

## ORIGIN OF DIVERSITY (WHEN WAS THE CONCEPT OF DIVERSITY DISSEMINATED IN MANAGEMENT LITERATURE)

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### ABSTRACT

*Workforce diversity is an absolute truth. If it is ignored, it causes disadvantages for the organizations. The study of workplace diversity has its roots in the United States. The Report "Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the Twenty-First Century" (Johnston & Packer, 1987), was the study that aroused everyone's attention on increasing the diverse workforce in industries and its impact on industrial performance. "Diversity was not directly mentioned or examined in any of the classic works of early management theory (Kurowski, 1999) until the Civil Rights Act of 1969". It came into force which abolished "discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin". After the Civil Rights Act, there was a flood of research literature on workplace diversity. "Progress may not be at revolutionary speed, but we are coming to an understanding that diversity makes business sense and that the diversity of the world is at our doorsteps."<sup>9</sup> (Sunniva, 2011). This Paper highlights the origin of diversity in ten different countries. It also traces the initiation of diversity, its legislative provisions, professional bodies (that manage issues related to diversity), and the introduction of concept of diversity in management literature. Furthermore, this paper also describes the meaning of diversity, workplace diversity and its rationales.*

**Keywords:** Diversity, Workforce, Civil Rights Act, Research Literature, National Origin.

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### Introduction

#### Meaning of Diversity

Diversity is not related to discrimination. But, yes, it is important to understand discrimination before understanding the meaning of diversity. Discrimination is a negative feeling which produces unfair behavior towards a disadvantaged group. Discrimination is a merger of three important factors attitude, stereotypes, and prejudices. Traditionally, cognitive and affective elements are conceptualized in attitudes (Dovidio & Hebl, 2005). Cognitive elements are thoughts and beliefs about attitude objects while affective elements are feelings and emotions towards attitude objects. Cognitive and affective elements present the consequences for people that they belong to in-group or out-group<sup>1</sup>. It might be possible that there is any inconsistency between cognitive and affective elements.

Prejudice is defined as a process to differentiate one individual from other due to their belongingness to a particular group. It is a negative attitude that interprets the environment and sees whether others in the same environment are good or bad.

"A stereotype is a generalization of beliefs about a group or its members that is unjustified because it reflects faulty thought processes or overgeneralizations, factual incorrectness, inordinate rigidity, misattributions, or rationalizations for prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory behaviors" (Dovidio et al., 1996). All three factors which constitute discrimination are negative towards other individuals. Discrimination is the unfair treatment of one person or group of persons towards another person or group of persons.

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<sup>1</sup> In-group and Out-group : (e.g., "the tendency to see members of another group as similar to one another")

Discrimination and diversity are not interrelated. It is important to eliminate discrimination to embrace diversity. Diversity is neither neutral nor detachable; it is about an individual's identity. At first glance, identity and diversity are opposite to each other. It might be two sides of the coin or two extreme points on the continuum. Diversity is a mixture of diverse traits of an individual which hardly overlaps. Diversity is sometimes considered a synonym of difference as "it is associated with the constructs of separation, variety, and disparity" (Harrison & Klein, 2007). The difference is a negative word, but diversity shifts its connotation from this negative approach to a more positive approach<sup>1</sup>. The word "Diversity" came into existence from two Latin words "diversus" and "diversitas" which means 'various' and 'contrariety'. In English and French, diversity is defined as the "fact of the difference between two or more things or kinds". Diversity is always related to human traits, so it changes with time and place (Villesèche et al., 2018). Diversity can be 'personal' and 'organizational'. "Personal diversity characteristics encompass multiple dimensions, including age, educational status, religion, and job tenure while organizational diversity characteristics include the composition of the organization and organizational practices" (Acquavita et al., 2009).

### **Workplace Diversity**

Every human being is different from others due to his/her unique characteristics which make them different. The word diversity has many definitions and meanings. The word diversity has been defined by different countries as per their own culture such as in India (Caste/Religion), China (Urban Men, Urban Women, Rural Men, and Rural Women), U.K (Race & Ethnicity), Europe (National Culture and Languages) and USA (Race, Gender, Age, Ethnicity, Religion & Sexual Orientation). Diversity does not have a common meaning for all, because when you're discussing diversity from an Indian perspective, people may think about caste and religion but when diversity is discussed from a European perspective, they may take it as cultural difference.

