Advances in Strategic Human Resource Management
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Diversity and Inclusion at Workplace: An Strategic Perspective
Lecture - 05 A
Diversity Management: The Introduction

[FL]. In this session, we are going to study and discuss Diversity and Inclusion at Workplace. After this session, I hope that participants will be able to identify the nature and importance of Diversity Management at workplace.

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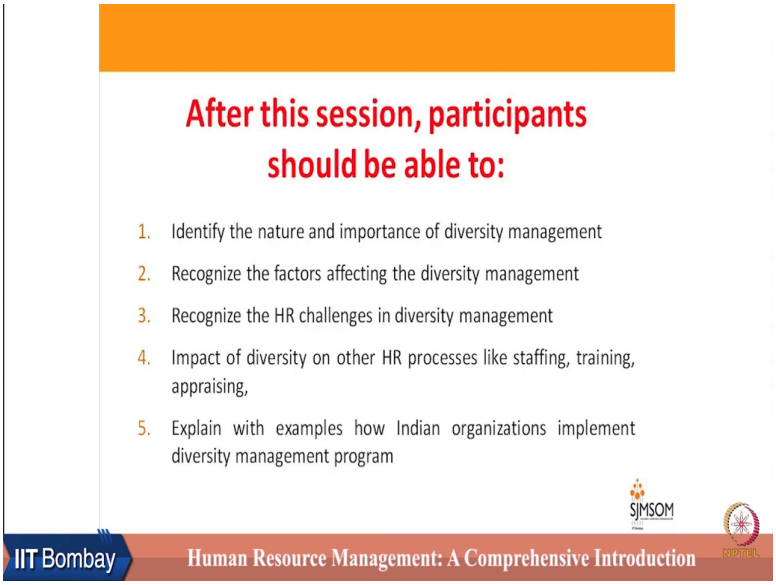

They will be able to recognize the factors affecting the diversity management. They will also be able to recognize the HR challenges in diversity management. We will also discuss the impact of diversity on other HR processes like staffing, training, appraising.

And after this session, participants should be able to explain with examples how Indian organizations implement diversity management program. We will also look at what internationally are found to be most effective diversity management processes and systems.

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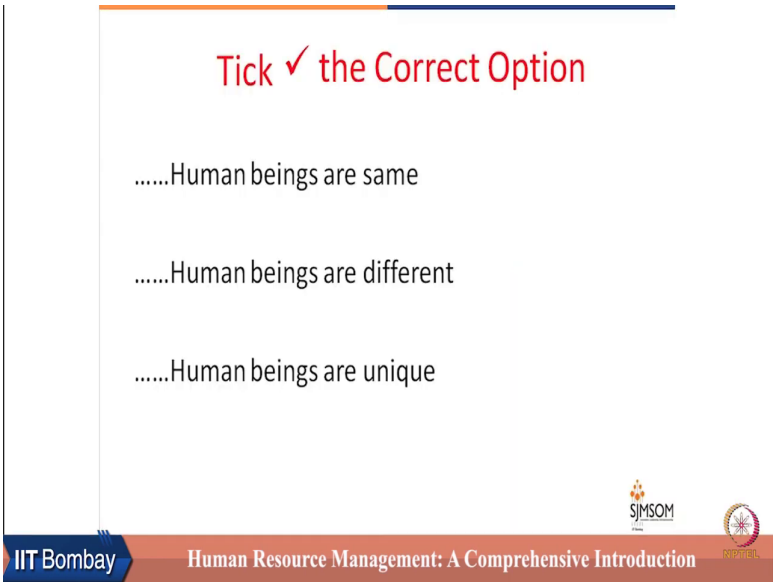

If I ask you to tick mark one correct option out of the three options given below, what will be what will be your answer? Human beings are same, human beings are different, human beings are unique. Probably we cannot tick mark a single phrase given in this on this slide. Because

on certain things, we are similar, on certain things we are different and on certain things, we are unique.

For example, human beings are same in terms of the 46 chromosome in their cells, the basic physiological indicators and the impact of some of the elements on their physiology. For example, paracetamol works in reducing temperature, irrespective of human being of any race or any society takes that. So, first option is correct on certain aspects. Second option is also correct because human beings build community. Communities are built on some common goals or common identities.

For example, we are Indians, there are some Americans, similarly there are some Buddhists, there are some Muslims. Similarly, there are groups of football lovers, photography lovers, cricket players, etcetera etcetera. So, football lovers or cricket followers are different in comparison to those populations or those groups which do not have interest in these games.

So, human beings are different as well. There are models of personality types which suggest that human personality can be looked at in 16 factors or 5 factors, etcetera. Based on those also, we see that human beings are different, but human beings can be clubbed in the small groups based on their similarity.

