

From Representational to Comprehensive: Workplace Diversity Redefined

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It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept and celebrate those differences.

- **Audre Lorde**

No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive

- **M. K. Gandhi**

In today's day and age, globalisation and the advancement in technology have transformed the world into, what the late media and communication theorist Marshall McLuhan calls, a 'global village'. Globalisation has facilitated free movement of people across continents and has enabled them to travel to and settle in countries of their choice. Whether on a short term or a long term basis, we have been witnessing a large number of Indians becoming a part of the global workforce and studies say that in the years to come this number is estimated to rise.

While on the one hand the world has witnessed the effects of globalisation, on the other hand we have witnessed global players making their presence felt in India. As much as these global players have adapted to the Indian style of business, they too, have brought their own work culture to India, in the wake of standardisation, across the globe. A McDonald's outlet, even in the remotest region of the country, will have its salesperson greeting the customer in the local language, before asking the customer to place his/her order. This is a very minor but representative example of how companies across the globe are attempting to strike the right balance, between adapting to a country's culture, while still remaining true to the values of the company.

An increasing number of MNCs have been operating in India, since a long time now. The MNC culture witnesses individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, linguistic differences and regional disparities coming together and establishing a synergy. The challenge, therefore, in such a set up is how an organisation maintains an equilibrium, which facilitates these individuals from diverse backgrounds, to create the best possible environment that would prove to be conducive, to the growth of the organisation, while also generating a feeling of comfort and self fulfilment for the individual.

While companies, on the one hand, are preoccupied with making the workplace a great place to work, as also one that generates success and profits, on the other, they are also seen focussing on these two factors, in a consistent manner and this is where sustainability has become the focal point for companies. Success is no longer seen as a matter of chance and every small policy is being measured, in terms of its long term repercussions. Everywhere there is talk of establishing a win-win situation, for all stakeholders, and a win-win situation implies that every small constituent of the organisation gets representation, is counted on and success or the lack of it is a product of the efforts, put in by every constituent of the organisation and the fruits of success trickle down, to each of these constituents that have contributed to its well being. Thus, was born the idea of inclusion, and emphasis has been laid on the fact, that organisational culture and policies be inclusive, so that a 'win-win' situation disseminates across all levels, in an organisation.

Given the fact that we are moving towards a melting pot culture, where global and local have been married to become 'glocal', as the sociologist Roland Robertson puts it, the challenge before organisations is to harness the diversity of their employees, by adopting an inclusive outlook and utilise this synergy for the sustainable development of an organisation.

As regards diversity, organisations have to manoeuvre around various facets of diversity at the workplace, some of which include gender, age, culture and inclusion of the differently abled. This paper would throw light on how these factors have been used by certain organisations, to the best possible advantage. Although there are areas like the economically deprived, the transgender population, et al, this paper has not included these under its purview.

Analysing the first facet in the diversity matrix, gender diversity has been much talked and written about, in recent times. It is truly heartening to read and be inspired by the success stories of, among others, Arundhati Bhattacharya and Shikha Sharma. However figures reveal a different reality. Dr. Preeti Shirodkar, in her article 'Unclogging the MENTal Block: Ensuring Greater Gender Diversity at the Workplace' quotes figures from the

Gender Diversity Benchmark 2011, which highlights that “India has the lowest national female labour force and the worst leaking pipeline for junior to middle level position women. Women constitute 28.71% of those at the junior level of a workplace, 14.9% of those at the middle level and 9.32% of those at the senior level.” Taking a global view of this aspect, a McKinsey Report, bearing the title *Women Matter*, also throws light on the representation of women at the board and executive committee levels. Here too, one observes that women are grossly under-represented. Sweden is said to have the highest representation of women in executive committees, which is a mere 21% and the worst representation is in Asian countries, with Japan ranking the lowest at 1%, preceded by India at 3%. This 2013 Report also states that the representation of women on corporate boards is a mere 5% in India.

Scores of Indian companies and MNCs have been religiously releasing gender diversity figures every year and a lot of media coverage is devoted to the measures that have been adopted, to ensure greater gender diversity. But organisations have been largely mum about the impact of these measures on gender diversity, in their organisations. A detailed benchmark, of more than 230 European companies, in 2012, revealed that a mere 5% companies operate with a diversity advantage, 13% companies have limited diversity practices, 16% are making progress with diversity and a whopping 66% companies are investing in diversity, without recording any significant impact.

