UNIT-4
MHRM-IV SEM
Workforce Diversity

1) Meaning

- Workforce diversity "is the bringing together of a variety of people to one workplace." It's a concept that does something that many other business-related concepts don't – it diverges from the professional and fundamentally concerns the *personal*.
- Managing workforce diversity implies creating an organisational climate in which a heterogeneous workforce performs to its best potential; without the organisation favoring /dis-favoring any particular segment of workforce with a view to facilitating the best attainment of organisational goals.

2) Dimension of Workforce Diversity: Some people dimensions of workforce diversity are described below:

(i) Age:
People belonging to different age groups cause diversity in workforce. Young people may be enriched with health, merit, capacity for hard-work etc.; while elderly people may possess more maturity than their junior counterparts and are full of experiences of life.

(ii) Gender:
Male workers are usually aggressive, bold and materialistic; while female workers possess sympathy for others and are more concerned with quality of life. What is important to observe is that people of both sex have material differences in outlook, nature, habits etc.; as differences between males and females are the design of God who created mankind.

(iii) Education:
In an organisation people may range from less educated to highly educated. Educated people have a broad outlook and are open-minded. They are endowed with logic and rationality and usually dislike discrimination among individuals on petty grounds of caste, colour, religion etc.

(iv) Culture:
Culture is a complex of race, religion, language, social traditions and values etc. People from different cultural backgrounds may have ethnic orientations i.e. a sense of favoritism towards their nation, race or tribe, which they belong to.

(v) Psychology:
(Psychology is the kind of mind that one has that makes one think or behaves in a particular way). In a organisation, there are people with different psychology. Some may be optimistic or pessimistic; some may be bold or timid or so on. Psychology may be a gift of Nature or a manifestation of family background or social affiliations.

3) Significance of Workforce Diversity Management: Workforce diversity management is significant for the following reasons:

(i) Ability to Deal with Diverse Market: Culturally diverse workforce can better appreciate the needs, feedings, and attitudes of culturally diverse consumers. Thus workforce diversity increases the competence of a corporation to deal with a market; that consists of diverse consumer groups in respect of age, sex, culture etc.

(ii) Better Decision-Making: People from heterogeneous backgrounds may aid management in better decision-making, by offering suggestions from a wide range of perspectives and orientations. In fact, heterogeneous groups of people may be more creative and innovative; when they pool their knowledge and experiences and agree on a common solution to a tricky problem; which might aid management in making excellent decisions for the organisation.

(iii) Better Human Relations: Workforce diversity management aims at developing and nurturing a common organisational culture and climate; which enable people from diverse culture and backgrounds to co-exist peacefully. Such a common organisational culture and climate leads to better human relations in the enterprise and producs all-round organisational and managerial efficiency.

(iv) Preventing Unnecessary Labour Turnover: When in an organisation there is good workforce diversity management; women and other dis-satisfied people are prevented from leaving the organisation. In case otherwise, when there is large labour turnover because of poor workforce diversity management; investment made in manpower may go waste, with other bad consequences for the organisation. In fact, employees leave the organisation when they do not feel comfortable and duly cared for by management.

(v) Building of Goodwill of the Enterprise: Companies with excellent workforce diversity management build goodwill in the society. As such, talented people of society with diverse backgrounds and culture get attracted towards it for seeking suitable employment. Such companies never have a problem of the scarcity of skilled, educated and talented human capital.

4) Techniques of Workforce Diversity Management And Ensuring Success:
Some techniques for successful workforce diversity management and ensuring its success are suggested below:

(i) Creating Awareness of Diversity: Management must create awareness in the organisation that differences among people as to age, sex, education, culture etc. exist in workforce; so that people may try to understand one another in a more rational and friendly manner.

(ii) Creating Conditions for Common Organisational Culture: Organisation must develop cross-cultural training programmes creating conditions for development of a common organisational culture and climate. Such common culture will create an environment in which a diversified work force can co-exist comfortably, peacefully and happily.