And human beings are unique as well because our face are unique, our thumb impressions are unique, our nature, our aptitude, our approach to life, our attitude towards certain incidents in life that can also be unique. So, human beings are unique as well. So, all options are correct in their respect to aspect.

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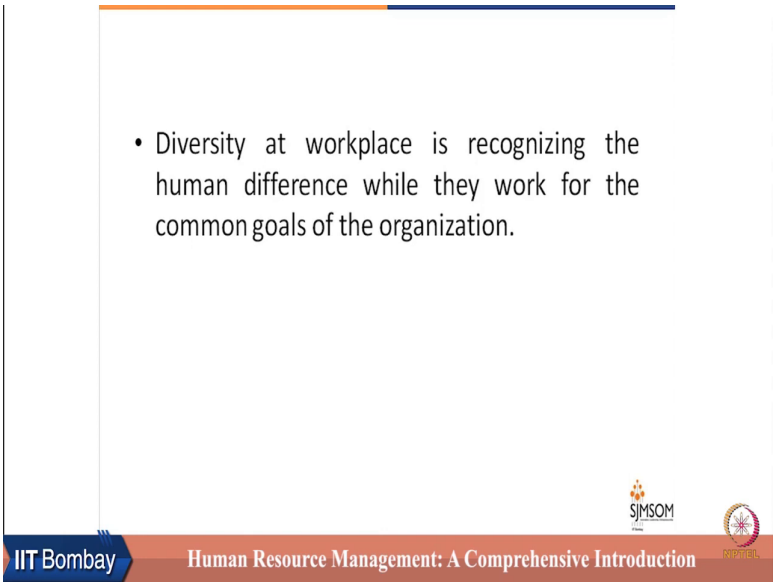

Diversity is recognizing the human situation, recognizing human being on all three levels. So, what is the meaning of diversity at workplace is recognizing the human differences while they work for the common goals of organization.

So, there is a commonality in terms of the organizational objectives, but human beings will be different, they will be having different personality, they might be having different orientation and that recognition and working together, recognizing these differences is the core of diversity at workplace.

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Diversity is inevitable, diversity is increasing at workplace and it is only going to increase further. There are many factors for increasing diversity at workplace. First one is globalizing world that is powered by IT and because of that human beings can work together even if they are located in different parts of the world. Domestic and international migration is also going on in certain countries; there is a dearth of certain type of skills.

So, they are they welcome people coming from different countries with those particular skills. Multinational corporations are being formed and in order to run the multiple corporations, in order to run the multinational corporations we hire managers; they hire managers and employees from different parts of the world. We discussed the human staffing in the international management; there can be a very global approach of hiring talent.

Emerging markets are growing as a result of that people are moving from their own country to different countries and there are expatriates coming to the emerging markets, both the movement is happening in both the directions.

Heterogeneous and cross functional teams are regularly formed in at workplace and they are found to be specifically relevant, specifically useful in finding out the creative solutions of complex problems of current times. Large in complex project require multiple expertise that expertise might be with different types of people and as a result you have diversity at in the project teams.

Reliance on the non traditional work force talent in order to understand the customer, in order to understand the unique segments of the customers, organizations have to rely on non traditional work force talents.

So, the work force talent which is competent in understanding certain type of culture or talent which is capable of working with certain specific population segment like differently abled segment or the segment of minorities or segment in some specific geographic location etcetera.

So, there is a reliance on the non traditional work force talent. Socioeconomic development is also one cause of diversity because socioeconomic development is increasing the education level; it is increasing the capability to move from one place to another.

And that is also increasing the human capability in terms of expertise in a particular field and people identify themselves as knowledge workers will not mind going from away from their domestic countries or from their native place to other places in order to use their talent. So, all these factors are making diversity as an inevitable phenomena, we are going to have it and we are going to have it with more intensity at different workplace.

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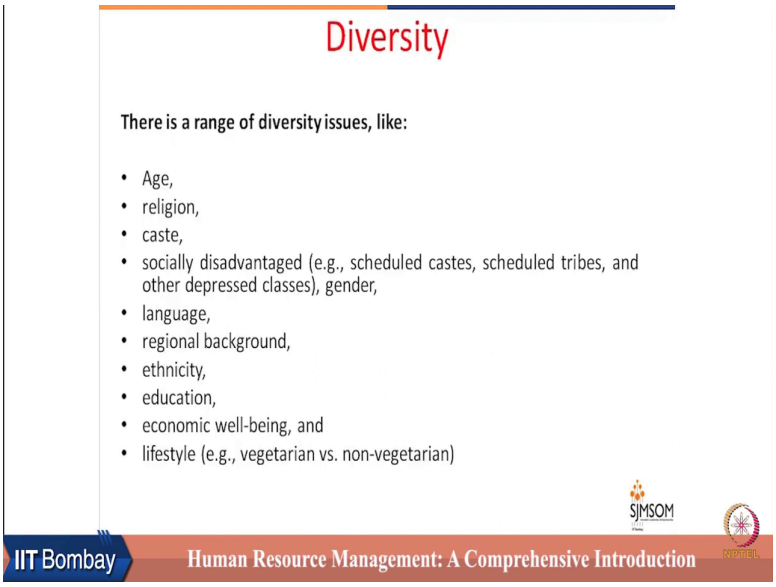