How does one then focus on initiatives that would help in boosting the inclusion of women in the workplace and addressing the leak in the pipeline? Some organisations have ventured on the ‘road less travelled by’, thereby making a difference to their workforce. One of the major reasons why women have been dropping out of the workforce is to perform the role of caregivers, and/or support their spouses to establish a work life balance. What however begins as a hiatus later turns out to be a huge roadblock, in terms of returning to the workplace, which is dynamic and changing at the blink of an eye. In this light, an initiative mentioned in the research paper bearing the title -‘Unclogging the MENTAL Block: Ensuring Greater Gender Diversity at the Workplace’ - would prove very effective in systematically addressing issues faced by women, who have exited from the work force and help them return to their offices. The Tata SCIP (Second Career Internship Programme), the brainchild of Mr. Satish Pradhan, Group Head of HR, formed a Focus Group for women under its aegis, helping them to share their dilemmas in an open forum. Through a series of talks and seminars on Gender Equality, women were able to bring out keys issues, like a feeling of obsolescence and the challenges of a rapidly changing workplace. The Focus Group was an immensely successful endeavour, which helped many women to come to terms with the transition in their lives and return to work with a fresh mind.

Furthermore, in terms of creating policies, for women that would help them to contribute, without the constant dilemma of choosing one over the other, women employees in companies like Siemens now get up to 6 months maternity leave and then 6 months unpaid leave; there is a crèche at all factory locations and organisations like Infosys organise for day care within a 4km radius of the office location and a day care audit report is also submitted every month. A case in point, of how policies can be made women friendly, is that of ICICI Bank, which as Executive Director, K Ramkumar puts it “challenged norms without having formal diversity policies”, when an extended maternity leave of one and a half years was granted to Ms. Chanda Kochhar.

Thus, while on the one hand companies are devising policies that are pro-women, one also needs to understand the role of men in devising, supporting and implementing this framework. And here what Jane Lewis says needs a special mention; “You don’t have to be anti-man to be pro-woman”. Some organisations have been offering 25% bonus for female employee referrals; whereas, in companies like Johnson & Johnson, part of the cash bonus of Business Heads and the HR Head is tied up to a matrix, which tracks whether the diversity ratio is improving, over the years.

Apart from creating a formal structure to gain support from men, what also needs equal, if not more, focus is a change in the mindset. Some statistics, in this light, go to illustrate why this change is necessary.

A 2013 McKinsey Study indicates that one third of the male respondents among the 624 men, who were interviewed, during the course of research, were unaware of the specific difficulties faced by women. The study also revealed that “28% men do not agree with the statement ‘even with equal skills and qualifications women have much more difficulty reaching top management positions than men do’; hence many of them found gender diversity measures potentially unfair”. This study further sheds light on the difference in the mental make-up of men and women. Here, it is interesting to note, that although both men and women fared almost equally, in terms of ambition and willingness to compromise and sacrifice their personal lives, the main differentiating factor among them was seen in the confidence levels required to reach the top and fulfil their ambitions; and the confidence gap was seen to be a significant 15%. Women seemed to be 15% less confident, than men, about

reaching either middle or senior management positions and here confidence refers to the perception of women's chances of success, in the current environment, rather than their confidence in their qualifications.

The question thus remains - what can be done to address this confidence gap? According to Renee James, President, Intel Corporation, the confidence gap can be bridged, by finding role models, irrespective of gender. Talking about her own experience, in a recent interview she shares how Andy Grove, once COO of Intel, was an impressionable mentor and how he never let her get away with saying 'because I am a woman'. Exemplary figures of leadership have been women like Indra Nooyi, Chanda Kochhar, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw who have believed in their aspirations and dreams and proven that the sky is the limit. Rather than looking up to men to celebrate women's achievements, or hoping to receive acknowledgement from them, let alone encourage or praise women in public, women themselves need to celebrate their small joys and share success stories with each other, as it is the little victories that matter most.

Another consolation is a 2012 Report, bearing the title *Women Matters*, which points out that companies with a critical mass of female executives, in top positions, perform better than those, with no women, in management positions; the reason being the leadership styles that these women tend to exhibit. Women have been observed to focus more on people development, expectations and rewards and building role models, as against men, who have been seen focussing more on individual decision making, control and corrective action. This is all the more reason to drive the change, and to quote Sheryl Sandberg, COO Facebook and author of the book *Lean In* more and more women need to "sit at the table, take risks and pursue their goals with gusto".