(iii) Programmes of Special Care for Diversified Workforce: Management must design programmes of special care, like the following:

1. Care for elderly people

2. Special work schedules to provide convenience to female workers etc.

(iv) Career Development Programmes: There must be programmes for identifying each individual's strengths, weaknesses and potential for career development; so that the organization can capitalize on the peculiar features of a diversified workforce. In fact, people should be valued for their difference and variety.

(v) Avoiding Discriminations: A very significant technique for excellent workforce diversity management is to avoid any sort of discrimination among people on the basis of age, culture and specially sex. In the most developed country the U.SA, the Glass Ceiling Commission states that between 95 and 97 percent of senior managers in the country's biggest corporations are men.

(The term 'glass ceiling' describes the process by which women are barred from promotion by means of an invisible barrier).

(vi) Prevention of Sexual Harassment: With the entry of a large number of women in organisations, the phenomenon of sexual harassment is usually witnessed; which management must prevent by all means and at all costs. Sexual harassment includes a range of actions, like – unwelcome touching, joking, teasing, innuendoes (indirectly bad and rude remarks), slurs, and the display of sexually explicit materials.

(vii) Committees of Diverse Members: Committees of diverse members must be formed for evaluating and addressing complaints of people, regarding their sad experience of working in the organisation.

5) Challenges of Diversity Management

Embracing and managing diversity in today's business world is not a recommendation – it's an essential part of successful business practices. Even when business leaders understand and value the differences in the people in their companies, they face challenges when managing diversity programs. Leaders need to spend the time necessary to fully understand the issues that can lead a w ell-intended diversity program to backfire and create problems.

a) **Understanding the Value of Differences** Business leaders know that embracing diversity brings various voices to a team, improves morale and increases overall productivity. However, when they develop and manage diversity programs, managers have difficulty understanding the value of each person's unique abilities or voice. This may be the result of unintended personal bias and differences. Even with diversity programs in place, some team members may be reluctant to share ideas or provide feedback based on historical cultural experiences.

b) **Help Employees Understand their Value** Managers work with employees to help them understand their own value to the team. Holding team-building exercises encourages every member to work on a task that is not job-related while getting to know other employees in different ways. They schedule diversity potlucks where employees share their culture through food. By going beyond policies and creating diversity-building programs, business leaders motivate everyone on the team to share and celebrate.

c) **Combating and Managing Discrimination** While a business leader may try to develop a diversity program to build team spirit and morale, there may be instances where certain employees still have conflicts. Discrimination not only kills team morale and negatively impacts performance, but it is a human resources issue that companies need to address before facing lawsuits. Managing discrimination is challenging. There may be times where someone claims to be discriminated against by another employee when no discrimination occurred.

d) **Publishing and Implementing Workplace Rules** Business leaders protect themselves against discrimination and effectively manage diversity platforms by publishing and implementing workplace rules and protocols that are the same for every complaint. Employee handbooks need to clearly explain the company diversity and anti-discriminatory policies. They should also give employees protocol to follow when they feel there is an infraction of the policy. Investigations should be thorough and unbiased with documentation and actions taken when necessary.

e) **Including and Celebrating Everyone** Diversity by its definition attempts to celebrate people for who they are, their backgrounds and what makes them unique. Managing

programs runs the risk of incidentally leaving out one particular group whether it be religious, ethnic or lifestyle. What business leaders have come to realize is that in growing diversity programs to celebrate one group, there is the risk of offending another. For example, as businesses moved toward gender-neutral restroom policies, some groups celebrated the progress being made toward the transgender community while others became outraged. It is this fine line that managers must walk when they develop policies and programs that support office diversity.

Disclaimer-: This is a kind of supplement notes. Content in notes is extracted from internet and books but is not limited to these 5 pages. Students are advised to read more through the following links and get more knowledge on the topic **WORKFORCE DIVERSITY**. *Preparation for main exams should not be limited from only these notes. Efforts should be made to* **read more** *on the topic. The following links, websites, articles will provided much needed help.*

1. https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/123886/7/07_chapter-1.pdf

2. https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/workforce-diversity.pdf

3. http://www.thiswayglobal.com/blog/top-diversity-issues-in-the-workplace/

4. https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail