

HR INITIATIVES IN BUILDING INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACES

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HR INITIATIVES IN BUILDING INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACES

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Dedicated to Papa ...

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Introduction

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Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
AT	Assistive Technology
ATS	Assistive Technology Services
AVE	Average Variant Extracted
BBI	Burton Blatt Institute
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EQ	Equal Opportunities
ER	Employee Relations
GOF	Goodness of Fit
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISD	Instructional Systems Design
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NCT	National Capital Territory
NFI	Normed Fit Index
SSO	National Sample Survey Organization
PANGEA	Platform for Automatic coNstruction of orGanizations of intElligent Agents
PAS	Personal Assistance System
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
PwD	Person with Disabilities
Q^2	Predictive Relevance
R^2	Coefficient of Determination
RMS	Root Mean Square
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
STS	Socio-technical Systems
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WHO	World Health Organization

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List of Key Terms

<i>Accessibility</i>	Ensuring that all aspects of the company are suitable for use by all persons. This includes the physical environment and methods of information and communication, as well as the company's policies, processes, systems, and facilities.
<i>Artificial Intelligence</i>	The ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings.
<i>Assistive Technology</i>	The tools, devices, accessories, or equipment that are categorically designed and used to enhance, support, or improve the occupational capacities of person with disabilities.
<i>Assistive Technology Services Framework</i>	Designing assistive technology framework/system and facilities for PWD user experience based on quality indicators such as needs assessment, implementation, evaluation, administrative support, evaluation and effectiveness, professional development, and AT in transition.
<i>Astigmatic Vision</i>	Eye condition that causes blurred vision.
<i>Behavioural Modelling</i>	Using available and relevant consumer and business spending data to estimate future behaviour.
<i>Business Gains</i>	Any economic benefit that is outside the normal operations of a business.
<i>Competitive Advantage</i>	Attribute that allows an organization to outperform its competitors.
<i>Compliance</i>	Responding favourably to a request offered by others
<i>C-Suites</i>	The group of officers of a business organization who have the word "chief" in their titles.
<i>Disability</i>	Any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.
<i>Discrimination</i>	Any distinction, exclusion, or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin that has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.
<i>Diversity Climate</i>	Organizational Climate that values the diverse characteristics of its workplace.

<i>Employee Relations</i>	Part of HRM practices that concentrates on building collegial relationships between employer and employee.
<i>Employee Retention</i>	The ability of an organization to retain its employees
<i>Employee Perception</i>	The ability of employees to perceive objects
<i>Equal Employment Opportunities</i>	A workplace that is free from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, caste, colour, creed.
<i>HRM Practices</i>	A system that attracts, develops, motivates, and retains employees to ensure the effective implementation and the survival of the organization and its members.
<i>Inclusion</i>	The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure.
<i>Inclusion Climate</i>	Organizational climate where all the stakeholders are equally valued, respected and celebrated.
<i>Organizational Citizenship Behaviour</i>	A person's voluntary commitment within an organization or company that is not part of his or her contractual tasks.
<i>Organizational Climate</i>	The shared values, beliefs, norms that govern employee's behaviour in the organization.
<i>Partial Least Squares</i>	Analytical tool that helps researchers to test and find relationships between variables.
<i>Structural Equation Modelling</i>	Multivariate Statistical Analysis technique for analysing structural relationships between variables and the constructs.
<i>Pluralistic</i>	Diversity of different ideas or people.
<i>Racial Discrimination</i>	Discrimination against individuals on the basis of their race.
<i>Reasonable Accommodation</i>	An adjustment made in a system to make it accommodating or make it fair for an individual based on a proven need.
<i>Refugee</i>	A person who has been forced to leave his or her country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.
<i>Role-Play</i>	Changing one's behaviour to assume a role, either unconsciously to fill a social role or consciously to act out an adopted role
<i>Pink-Collar Employees</i>	Women employees referred as "pink collared" working in jobs traditionally considered suitable for women.
<i>Sensitivity Training</i>	A kind of training that creates awareness among people about their own goals, as well as their prejudices, and more sensitive to others and to the dynamics of group interaction.