Like gender diversity, another aspect which demands a closer examination in terms of tapping latent potential of individuals, to enhance organisational productivity, is assimilating the differently abled more stringently into the working population. The differently abled constitute 10% of India's population. According to the International Labour Organisation, India is home to about 70 million persons with disabilities (PWD) and apparently only about 100,000 have succeeded in obtaining employment. Although The Person with Disabilities Act, 1995 encourages companies to employ 5% of the differently abled (the public sector has a 3% reservation, since 1997), more often than not, employing someone, who is differently abled is perceived, either as an act of adhering to norms or as an act of sympathy. Moreover, as Anubhuti Bhattacharya, who heads Anubhuti HR Consultancy, a recruitment agency exclusively for differently-abled people points out, "There's a lot of noise around companies employing people with disabilities. But for most organisations, this is just a 'me too' thing. In their rush to hire differently-abled people, only a handful of organisations end up creating conditions that are conducive and comfortable for them."

An attempt to bring about a basic level of physical comfort and ease in mobility is seen in terms of changes in infrastructure, be it building of ramps, constructing washrooms for the differently abled, reservation of seats or compartments in public transport systems or even providing special ATMs, for their needs. However, these acts too, more often than not, are carried out either to comply with certain standards or in a mere 'tick the check-box fashion'. Most office buildings, observed during the course of research had a ramp at the entrance, which would be convenient for the differently abled to enter the premises; but later had a minimum of two steps before leading to the elevators, making it a redundant exercise. And even after making conditions conducive, in terms of physical comfort, inclusion of the differently abled as a holistic objective might not take place and quite often organisations might end up discriminating against rather than accommodating this section of the society.

Taking cognisance of constraints, faced by the differently abled, in terms of settling in the workplace, one cannot turn a blind eye to other issues like the special training, which a company would have to provide a person, who is challenged, and sensitivity training that would have to be imparted to those who work with the person; and, often, this attempt, at accommodating, is seen as an 'extra' effort and one that is possibly met with a lot of resistance from employees.

Given these dynamics, can an organisation really and truly 'afford' to assimilate the differently abled is a matter that could be debated. However, the fact that two organisations in India, have not only taken up this challenge but have turned the problem on its head, itself proves that if the effort is genuine, it will yield results. Mirakle Couriers and Vindhya e-Infomedia are two such professional organisations, which operate with a complete employee base of the differently abled and are organisations, whose models will be inspirational and worth replicating.

Recipient of the National Award for the Empowerment of People with Disabilities, in December 2010, Mirakle Couriers is a courier company, which currently employs 64 people with hearing disability, 20 of whom run their back office operations. All back office supervisors have email addresses and have been trained in professional etiquette of email writing.

The company has a team of 44 male courier agents, who travel using only public transport, as they believe that it is far more reliable and efficient than struggling through congested roads, and also because they do not want to add to the carbon footprint. The only five people who are able-bodied, so to speak, in the organisation are the Founder Dhruv Lakra, two Operations Managers, one Media and Marketing Development Head and the HR Manager, who has attained a high level of fluency in sign language.

Everything from pick-up to delivery is carefully planned at their branches in sign language. The field agents receive instructions via sms, of a client's address and the time, when documents need to be picked up. Thereafter, the shipments are counted and a confirmation sms is sent to the branch supervisor. Once the packages arrive at the branch, they are sorted and prepared for delivery by the female staff. A tracking code is given and entered into the system, which helps tracking and maintaining transparency about the shipment. A Proof of Delivery or a digital delivery status report is sent to clients, the day after delivery. Any part of this delivery procedure can be customised.

The brainchild of Dhruv Lakra, Mirakle Couriers' clientele includes Mahindra & Mahindra, The Aditya Birla Group, Victory Art Foundation, JSW Group, Indian Hotels Company, Godrej & Boyce and Essel Propack. Although currently Mirakle Couriers operates only within Mumbai, they soon plan to expand to other cities. Apart from generating employment for the differently abled, the company, with its unique business model has given people with a hearing disability a sense of self-confidence and pride in the fact that they can earn their own livelihood.

Another enterprise, which has carved a niche for itself, by empowering the differently abled in terms of employing them, is Vindhya E-Infomedia, a BPO based in Bengaluru. With over 600 employees, Vindhya might just appear like a "speck in the booming BPO market". But what makes it unique is that most of its 600 plus employees, including everyone on the floor operations is differently abled.