Diversity can occur in range of aspects like age, religion, in India; caste, socially disadvantaged groups. We in India have certain scheduled, caste and scheduled tribes, other backward classes based on gender diversity can happen, language, regional background, ethnicity, education, economic well-being, lifestyle all these factors contribute to the diversity at workplace.

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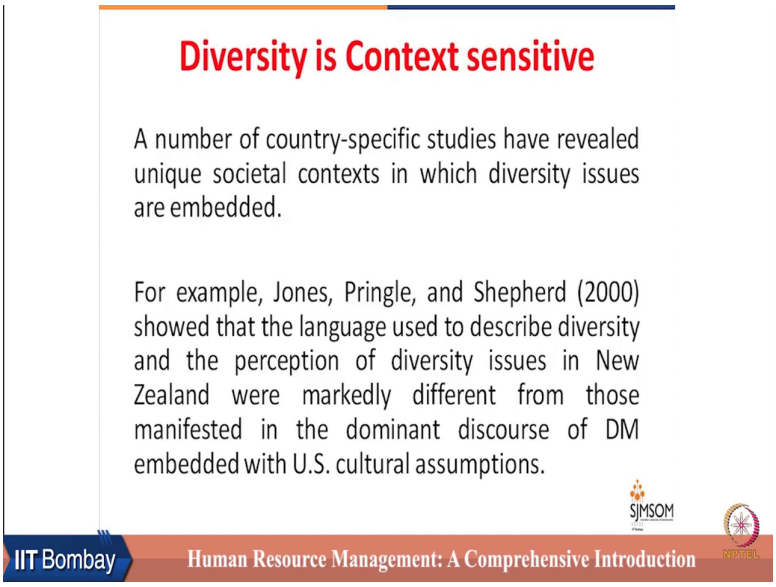

Diversity is context sensitive. So, a conversation about diversity may look at different issues in one country in comparison to another country. In some countries diversity conversation and concern for diversity may be more focused on inclusion of minority. In another country the conversation about the diversity focus can be about inclusion of more women at workplace or people from lower socioeconomic strata of the society. So, the issues of diversity may vary across countries, across economies, across societies.

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Diversity management, the objective of the diversity management is for organizations to increase awareness of cultural differences, and develop the ability to recognize, accept and value diversity through organizational intervention to minimize patterns of inequality experienced by those not in the mainstream; and modify organizational culture and leadership practices so that "members of all socio-cultural backgrounds can contribute and achieve their full potential".

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Conversation about diversity is incomplete without looking at without considering inclusion. A diversity is about the representation or make-up of an entity whereas, inclusion is about how well the contribution, how well a particular minority or specific group of the worker experience the presence and what is the perspective of different groups of people. Whether it is valued or not? Are they integrated at the workplace in the organization culture or not? So, diversity without inclusion is mere tokenism.

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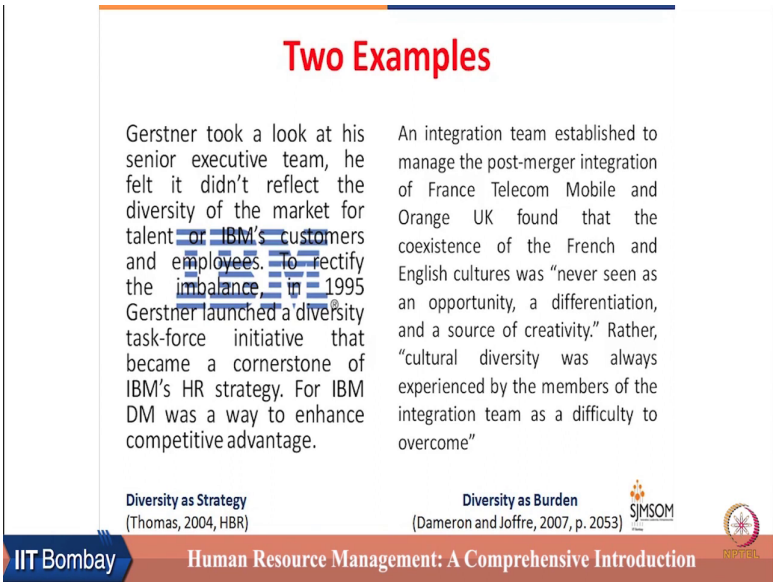

We can understand the issue of diversity from these two examples. One example is of IBM. You can read more about it in the diversity as strategy the HBR article by Thomas published in 2004. When in 1993 new CEO took over the charge of IBM, he saw that executive team is pretty homogeneous.

