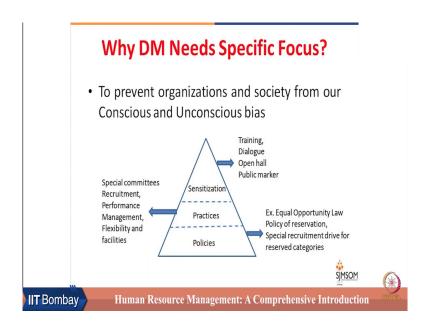**Advances in Strategic Human Resource Management**
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Diversity and Inclusion at Workplace: An Strategic Perspective
Lecture - 05 D
Biases in Organization and Ways of their Resolution
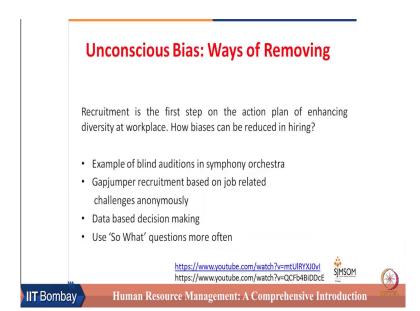
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So, in nutshell diversity management needs specific focus on three aspects; aspect 1 is about policies and on this aspect about policy organization and state both have important role. State has a role in terms of making the regulation and enforcing the implementation of those regulations. So, in India there are regulations related to given reservations to different, different sections of society. In USA there is an equal opportunity law, organizations also commit themselves and state the policy of the equal opportunity.

All these come in the very first step of diversity management which is about policies. Only policies do not result into diversity at work place. Policies must be supported by organizational processes. Those processes can be about enhancing the diversity management and maintaining the diversity at work place. So, constitution of this special committee is to promote the diversity at work place is a special practice.

Whereas having objectivity in the performance management, having objectivity in the recruitment process, deliberate attempt to reduce the bias in the recruitment process these are the examples of practices which promote diversity. Flexi timing in the facilities another example of the process which supports the diversity.

Along with practice there is also a need for diversity training, constant dialogue and initiatives like open hall conversations, promoting the organizational metrics publicly. These are some of the topmost indicators and ways of enhancing diversity management.

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Unconscious bias are the ways of diversity propagation. While designing the practice HR and organization and management need to ensure that they address the unconscious bias which all of us carry about people from different groups. If we start identifying our own unconscious bias, we may be shocked. Some of us believed that those who are sports people become they make good team players.

Some of us believe that people coming from sudden geography are more sincere. Some of us believe that people coming from some other geographies, some other communities are reliable, more reliable or less reliable. So, we all carry lots and lots of unconscious bias and that results into all the HR processes. In fact, all different stages of HR processes. For example, in the recruitment CV selection CV short listing, profile short listing is the first step.

Our unconscious bias can even operate at the time of CV short listing and we may end up short listing people whom we perceive are likely to be better fit or for the job and what we perceive are the better people. So, HR has to take extra care to ensure that these unconscious biases do not come on the way of selection of the candidates. There are some examples.

These examples shows that how strongly our unconscious bias affect our decisions and also reflect how we can what are the practices through which we can reduce the unconscious bias. So, this one example is taking from is being these examples are taken from these YouTube TED talks. You can look at these TED talks these are really interesting talks on the theme of diversity.

There in these examples are mentioned one of them is about the symphony orchestra. In 60s and 70s they recognize that they have mostly white players in the orchestra. So, they need to increase the women representation of the women or minority groups. For that they started practicing the blind audition means artist at the time of audition would play and the examiners were not allowed to look at the artist face. They also did not know their names.

When they did this practice depending on the different studies it was found that number of women and number of minority increased in the orchestra by 25 to 40 percent. There is a company gap jumper they started recruiting not based on CV short listing. They started recruiting based on job related challenges giving them anonymously and selecting the candidates.