<i>Socio-Technical Systems</i>	An approach to complex organizational work design that recognizes the interaction among people and technology in workplaces.
<i>Training Manual</i>	A book of instructions, designed to improve the quality of a performed task.
<i>Universal Design</i>	
<i>Vulnerability</i>	The quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally

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About the Author



A prolific scholar with 20 years of academic experience in Human Resource (HR) Management, Organization Behavior and Organization Development. She is currently employed as a Professor in the University School of Management Studies, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi, India. She is intimately knowledgeable about the HR aspects of inclusion and accessibility, and her teaching and research focus on inclusion and accessibility and the integration of HR technology with social systems, with an emphasis on emerging economies like

India. She holds membership in the Academy of Management and is on the editorial boards of national and international journals. She has published extensively in numerous journals and has presented her research to domestic and international audiences. She has developed a Training Manual: Framework for HR-enabled Inclusion and Accessibility Training (An Overview) and has also authored a module on “Organizational Inclusiveness – Gender, Special Needs and Disability” for Management School in IGNOU. For details: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-shalini-garg12345/>

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Preface

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ 32॥

ātmaupamyena sarvatra samam paśhyati yo `rjuna

sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham sa yogī paramo mataḥ

Bhagavad Gita,* Chapter 6, Verse 32

**Bhagavad Gita* is the best known and the most famous book of spiritual knowledge belonging to ancient Indian scriptures.

Translation: “One who sees the true equality of all living beings and responds to the joys and sorrows of others as if they were their own is considered the perfect and the highest.”

This timeless message on the “Equality of Vision” in the words of Lord Krishna to his disciple Arjuna in *Bhagavad Gita* refers to the inner battle between knowledge and ignorance, rigidity and transitoriness, discrimination and equality – and is a perfect answer for the modern-age illusions and dilemmas about the notions of pluralism, inclusion, diversity, accessibility, tolerance, acceptance, equality, altruism, and other issues.

Inclusion and accessibility, being a global challenge, has a tremendous scope of research and is not yet a saturated field of study. Diversity alone is not enough. It has to be accompanied by inclusive and accessible work practices and culture in order to triumph. Today it is a well accepted fact that inclusive and accessible practices make business sense and add both tangible and intangible value to the bottom line.

The changing demographics at the workplace pose an important global challenge to the successful management of employee relations for HR managers, business leaders, and management trainers and consultants. The inclusive growth and development of humanity are at the heart of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. This ambitious agenda became a call to action for all stakeholders for understanding the societal transformation needed to achieve inclusive growth.

Hence, being an avid academician and researcher and, above all, an HR enthusiast, I started this research journey in 2015 to understand the role of the corporate world in advancing inclusive and accessible workplace development through progressive HR initiatives.

The intended empirical research was centred around the following research issues:

- Investigating HR initiatives adopted for creating inclusive and accessible workplaces

- Understanding employee perception about inclusive practices adopted by their employers
- The relevance of a Training Manual for guiding successful policy making and implementation for workplace inclusion and accessibility

The research responses were collected and compiled in the Indian continent neighboured by Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, among others. The research findings were obtained using the PLS-SEM analytical tool, which is a modern and robust technique for research in management and the social sciences.

The research compiled in the form of this book has had immense global appeal as the responses were collected from the well-known MNCs (multi-national corporations with operations all over the world) across different sectors in India, employing a diverse mix of people belonging to different cultures and nationalities. The research further addresses the needs and gaps in HR-oriented inclusive and accessible practices and proposes a Training Manual.

This book has the potential of being a one-of-a-kind work, supplemented with a Training Manual: Framework on HR-enabled Inclusion and Accessibility Training (An Overview) for guiding stakeholders such as academicians, researchers, business leaders, consultants and trainers on the implementation of inclusion and accessibility-based HR initiatives highlighting areas of progress and areas where more actions need to be taken to ensure that no one is left behind.