No comprehensive definition of diversity which covers all aspects of diversity has yet been developed. According to the literature, the term diversity was developed in the US in the 1980s after the Workforce Report 2000, which highlighted demographic changes in the workforce. It has been defined as "We define diversity as a mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system" (Fleury, 1999). It has also been defined as "Diversity is the collective amount of difference among members within a social unit" (Harrison & Sin, 2006). From the above definitions, it is clear that diversity refers to differentiating on the basis of race, gender, age, ethnicity, religion & sexual orientation among people.

To name a specific diversity dimension that can be used as it is in all cultures and nation is a very difficult task, for example, the division of the Indian population on the basis of caste is irrelevant in Belgium. Some categories have a positive effect and some have a negative effect (in Western countries, younger employees are believed to be more desirable because they are considered to have fresh ideas, better technical skills, and flexible attitudes, but in traditional countries such as China, older people are considered to have desirable qualities of knowledge and experience). Categories used in one country are not comprehensive enough to include the list of all diverse categories, for example, caste diversity is not included in Ireland. Workforce diversity has become important due increase in the diverse workforce in organizations. If everyone is the same, there will not be any diversity (Rao & Bagali, 2014).

"Workforce diversity refers to the division of the workforce into distinct categories that (a) have perceived commonality within a given cultural or national context and that (b) has a potentially harmful or beneficial outcome such as job opportunities, treatment in the workplace, and promotion prospects – irrespective of job – related skill and qualification" (Mor Barak, 2014). When we are talking about workforce diversity, a major focus of organizations is to hire a more diverse workforce and provide equal job opportunities to one and all. More diverse people can be hired on the basis of different dimensions of diversity. Major workforce diversity dimensions are age, gender, religion, physical disability, and culture. Traditionally, demographic characteristics were the major reason to hire a more diverse workforce, but time has changed from "surface-level diversity" to "deep-level diversity" (Robbins et al., 2001).

### **Rationale of Workplace Diversity**

"Workplace diversity is understood as the presence in organizations of men and women from the different cultural and racial-ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, physical abilities, and age" (Muller

<sup>1</sup> Etymonline(n.d). *Diversity*. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/identity> (2019a.). Retrieved August 4, 2019, from <https://www.etymonline.com/>: <https://www.etymonline.com/word/identity>