He also recognized that their customer base is not homogeneous it is very heterogeneous, it is across the world and it includes all possible groups of the society. So, he launched the diversity task force initiative that became the cornerstone of IBM's HR strategy. He constituted more than 10 task forces, they looked at different groups, they talked to different groups which were under represented in the IBM's workforce.

So, groups so, the task force worked on differently abled people, task force, worked on different people with the different orientation towards sex task force. One task force was

about the minority, about women etcetera etcetera. So, in few years the composition of workforce in IBM changed drastically.

Not only overall workforce their executive team their top management team also was much more heterogeneous in terms of people from different small groups. So, called non-mainstream group work constituting they were making the executive team the top management team of IBM.

And there are some interesting stories. They were able to in the process of understanding the different groups they were able to understand the different customer segments as well. For example, a group which was working on minorities also recognize that small and medium size enterprises are owned by a large number of minorities. And while working with them they also identified a opportunity to launch a new product.

Similarly, a group which was working on differently abled population, they recognized that there is already a legislation and they have to modify their offices and they have to modify their products which are suitable for the places which are friendly for the differently abled people. So, they are able to respond to this need of market need of this particular segment more productively earlier than many of their competitors.

And that build the business case that contributed to the IBM's business. So, this is one example. Another example is given by this article by Dameron and Joffre they talk about an integration team established to manage the post merger integration of Frank Telecom Mobile and Orange UK. And they found that the coexistence of the French and English cultures were never seen as an opportunity.

It was never considered as differentiation; it was not considered the source of creativity either. Rather cultural diversity was always experienced by the members of the integration team as a difficulty to overcome. So, these two examples suggest that diversity can be looked at as a capital as source of competitive advantage, it can also be looked at as burden. And as it is being seen as management sees this. So, it so the diversity will result into.

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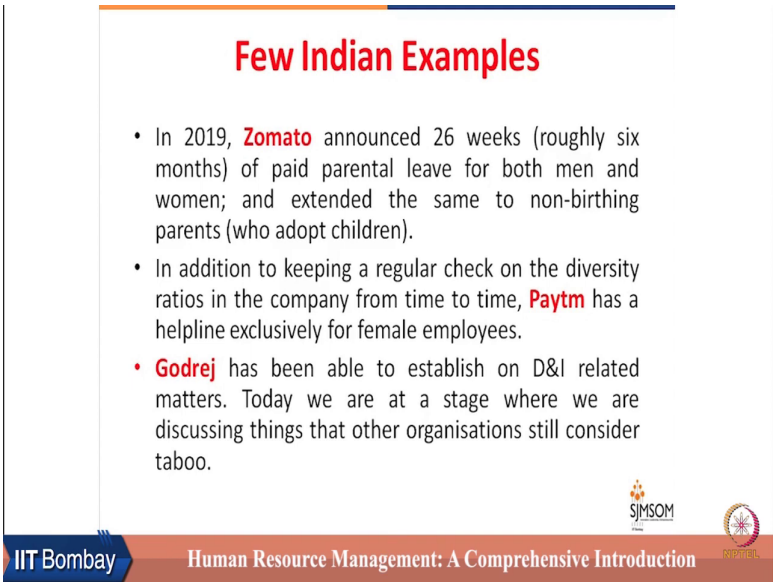

Here I would like to take example of few Indian organizations and how they are promoting diversity at workplace. So, example the first one is example from Zomato. They announced 26 weeks roughly 6 months of paid parental leave for both men and women and extended the same to non-birthing parent who adopt children. That is a very unique step in comparison to most of the private privately owned organizations in India.

Because most of the organizations give about 3 months leave. Similarly, Paytm has established a exclusive help line for women. In addition to keeping a regular check on the diversity ratios in the company, a Paytm has help line which is for the female employees wherein they can share their concerns; they can also share their positive and negative experience about working in the organization.

And that gives excellent feedback to the top management about how women are finding Paytm as an organization to work with. Godrej has established a diversity and inclusion cell; it is able to establish on diversity inclusion related matters. Today they claim that we are at a stage where they can discuss things that other organizations still consider taboo. So, as a result of this initiative workplace has become more inclusive for people who are having different background or different orientation.