In an interview with Abhishek Mande-Bhot of rediff.com, Pavithra Y S, the founder of Vindhya states that there were many things she had to work around, starting with the perception of their company. At the outset, Pavithra had positioned her company as a profit organisation, which incidentally happens to work with the differently abled. People still perceived her company as an NGO, as there wasn't another model like Vindhya. Many clients were appreciative of the work Pavithra was doing, but were sceptical about giving her business, in the context of the doubt they experienced about Vindhya's ability to deliver and meet deadlines. But like other competitors in the market, Vindhya also did pilot projects to win the trust of their clients and from then on there was no looking back.

In terms of the challenge of working with such a huge section of the differently abled is concerned, Pavithra opines that one needs to be extremely patient, as the learning curve is longer, as also considering the fact that there are a lot of issues related to low self-confidence. But once employees are trained, they are even better than able-bodied people. At the outset, employees are made aware of the fact that they must not expect sympathy or charity, and they must not expect magic to happen, if they don't work hard. Prospective employees are made to undergo training and only if they deliver, during the training process, are they brought on board. The unique qualities that such employees carry to the workplace are an unparalleled commitment and a sense of loyalty, to an organisation that has shown a lot of trust in their abilities. And like any other organisation, Vindhya too has had to let go of employees. But here too, Pavithra shares that an employee is fired, not if the company is doing badly; an employee is fired only if s/he does not deliver/perform, despite repeated training. The Mirakle and Vindhya E-Infomedia models thus go to show that inclusion of the differently abled, in the working populace, is not an impossible task and neither is it a task, which is predominantly non-profitable, as is popular perception.

A factor that may not be seen at play, as conspicuously, as the inclusion of the differently abled, but one that operates subtly, yet in a very widespread manner, is diversity related to culture. This paper will touch upon two facets of how this factor operates – one within the country, where most organisations consist of people from different ethnicities and cultural orientations and second when MNCs send people from the parent organisation, to India, to manage operations. The issue of Indians working abroad will not be covered in this research, as the paper essentially focuses on ensuring sustainability in India.

India's diversity, in terms of people hailing from different ethnicities, religious and cultural orientations and specific dynamics, related to certain communities, poses unique challenges in terms of diversity measures that could be adopted at the workplace. And more often than not, policies and programmes conceptualised for and aimed at integrating the workforce could rather end up alienating it. One therefore needs to tread very carefully, and the following section will illustrate how this balance could be achieved.

While dealing with a multicultural workforce, a pre-awareness of certain cultural specifics, either through observation, experience, or by talking to other colleagues might help to ward off conflicts. A simple example of this is of a colleague, who felt offended, when another colleague, who was eating non vegetarian food, used her spoon to eat vegetarian food that the colleague (who was fasting for religious reasons) had offered. The colleague, who was fasting, promptly closed her lunch box and refused to eat the remaining food. Completely perplexed by this phenomena, as such a concept had not existed in her own community, the colleague who was having non-vegetarian food apologised several times, but could not rationalise what had actually gone wrong. It was only after another well informed person, who was a witness to the misunderstanding, counselled the colleague and educated her about the fact, that certain communities do not appreciate the same spoon being used for both vegetarian and non vegetarian food, that some light was shed on the issue. Such instances of misunderstanding, which would offend colleagues could be prevented, by acquainting oneself, through various means, by either reading about cultural specificities, through books, articles on the internet or blogs or asking for help from informed colleagues and their extended network of acquaintances, friends or relatives.

Other than being aware of particular norms of behaviour, utmost care should be taken of the fact that an organisation that considers itself secular in its outlook, does not end up subscribing to/promoting a given cultural or religious affiliation. This could be demonstrated by the gifts that an organisation might give to its employees or names of various programmes that would be held in an organisation. If these are laden with cultural/religious/caste/ethnic implications, it might result in alienating a section of the workforce. An organisation, therefore, needs to re-examine, whether its initiatives give scope for including the minorities and people, who are secular, in their approach. In this light, it is important to focus on keeping the workplace neutral, in terms of religious or other ethnic symbols and practices.