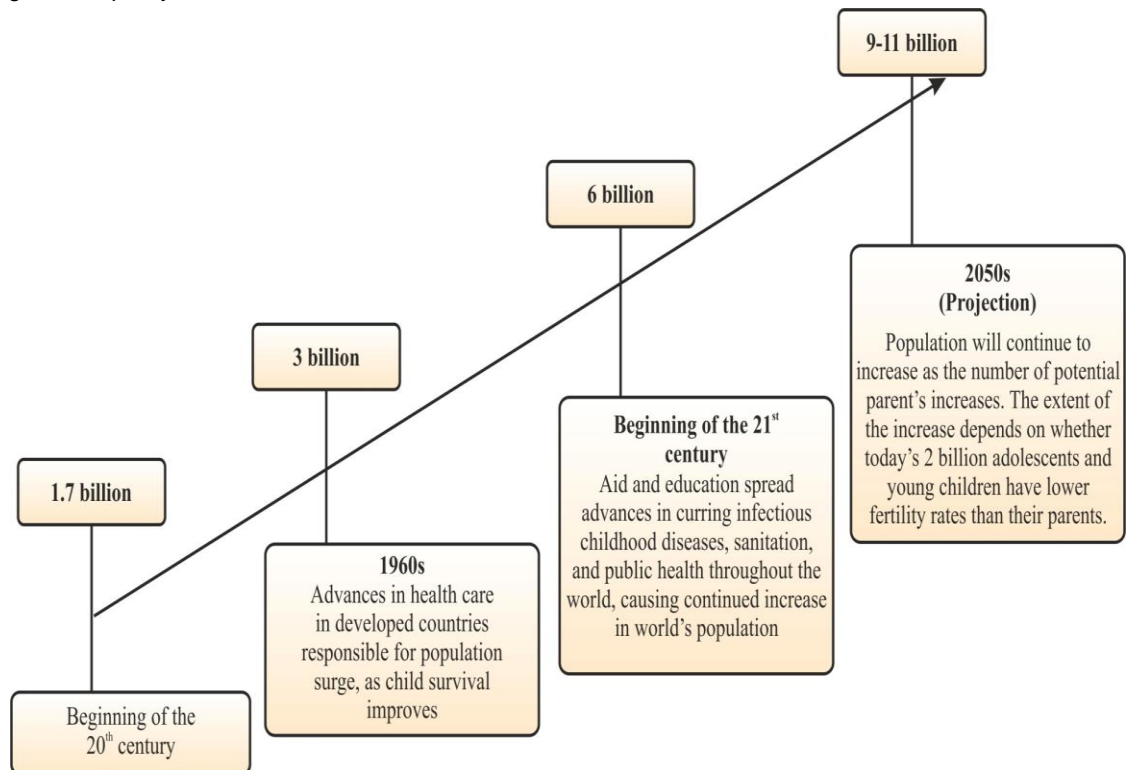
& Parham, 1998). Every individual is different from others and this heterogeneity in population gave birth to a heterogeneous workforce in the industry. This workforce belongs to diverse ages, races, gender, ethnicity, and educational backgrounds. Besides these differences, they are diverse in ways of thinking, managing, and leading. Few of them have control over their physical abilities while others are working with physical disabilities. They work under the same roof with different cultural and functional backgrounds. Few factors which are not far to seek make it important for organizations to consider workplace diversity as a foremost factor.

- **Changing demographic trends**

Demographical trends play important role in the study of workplace diversity. An increase in health care services, health awareness, and industrial development factors are responsible for major changes in demographic trends. World population trends (Figure no-1.1) represent the increase in population from 1960 to the projection of 2050.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, healthcare services have improved progressively in developed countries and the population has reached 3 billion. It has been projected that in 2050, the world population would increase to 9.11 billion (Mor Barak, 2014). The percentage of the young working population was high until 2012, but their proportion has decreased significantly in the next decade. This change in demography had aroused the attention of industrial firms toward workplace diversity (Global Monitoring Report -2015/2016, World Bank, 2016)

High fertility in poorly developed countries and low fertility in developed & underdeveloped countries have depicted the change in demographic trends of these countries. Demographical changes are reflected not only based on fertility, but also due to other factors such as "mortality and migration". Some factors are driven by forces such as healthcare services, the education system of the country, and gender equality<sup>1</sup>.



**Figure 1: Worldwide population trends**

Source: (Mor Barak, 2014)

<sup>1</sup> "Global Monitoring Report-2015/2016, World Bank (2016). *Development Goals in an Era of Demographic Change*. Washington, DC, United States of America: World Bank and International Monetary Fund".

Diversity is ubiquitous in India. One out of every six people who are living on this planet is living in India. According to the Census 2011, the country's population grew to 17.7% and it has doubled in size in the last 40 years. The current growth rate of the population is 0.99%<sup>1</sup>. After the LPG (liberalization, privatization, and globalization) policy of 1991, there was a tremendous increase in industries in India. These changing trends in the population of India make it necessary not only for Indian organizations but also for MNCs to manage this diverse workforce. Caste, religion, and gender are major dimensions of workplace diversity that are considered important in India.

"In a country where unity in diversity was eulogized by politicians and popular culture since its independence, the word 'diversity' conjures up images of a dizzying kaleidoscope of language, food, apparel, and art. In today's new India, especially in its urban centers, these differences are fast fading, and we have arrived at the threshold of another 'unity in diversity' revolution — the workplace"<sup>2</sup>.