Acknowledgements*

In this empirical research journey, I have had the privilege of working with many outstanding people in completing this three-year-long research effort and later compiling it in the form of a book. I take this opportunity to thank and appreciate the following:

I attribute all the learning and my personal development during this period to the divine grace of the lord and his blessings.

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My heartfelt thanks go to my research scholar, Ms. Shipra Sharma, Project Fellow Ms. Nidhi Sinha, and the office assistant, Ms. Shaili Verma, all of whose contributions have been invaluable to the successful completion of the research work and its culmination in book form.

I wish to thank the editorial team of Emerald Publishing UK, which understood the value of this research work to be compiled in the form of a book and who provided continuous support and valuable assistance throughout my progress on the book.

The credit for who and what I am today and my achievements goes to my Guruji (Shri Ojaswi Sharma), my parents (Shri S. L. Garg and Dr Poonam

*This book is an expansion of earlier research undertaken by the author, Shalini Garg, entitled *HR Initiatives in building Inclusive & Accessible Workplace*, for the University Grants Commission – UGC Delhi in (2015-18). This research was not commercially published. The research has been expanded and revised for publication.

Garg), my ever supporting life partner (Mr Vineet Gupta), and my loving kids (Gauree and Kartikeya). I am indebted to my respected academic mentors, Dr P. P. Elhance (Maternal Grandfather and Earliest Mentor), Prof A. K. Mittal (Vice Chancellor, BBD University, Lucknow), the late Prof Udai Pareek (“Father of HRD in India,” Indian Institute of Health Management Research, with whom I guided/Supervised my first PhD), Prof K. K Aggarwal (Founder and Ex-Vice Chancellor, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi), Prof Amarjeet Kaur (Director of University Centre for Disaster Mangement Studies, GGSIPU), and Prof V. K. Malhotra (Member Secretary, ICSSR, Delhi) for having shown faith in my capabilities, for continuous support and guidance, and for providing growth opportunities throughout my academic career.

Introduction and Background

I.1. The Origin of Diversity and the Shift to Inclusion and Accessibility

The origin of diversity and the diversity initiatives for the workforce is difficult to determine. Although the first legislation for equal employment opportunity in 1943 was introduced by the U.S. Congress, it was generally a non-starter, as were successive legislative initiatives proposed over the next 20 years. In 1948, U.S. President Harry Truman made an official announcement to prohibit the discrimination of the armed forces with the passage of Executive Order 9981, which made disunion/partition based on “color, race, natural origin or religion” outlawed for all members of the armed services.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the need to promote workplace diversity emerged in the United States. Many renowned organizations, military sectors, communities, and higher institutions in educational sectors had been planning, managing, and conducting some form of workforce diversity education during this era. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was also supportive in avoiding discrimination in any activity related to employment. The workplace advancement policy attempted to go further with the introduction of the practice to encourage opportunities of equality in employment by identifying prospects to be sustained in any department for a prolonged duration. The policy resulted in a massive success because it successfully implemented the consideration of diversification attributes such as national origin, ethnic and racial group, age and gender diversity, among others, in order to acknowledge the principle of being just and fair to all and treating everyone equally. A President’s Committee on Equal Employment, with the objective to find policies to abolish employment discrimination, was recognized by John F. Kennedy, president in 1963.

In 1971, the Nixon administration reviewed the policy in a way to ensure that a positive/affirmative action outline with a goal is set. In 1987, a delegation created by Secretary of Labor William Brock conducted a trends study, in association with the Hudson Institute, which was a publication on the economical and demographical status of the workforce. This study, “Workforce 2000: Work and Workers” by the Brock commission for the Twenty-First Centurial, has become a landmark and is considered as the origin of the diversity industry. During the 1980s and 1990s, diversity training was used in businesses to support, look after, and achieve Civil Rights Act benefits. Gender diversity—related educational training was introduced to develop and become visible during the 1970s and 1980s. In the United States, a major expansion occurred in the 1990s, focussing