What however matters in the larger picture is how ready an employee really is to be placed in a different culture, and for ensuring readiness, one actually needs to focus on the mental make up of an individual, rather than other dimensions, which will be discussed at a later point in this paper. An example in point is that of Karl Slym, once MD of Tata Motors, who is remembered fondly, by not only his colleagues, but also his competitors, in the auto field, for his exemplary ability, to adapt to the Indian auto industry and foster a culture of inclusion. What makes his stint even more memorable is that it stands as a stark contrast, to that of his successor, another professional from abroad, whose actions and demeanour illustrated that he was quite resistant to adapt, to an alien culture and its business practices. Although the example stated in this context is representative of the situation vis-à-vis expats, such occurrences could also involve people within different regions/states within India. It is in this context that the motivation of the person and whether/not the person is a right fit, needs to be evaluated beforehand.

Although a sense of motivation could come largely from within, making employees ready in terms of efficiently handling operations elsewhere, can be managed and is being managed, through a lot of formal training in that regard. Since many MNCs have set up their offices in India, a number of foreign nationals have been coming to India, to manage their operations. To help these foreign nationals adapt to Indian ways, training is provided on professional, social and cultural etiquette. In fact, as Mr. Vikas Shirodkar, an HR professional states training is also provided to the family members of the employee, so that a basic platform for interaction and functioning is

established. Training is outsourced to companies like *Global Adjustments*, who hand hold foreign nationals and help them deal with the intricacies of an alien culture.

In terms of assimilating practices from another culture, into an Indian workplace, an HR professional from an Asian MNC had some interesting insights to share. He said that initially when Japanese employees from his company stood up and exercised for about 5 minutes, after sitting in their chairs for around two hours, the sight became quite a spectacle, in the Indian office. Similarly, when these Japanese employees set out for a jog/walk, donning walking shoes, during lunch hour, quite a few people scoffed at this and found it outrageous and many a times culture jokes did the rounds. However, gradually, some Indians too joined the routine and now this practice has become a common sight, in the Indian office. Similarly, when the Japanese practice of morning meetings, which is primarily a five to ten minutes interaction, with the entire office, about what are the major programmes or meetings lined up, first started 20 years back, it created quite a stir as, in the Indian set up, this was never the norm. However, morning meetings have now become as essential as morning tea is what the HR professional shares and, most of the times, such interactions help employees get a heads up of what s/he can expect to unfold during the course of the day.

Thus, while each organisation tries to arrive at its own algorithm of making cultural diversity work, what cannot be denied is that it is a factor, which one cannot be oblivious to, in a globalised context. In fact, studies show that, after IQ and EQ, organisations are now graduating to CQ (Cultural Quotient), to help sustainability and organisations, the world over, are making concentrated efforts, to make the best of not just both, but multiple worlds, which meet each other, in a workplace.

Focusing on the last paradigm of diversity, that this paper has chosen to analyse, age is a parameter that has triggered quite a few discussions and debates, in the recent past and talk of multigenerational conflicts is not unheard of, in modern organisations. What requires deliberation though is how effectively this factor can be interwoven into the fabric of the Indian workplace, in the context of Indian demographics that are creating unique challenges. As an article states, “Even as the world is greying, India is getting younger. By 2020, the average Indian will be only 29 years of age compared to 37 in China and the U.S., 45 in Western Europe and 48 in Japan. Currently, more than half of India’s population is less than 25 years of age.”

With this as the backdrop, what also demands attention is a growing trend, which Mr. Vikas Shirodkar, a well known HR professional believes has become the norm nowadays - a trend being set by companies that have been increasingly working on the basis of meritocracy. He adds that the average span of the CEO, in a given company (as Fortune Magazine also states in a study), is 2 ½ years. And, this further adds to the already complex matrix of age diversity, making managing it a tight rope walk.

There were two disparate views that were observed on the issue of age diversity, in an organisation. One school of thought laid down that companies are largely focusing on meritocracy, as seen from the fact that professionals like Satya Nadella, Shantanu Narayen and Francisco D’Souza, who are in their late 40s and early 50s, to name a few, are being picked up as CEOs, based on their skills and performance. While, on the other hand, an HR professional said that focusing on meritocracy might not help in the long run because only experience would be able to create a vision in an individual. Apart from this, although its analysis is not in the purview of this paper, at the macro level, internationally too companies having been shying away, from releasing figures on age diversity. In the Silicon Valley alone, only two companies – HP and Intel have been releasing age diversity figures every year and the others have either not released them at all or circulated them internally, as a matter of policy.