- **Change in Trends of the Working-Age Population**

"The working-age population is defined as those aged 15 to 64. The basic indicator for employment is the proportion of the working-age population aged 15-64 who are employed. The age dependency ratio is the ratio of dependents (people younger than 15 or older than 64) to the working-age population. This indicator is measured as a percentage of the population"<sup>3</sup>. United nations statistical office have published the data regarding working-age group from time to time and it had projected that the working-age population will increase by one third between 2000 to 2025 (Mor Barak, 2014). Asia and Africa are expected to reach around three-quarters of the working population by 2030. In 2000, these two regions were representing two-thirds of the global share. In 2001, there was around 60 percent working-age population in India while 40 percent population was dependent on them.

**Table 1: Percentage Share of GWAP (Global Working-Age Population)-Selected Regions**

Country	Percentage Share of GWAP 2000	Percentage Share of GWAP 2030
Asia	57	56
Arab states	2	2
Africa	11	16
Europe and Central Asia	16	12
Northern America	6	5
Latin America and the Caribbean	8	9

Source: (International Labour Organization, 2018)

This percentage has increased to 66.54 percent in 2018<sup>4</sup>. The rapid increase in the working-age population has induced a diverse workforce in industries.

**Table 2: Population Distribution-India**

Age	Total Population	Percentage of the Total Population
Below 15 years	363,610,812	35.44
15-64 (working age group)	613,155,502	59.78
Above 64 years	49,105,542	4.78

Source: (Census, Government of India, 2001<sup>5</sup>)

- **Global Migration Trends**

Migration trends are the other important factor in workplace diversity study because flows of migrants from one country to another keep balance between working-age populations of different countries. Global migration brings diverse cultures, races, religions, and ethnicity to countries and is a key challenge to the respective industries.

<sup>1</sup> World Population Review. (n.d.). *Population Review*. Retrieved June 6, 2019, from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/india-population>

<sup>2</sup> Economic Times. (2019). Beating biases for diversity at the workplace. Retrieved July 24, 2019, from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/magazines/panache/being-biases-for-diversity-at-the-workplace/articleshow/70356464.cms>

<sup>3</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (n.d.). *Working-age population*. Retrieved August 19, 2018, from <https://data.oecd.org/pop/working-age-population.htm>

<sup>4</sup> "Census, Government of India. (2011). <https://censusindia.gov.in/>. Retrieved March Monday, 2017, from Census: <https://censusindia.gov.in/2011-Common/Archive.html>"

<sup>5</sup> Census, Government of India. (2011). <https://censusindia.gov.in/>. Retrieved March Monday, 2017, from Census: <https://censusindia.gov.in/2011-Common/Archive.html>

"The number of international migrants globally in 2019 was 272 million (3.5% of the world's population) and 52 percent of them were male while 48 percent were female. 74 percent of all international migrants were of working age (20–64 years)<sup>1</sup>. India has continued to be the largest country of origin of international migrants. It had the largest number of migrants living abroad (17.5 million), followed by Mexico and China (11.8 million and 10.7 million respectively). The top destination country remained the United States (50.7 million international migrants).

(Bove & Elia, 2017)<sup>2</sup> explored how and how much immigration affects economic development through its effect on the cultural and ethnic composition of the destination country. Most existing studies are cross-sectional, and explore the effect of ethnic and linguistic diversity on economic growth using time-invariant measures based on language and ethnicity (Alesina et al., 2003; Montalvo & Reynal, 2005; Gören, 2014). The racial and ethnic composition of modern societies has dramatically changed in the last few decades as a consequence of mass migration. Between 1960 and 2000 the global migrant stock increased from 92 million to 165 million (Özden et al., 2011). By 2010 it reached 222 million (UNDESA, 2016). Arguably the effect of cultural heterogeneity is likely to differ over time."

### Origin of the Concept of Workplace Diversity

Power and dominant society, which is an outcome of the historical disparity, created differences that led to the origin of the concept of diversity. The word Diversity was coined by the late "Pope M. G,"<sup>3</sup> who was a diversity consultant, to highlight the demographic characteristics of the workforce (James, 2007) After the Civil war in the U.S.A, although slavery ended officially, discrimination was witnessed by black Americans. In 1948 executive order (9981) was passed under the presidentship of Harry S. Truman to abolish racial discrimination in the U.S.A because black Americans had to wait for 3 years to join combat after being qualified, while the white Americans can join the combat within a month of their qualification.