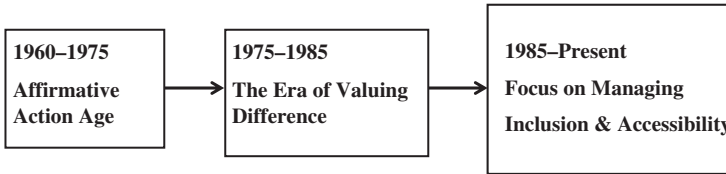


Figure I.1: The Shift of the Diversity Era to the Inclusion Age.

on and removing obstacles to inclusion for other identical groups. Differences in abilities, ethnicity, religious beliefs, and recognition of other genders such as LGBTQ views appear in organizational training and educational institutions. Thomas's 1990 article in the *Harvard Business Review* is viewed as one of the earliest treatments of managing diversity from a practitioner's perspective (Figure I.1).

I.2. History of Accessibility Practices at the Workplace

The accessibility movement has its accepted origin with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights movement. These roots lie in the complex structure and implementation of accessibility-related laws. The first nationally accepted standard accessible design was the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), A117.1 for Usable Buildings and Accessible Facilities. It was released in 1961 funded by the Easter Seals Research Foundation, with the research done by the University of Illinois. The standards provided served as an important reference for local, private entities and state governments. In 1974, the federal government provided national standards when the Department of Housing and Urban Development joined the Secretariat of President's Committee. The understanding and awareness that many prospective workers were unable to access the premises of workplaces initiated the steps toward the requirement of accessibility.

With the passage of the Architectural Barriers Act in 1968, the federal government took steps to require facilities, in design or by alteration, to address accessibility, using federal funds provided to organizations.

I.3. Future Practices: Beyond Accessibility to Universal Design

Accessibility law establishes legal mandatory guidelines that safeguard people with disabilities against biasness and that provide equal employment opportunity in the built organizational environment. These practices reassess using minimum legal requirements to ensure appropriateness by people with disabilities based on their participation, involvement, and understanding so that they feel acknowledged and are able to be involved in organizational activities within the workplace.

"Universal Design" (UD) is the term derived on the ground that the environment within an organization could be more attainable than the legal compliance requisition if architectural designers focuses their application on upgrading

actions and activities for a large dimension of diverse people. At the comprehensive level, it is involved with creating a universal design for professional organizations to cover a diverse workforce equality where information, resources, and facilities are attainable by all members and potential candidates.

“Inclusive organizational design,” “life span design,” or “designs for all” are synonymous with the term “Universal Design.” Whatever the term, it states that in creating design for typical users, it is better to construct architecture for employees with different endemic language expression, nationality, origin, ethnological background, gender, physical potentiality, and impairment.

As initially perceived and accepted, the main focus of Universal Design is on issues of usability. The universal organizational environment, created to be accessible by all people in Universal Design, is constructed, to the greatest extent possible, so that it does not need any specialized design or adaptation. In the prior ten years, attention was expanded to include the vast arguments of organizational inclusiveness and social inclusion. An upgraded definition includes more employees from the organizational perspective without overlooking PwDs. It states that Universal Design is a development action that permits and accredits its workforce diversity by boosting employees’ achievement, well-being, accommodation, and cooperation (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012).

Universal Design enhances the unrealized potential for advancing the quality standards of lifestyle for a broad scope of individuals in the workplace. It also curtails disfigurement by placing disabled employees on proportional setup of organization. While UD does not provide any alternative or replacement assistive technological equipment and devices, it does support people with operative function impediment within the organization as an aggregate. It guides and helps employees in being more self-sufficient, socially engaged, and organizationally supported. For governments and organizations, it lowers the fiscal and financial strain of exclusive services and programs constructed and designed to help employees, clients, employees, or customers.

