to making this a reality.

There are some realities of our socio-cultural fabric that somehow seem to not find adequate visibility in the conversations and efforts that India Inc. with respect to D & I. That as a nation we have grown up in environments rich in diversity brings in a certain ingrained acceptance and absorption of differences. The premium that we as a society put on relationships is perhaps the much needed ingredient to build respect for individuals beyond labels. And our attitude to life being a continuum with not a

destination (dying is also a part of that continuum) is the flavor in which the journey towards inclusion needs to be experienced. The 5000 years of history of handling diversity, the unconscious competence of being inclusive, some of the known specific characteristics of India (as mentioned above) are perhaps what India Inc. could consciously weave into its focus and efforts towards building a truly inclusive organization.

India Inc. can lead the discourse and journey of D & I for what inclusion represents and help move away from the appearance focus of looking and feeling good to remain in sync with the global business community.

In closing, we quote Rumi:

"Keep walking, though there's no place to get to. Don't try to see through the distances. That's not for human beings. Move within, but don't move the way fear makes you move".

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Inclusion Core Research Team (in alphabetical order)



Neharika Vohra is a Professor in the Organizational Behavior Area at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Her research interests are in the area of leadership, gender, cross-cultural behavior, educational administration, and organizational attitudes. She is currently on the editorial board of four national and international journals. She is currently on the board of a large listed company and three national level management institutes.

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Rashmi Mandloi leads the Diversity & Inclusion practice for Biz Divas in South Asia. She has successfully partnered with both public and private organizations on advising on inclusive practices, processes and policies. She continues to do in-depth work on building advocacy on inclusive work practices, both at social and organizational spaces. She specializes in consulting with organizations that are keen on building 'future women leaders'.

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Sarika Bhattacharyya, Co-Founder & Director Biz Divas has over 15 years of corporate & business experience having worked with firms such as Merrill Lynch. She is passionate about promoting inclusive practices at workplace. Sarika was felicitated prestigious "Global Leadership in Mentoring" award by Hilary Clinton & Vital Voices in USA in 2014. A highly respected speaker on gender inclusion and related business issues,

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Vijayalakshmi Chari (Vijji) has over 17 years of experience in the Leadership Development with organizations like Navgati, Infosys and T V Rao Learning Systems (TVRLS). Her work in leadership development has been through executive coaching, facilitation using theatre and storytelling, and assessment centers. She currently lives in Bangalore and is most passionate about creating spaces for individuals and groups for explorations at self and inter-personal levels.

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Rohit D'Almeida - Senior Consultant

Shweta Chavan - Senior Consultant

Chetan Nikam - Consultant

Savio Rebello - Senior software engineer

List of Participating Organizations

- ACG Pam Pharma Technologies Pvt Ltd.
- Airtel Ltd.
- Barclays Shared Services
- BC Management Services Pvt. Ltd.
- Bluestar Ltd.
- Capgemini India Pvt Ltd.
- Credit - Suisse
- Decathlon India
- Encore Capital Group
- E&Y Global Delivery Network
- Interglobe Enterprises
- Hewlett Packard
- Jones Lang LaSalle India Pvt Ltd.
- Make My Trip
- PepsiCo India Holdings Pvt Ltd.
- Siemens India Ltd.
- Starwood hotels Pte. Ltd.
- TE Connectivity Global Shared Services India Pvt Ltd.
- Tata Teleservices
- Vodafone India
- Wipro Ltd.

List of D & I Practitioner/Consultants Interviewed

- Community Business
- DEOC (Diversity and Equal Opportunity Centre)
- Humsafar Trust

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