Given these dynamics, analysing how this dimension can be harnessed, to yield the best possible result, is a challenge. Some thoughts by a professional, who has worked and interacted with colleagues, from different age groups, both in an individual capacity and in teams, has been able to throw light on how to approach this challenge.

What features first among other issues is the attitude of Gen Y, which is the cause of most conflicts in the workplace. Feedback, from senior colleagues, about work, and advice are dismissed as criticism, while being

termed as ‘sharing insights’, when it comes to people, who are closer, in age, to Gen Y. This closeness to previous generations could, in fact, be capitalised upon, to provide attitude training for youngsters, which might probably help in bridging the gap. An exercise, though in the academic context, might shed light on how this works. When Dr. Preeti Shirodkar, an academician, who has worked with students, for over two decades, realised that pep talks by faculty members, or an open dialogue with students aren’t proving enough, to make students aware of the likely problems, they are bound to face in the professional world, she invited an alumnus to share his thoughts and views, in a semi-formal set up. And, this exercise was an eye opener and an attitude scaling session for most. While, on the other hand, for senior members in a department, training sessions in change management which could be done with the help of either interactive workshops or counselling would help achieve the balance.

Speaking of balance, care should also be taken to balance teams, vis-à-vis age, gender, and if possible – culture, so that a balance of views and opinions as also skills and experience are maintained. This equilibrium could also be used to drive home organisational culture, in terms of what the organisation stands for and the roadmap it wishes to follow, to reach the level of excellence it has planned to achieve. As Mr. Ajit Jadhav, the General Manager of an Indo-Japanese company, who has worked, in the company, for over 25 years, puts it, “the older generation of employees maintains a sense of continuity and carries the responsibility of passing on the organisational culture and vision to the younger lot. Their sense of loyalty and commitment to organisational excellence, works as an important driving force and balances the flippancy and lack of loyalty of the younger generation.” And, though there may be exceptions to both these age groups, they would, if at all, only serve to prove the rule.

Within these multigenerational teams, it is important to create a culture of rationalisation, pertaining to decisions, actions and changes, in the organisation. Whether related to appraisals, delegation of authority, inclusion or exclusion, within sub-teams, in organisations, for specific short term or long term tasks, only an open dialogue will help in viewing such changes in the right perspective and help to nurture and sustain a culture of understanding and trust. And on occasions, when conflicts arise, organisations need to involve a neutral party for resolution, to maintain a democratic culture. More often than not, involvement, let alone opinions of this neutral element, within the organisation might be viewed sceptically, in which case involving a consultant would help focus on resolving the issue, rather than those affecting work efficiency or organisational culture.

Beyond conflict resolution, what could help actually create a harmony among age diverse teams is to nurture an environment or ambience, which makes working in an age diverse team, a sheer pleasure. Creating bonding exercises, whether in terms of organising/participating in social events or working on projects, could go a long way in building this synergy. Attempts to bring about greater understanding, among age diverse groups, through interaction and idea exchange, further germinated into the concept of reverse mentoring, which has been used by organisations like Bharti Airtel, to bridge the age gap. As a part of their reverse mentoring programme, leaders across the country, including the Airtel Management Boards and function heads were mentored mostly by young managers, in their second and third year, in the organisation. The idea exchange spanned topics such as brand activation opportunities, downloading apps, fashion trends, latest gadgets, business strategies and even what youngsters do in their leisure time. The result was that many senior leaders from the Airtel Management Boards began using Twitter and subscribing to blogs and utilising apps, all of which gave them insights into current market trends and consumer tastes. But, this success model has its own limitations and will have to be used with great caution, as organisations might end up aggravating problems, instead of mitigating them. Additionally, this model might not apply across industries and may be applicable only in specific areas of functioning.

An analysis of four among the varied criteria to harness diversity in the workplace, thus reveals that the modern office is going to be anything but simple, where multiple factors will be at play concurrently. Unless organisations acknowledge the presence of these factors and as Mr. Vikas Shirodkar says “have an open mind”, sustainability will keep eluding organisations. The key, then, is to balance the impact of these factors and work towards a truly evolved workplace because at least the idea of the perfect can make the near perfect an actuality. To survive in the game, corporations will have to take cognisance of the ever changing definition of workplace

diversity. The observation and views of Intel President Renee James, who summarises the contemporary trend very aptly, are quite noteworthy in this regard. James opines that “There is a huge business case for diversity... If you don’t have an inclusive, diverse workforce, it makes you myopic”.

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