Supporters must admit that Universal Design environment devices and products are only partial accessible by every individual around the world. The managerial practices, policies, and services pertaining to Universal Design thinking can assist employees in organizational set-ups and should be recognized as a continuous development process rather than as an end state. There is hardly any end to the pursuit of enhanced and upgraded services, healthfulness, and social or organizational involvement; hence consideration to justify the inbuilt UD organizational environment is required to obtain these broader conclusion.

I.4. Contextual Background: India and Inclusive HRM Practices

India, being a diverse, complex, and economically re-emerging nation, has led to a migratory workforce, resulting in increased diversity in organizations. In recent years, inclusion has emerged as a fair area of exploration that focusses on integrating diversity into everyday work life. With India intent to become a

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growing country till 2020, it is time to accept a universal inclusive management HR approach through public sector and private ownership. People management is a complex process. People are the contributors and participants, as well as the benefit holders in the growth and development of economy; hence their inclusion in work system is of the utmost importance.

The Indian Constitution restricts discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, race, religion, or birthplace. Equal employment opportunity is also listed in public employment and in principal directives. A few of the major categories of circumvented and disadvantaged groups in India include Muslims, women, transgenders, schedule caste, schedule tribes, bonded labourers, and disabled peoples. According to a report by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO, 2012),¹ the employment rate of women in the labour force is 23.3%, of Muslims 33.8%, other backward communities 40%, schedule castes 41.2%, schedule tribes 46%, and other disadvantaged social groups 37.5%. The Constitution of India has also created provisions for access by employment opportunities without biasness, and there are legal frameworks to protect the rights of minority groups. Inclusion in its full-fledged form is still far from being achieved.

The significant diversity dimensions in India, as well as their study and analysis, is important for global managers to understand, along with the challenges at the organizational level and in developing inclusive and accessible management strategies. Diversity management and the creation of the inclusive workplace are closely related to the diversity dimension prevailing in the country. It cannot be viewed as an independent event in organization. The benefit accumulated from workforce diversity and inclusive workplace largely depends on how strategically and effectively it is executed in the organizational set-up. In each scenario, inclusive practices need different approaches for diversity management within organizations. The diversity of magnitude and proportion varies from one nation to another within the workforce; a deep understanding regarding the dimensionality of diversity specifically for a country and its implications is all but essential for developing inclusive strategies for managing the diverse workforce.

The present organizational culture in India is symbolized by a diverse workforce. Since 1991, a number of multinational corporations has increased. With the launch of the “MAKE IN INDIA” initiative by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, the number is going to increase in future.² Multinational corporations are fascinated with and engaged in the Indian economy to examine its diverse cultural workforce and market. These organizations’ management is deliberately attempting to frame policies for inclusive practices

¹NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation) is an organization under the Ministry of Statistics of the Government of India. It is the largest organization in India conducting regular socio-economic surveys.

²The “Make in India” (2014) initiative was launched by the government of India to encourage companies to manufacture their products in India and to encourage dedicated investments in manufacturing.

and create accessible workplaces for the various groups in society in order to fill the skill gap and to acquire the benefits of on-boarding diverse employees. However, the change in demography statistics presents a few challenging threats, such as the formation of formal and informal groups in conflict with one another and discriminatory behaviour toward minorities, which reduce the work efficiency of organizations. To derive maximum advantage from the diverse workforce, organizations are active toward framing policies for inclusion. Therefore the need is to analyse Indian diversity in the workplace, which would develop a perceived need for global and Indian managers to manage and harness the benefit of diversity with inclusive strategies.