Another rule related to discrimination was passed in the U.S.A to stamp out demographic discrimination in the labor force of the U.S.A named "The Civil Rights Act 1964". Workplace Diversity was first recognized around the 1970<sup>s</sup> and 1980<sup>s</sup> in the US, when the report "Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the Twenty-First Century" (Johnston & Packer, 1987) by the Ministry of Labour, highlighted an increase in the diverse workforce in US organizations. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, United States, 1992<sup>4</sup> was set up in 1965 to provide equal work opportunities to everyone irrespective of color, sex, race, and nationality. In England, slavery was considered to be for a short time, but their discrimination of immigrants (Asian, Black) continued. Racial discrimination was continuously experienced by black Africans in South Africa. Gender and sexual discrimination is perceived by all societies in all countries. After these initiatives, other countries also took a step toward discrimination under unequal employment opportunity law. Diversity initiatives were taken in the 1980<sup>s</sup> and 1990<sup>s</sup> and it is studied as a concept after 1990 in many countries. The table below portrays a clear picture of the origin of the concept of diversity:

**Table 3: Origin of Concept of Diversity in Different Countries**

S. No	Country	Diversity Initiative	Legislation	Covered Diversity in Legislation	Professional Bodies	Year when was the concept of Diversity disseminated in Management Literature
1.	Turkey	19 <sup>th</sup> century	Yes	Gender, Ethnicity, Religion, Sexual Orientation	Union of Turkish Bar Association, the European Commission	2000-01
2.	Pakistan	1973	Yes	Gender and Disability	The federal government, MNC, and NGOs	2004
3.	Austria	1848	Yes	Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Age, Ethnicity, Religion/Belief	Austria Society for Diversity	2003

<sup>1</sup> IOM UN Migration. (2020). *World Migration Report*. Switzerland: International Organization for Migration.

<sup>2</sup> Bove, V., & Elia, L. (2017). Migration, diversity, and economic growth. *World Development*, 89, 227-239.

<sup>3</sup> "James, R.R. (2007). Profile in Diversity Journal: The Pioneers of diversity blazing the trail: The 2007 innovation in diversity awards. *Diversity Journal*, 9 (4), 1-27".

<sup>4</sup> Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, United States. (1992). *EEOC compliance manual*. Washington, D.C: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

4.	Belgium	1975	Yes	Sex, Age, Sexual Orientation, Civil status, Birth, Property, Religious or Philosophical belief, political persuasion, Language, Disability	Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism	2003-04
5.	Canada	1982	Yes	Race, National, or Ethnic origin, Color, Religion, Sex, Age, Mental or Physical Impairment	The Human Resource Professional Association, The Women in Management Division of Administrative Science Association of Canada (ASAC)	1995
6.	France	The 1980s-1990s	Yes	Origin, Gender, Family Status, Pregnancy, Physical appearance, disability, health, condition, Genetic characteristics, demeanors, sexual orientation, age, political opinion, Union activity, Family name, Nationality, ethnicity, race, and religion.	The European Commission, the French government	2003-04
7.	German	1990's	Yes	Origin, Gender, Family Status, Pregnancy, Physical appearance, disability, health, condition, sexual orientation, age, political opinion, Union activity, Family name, Nationality, ethnicity, race, and religion.	The German government, The European Commission	1990's
8.	Netherlands	1983	Yes	Religious and political conviction, Race, Nationality, Gender, Marital Status, Sexual Orientation, Permanent or temporary labor, Working Hours, Handicap and chronic illness, Age	FORUM, Div-Netwerk	2000
9.	Singapore	1989	Yes	Race, Religion, Descent, Place of Birth	The government	2003-04
10.	South Africa	1990	Yes	Race, Gender, and Disability	The Government	Early 1990's

Source: Compiled by researcher through the study of (Klarsfeld et al., 2014).

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