1.5. Organizational Shift from Workforce Diversity to Valuing Inclusion and Accessible Workplaces

In present times, the discussion on diversity has shifted toward inclusion. Corporate consideration regarding diversity has advanced from legal compliance to workplace inclusion. Successful organizations admit the significance of having a diverse mix of employees. Workforce diversity is progressively being observed as conducive in developing the organizational performance and also as a mandatory activity that cannot be ignored by organizations. Today, it is well accepted that inclusive practices add both tangible and intangible value. Diversity alone, though, is not enough for accomplishing success. Workforce diversification must be accompanied by inclusivity and equality in order to triumph. Inclusion is about appraising differences that exist in the diverse workforce. It is the potential that can be derived by an organization from consciously cultivating and harmonizing diverse groups of employees so that they work together. Workforce inclusion within an organization includes people at all groups and at all hierarchical levels. Inclusive workplace policy is ethical and flourishes in organizational culture where each employee is independent to choose his or her career goal and development without being restricted by race, ethnicity, origin, gender, nationality, religious beliefs, or other factors that are extraneous to work performance. To manage diverse culture and promote inclusion within an organization requires trusting workforce diversity to execute its full possibilities in an equal framework where no individual has a dominance, influence, or unfavourable position. Studies empirically done on inclusive organizational practices are confined to areas such as talent acquisition, on-boarding, learning and development, and employee engagement activities like meals and practices. This is acceptable since knowledge and the practical implementation of inclusive practices have only recently entered the organizational practices.

Workforce diversity programs have been around for decades within organizations, but most of them still an inclusive and accessible workplace. Inclusiveness happens when employees feel free to embrace their unique identity, whereas accessibility can be viewed as the “ability to access resources” and to benefit from the organizational system. In the absence of inclusion, if employee diversity increases, then this becomes harder to understand by their colleagues as people

feel less familiar. The research of Deloitte shows that companies want to shift from a diversity program to one of inclusion as an organizational strategy. But in the global survey, nearly one-third of companies are unprepared in this area, while only 19% affirm that they are fully ready. Unfortunately, many well designed inclusion initiatives and accessibility implementation programs fail because organizations behave on the defence, putting corporate policies in place to increase diverse workforce with the appointment of a diversity officer and implementation of flexible work policies and thus to escape the high cost of legal compliance, without assisting employees to develop the attitudes and behaviours geared toward inclusion. Broad research reveals that diversity programs alone are not helpful for employees and organizations; the research indicates that diversity alone lowers the gain, as well as employee's performance, employee motivation, and well-being, along with slow outcomes in decisions, increases in clashes, low attendance of employees, missed opportunities, and cases of biasness and discrimination. But when instrumented with an inclusive culture and accessibility in the workplace, diversity delivers higher performance, enhanced customer satisfaction, less absenteeism, and greater innovation.

Few organizations even differentiate between diversity and inclusion, Diversity can be inscribed as a compliance issue and followed fairly easily, the range of individual behaviours that make up inclusion and implementing accessibility as per norms is considered as HR's goals. Inclusion requires individuals to transform their inherent beliefs and behaviours, which is why it is more difficult to realize and effectuate when it happens. Organizations that are confident enough to address inclusion as a cultural issue and implement accessibility practices within the workplace reap immense benefits. It starts with key shifts in attitude from inclusion from the corporate to the individual levels and from demographics to diversity of thinking and inclusion and accessibility practices as an issue of compliance, an essential activity for organizational success.

I.6. Inclusion Scenario

In the recent years, inclusion has emerged as a fair area of exploration that focuses on integrating diversity into everyday work life. It is time to accept a universal inclusive management HR approach through the public sector and private ownership. People management is a complex process. People are the contributors and participants as well as the benefit holders in the growth and development of economy; hence their inclusion in the work system is of the utmost importance.

The UN Convention restricts discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, race, religion, or birthplace. Equal employment opportunity is also listed in public employment and in the principle of directives. A few major categories of circumvented and disadvantaged groups in developing countries include women, LGBTQ members, indigenous people such as tribes, refugees, people with disabilities, among others. According to a report by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO, 2012) in India, the participation rate of disadvantaged

groups in employment was found to be considerably low; for example, the participation of women in the labour force was 23.3%, backward communities 40%, disadvantaged social groups 37.5%, and so on. The constitution of India has also created provisions for access to employment opportunities without biasness, and there are legal frameworks to protect the rights of minority groups. Inclusion in its full-fledged form is still far from being achieved.

The significant diversity dimensions, their study and analysis are important aspects for global managers to understand challenges at the organizational level and in developing inclusive and accessible management strategies. Diversity management and inclusive workplace creation decisions are closely related to the diversity circumstances prevailing in a country. It cannot be viewed as an independent event in an organization. The benefit accumulated from workforce diversity and an inclusive workplace largely depends on how strategically and effectively it is executed in the organizational set-up. In each scenario, inclusive practices need different approaches for diversity management within organizations. The diversity magnitude and proportion vary from one nation to another within the workforce; a deep understanding regarding the dimensionality of diversity specific to a country and their implications is almost essential for developing inclusive strategies for managing diverse workforce.

The present organizational culture in Asia is symbolized by a diverse workforce. Since 1991, a number of multinational corporations have increased. Multinational corporations are fascinated by and engaged with examining this diverse cultural workforce and market. The organization's management is deliberately making attempts toward framing policies for inclusive practices and creating accessible workplaces for different groups in society in order to fill the skill gap and acquire the benefits of diverse employees. However, the change in demography statistics comes with a few challenging threats, such as the formation of conflicting formal and informal groups and discriminatory behaviour toward minorities, which reduce the work efficiency of organizations. To derive maximum advantages from a diverse workforce, organizations are active toward framing policies for inclusion. Therefore, the need is to analyse the Indian diversity context in the workplace. This would develop for the perceived need of global and Indian managers to manage and harness the benefit of diversity with inclusive strategies.

I.7. Challenges and Strategies for Promoting Inclusion at Workplace

With the consistent efforts by government as well as organizations to convert organizations into inclusive and diverse workplaces, there has been a welcoming stance taken up to accommodate people with diverse visible and invisible dimensions. Although organizations claim to have implemented inclusion practices, the execution of such practices are more dependent on employees working in those organizations. This may happen because of the biases and prejudices prevalent in the employees who resist the enforcement of such practices.

Thus, organizations face various challenges while implementing inclusive and accessible practices in the workplace that results in a homogeneous workplace being viewed as discriminatory against minorities and other disadvantaged groups. These challenges can come in the following forms:

- resistance from employees; and
- biases and prejudices.

1.7.1. Resistance from Employees

The execution of company policies depends on its employees and how well they recognize it as an important aspect for the betterment of the organization. Organizations promoting inclusion and accessibility practices have to sustain themselves against resistance from its employees toward such practices. Whether managers or peers, all employees exhibit some kind of reluctance in acceptance of co-workers with different backgrounds, such as those of diverse races, ethnicities, religions, educations, employees with disabilities, and so on. Resistance to inclusion and diversity always leads to unnecessary stress and increased conflicts in organizations.

1.7.2. Biases and Prejudices

Biases and prejudices mostly affect organizations' efficiency. Managerial decisions are often found to be affected by biases and prejudices leading to inefficient decision making and low organizational performance. Such biased decision making can negatively impact organizational anti-discriminatory policies and inclusion practices. Most companies acknowledge the importance of inclusion in the workplace and initiate several strategic practices for its implementation. Challenges associated with inclusion and diversity can be managed by three main key drivers: communication, respect and acceptance of differences, and training programmes.

Embracing inclusion, accessibility, and diversity practices can be more difficult if there are communication barriers. The free flow of information associated with the implementation of such practices can help employees to understand its importance for the organization and work culture. Organizations can promote social networks, meetings, group discussions, and discussion forums to acknowledge employee's skills, abilities, and ideas. Respect and acceptance comprise another key driver for promoting social inclusion, enabling individuals to develop social identities, belongingness, and respect for one another's skills and differences. Individuals can be known for their work rather than for their social and physical background. This also helps in developing trust, loyalty, and commitment toward their organization. Companies have to promote inclusion and accessibility practices by organizing awareness and training programmes, reinforcing the workforce to acknowledge its importance and to embrace inclusion practices, thereby creating opportunities for employees to mentor one another and to collaborate and associate with one another on a daily basis in different