When they started relying more on the job related challenges, they found that the representation of the minorities in the short list is CV increase by 60 percent representation of the women increased by 125 percent. So, these are the examples how the unconscious biases can be removed from the processes.
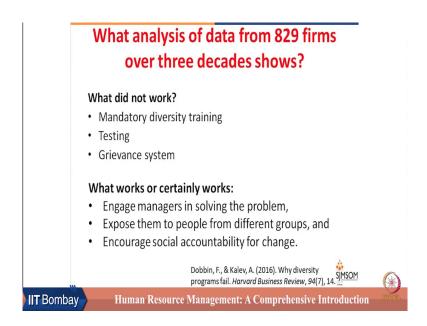
Data base thinking that is why is very important to be implemented in as many HR processes as possible. In nutshell we also need to ask. So, what question at different stages of the recruitment selection performance appraisal etcetera. If I have a perception that people should

not wear certain type of dress at workplace if they wear that kind of dress, we likely to perceive them poor performers.

In those situations, we need to ask so what if that person wear that kind of dress. In our perception we may believe that a people who wear glasses are likely to be more studious and they are less likely to take the physical physically demanding jobs. In that situation we can ask so what if person is wearing glasses why cannot he take up the hard physical task and how can I reach to that conclusion without testing the person's capability.

So, if we ask more so what questions about when we are making decision about people we can address unconscious biases to a great extent.

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What analysis of data from 829 firms over three decades shows?

What did not work?
- Mandatory diversity training
- Testing
- Grievance system

What works or certainly works:
- Engage managers in solving the problem,
- Expose them to people from different groups, and
- Encourage social accountability for change.

Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2016). Why diversity programs fail. *Harvard Business Review, 94*(7), 14.

IIT Bombay Human Resource Management: A Comprehensive Introduction

In 2016 which is not very long ago a study was conducted wherein they looked at data from 829 firms over three decades. So, these are the organizations which implemented diversity management practices in last three decades and what they found was interesting. They found what did not work in these organizations or these were not very effective initiatives and they also found what actually worked better to enhance the diversity management.

So, what did not work what did not work was mandatory diversity training people batch after wedge would go to the diversity management, they may be sense to they may get sense to they remember few things till the end of the meeting or after few days of the training, but then they generally come back to their old biases.

Testing is also was not found to be effective way of enhancing diversity management. In fact in the same paper, they have reported few organizations where they found that people the managers who are favoring the white male candidates they would not conduct the test for them they would conduct the test entrance test only for them who are not to whom they are not favorable and they would declare them unfit after the test.

So, test was used to segregate the people whom they were not interested to recruit. Grievance system also was not found to be very effective in fact very few grievance mechanism system gave punishment to the people against whom the complaint was filed by the people for working against the diversity management principles.

When the minorities and the disadvantages groups see that grievance system is not doing favor to them it is not addressing the problem their propensity their willingness to raise the voice also decrease and that vicious cycle starts and grievance system remains kind of ineffective in addressing these issues.

This study also unravel what has worked in last three decades to enhance diversity management. What has worked? First thing is engaging managers in solving the problem. When you engage the managers to solve the problem of low diversity at workplace when they

commit for some action in the process, they recognize the importance of diversity and later on they promote diversity.

So, they gave example Dobbin and Kalev they gave example of managers who were otherwise not very active in promoting diversity at workplace they were given the assignment of college recruitment wherein they were asked to identify the promising candidates also from the disadvantages minority groups.

Most of the managers after going through this assignment they reported their sensitivity towards the minority groups has enhanced because during the recruitment of these groups. They were actually looking for the positive traits in these groups and that made them converse with these groups more intensely more deeply and as a result their biases came down.

Exposing managers from different groups one example given about the second point is putting people in the diversity committees. When people were allocated when the managers were assigned manager was given the task of working in the diversity enhancement committee naturally, they have to talk to the people from the different communities from the minority group from the females.

As a result of that they became more sense to and that sensitivity remained with them and they became more active in promoting diversity management at workplace. One of the examples of practices in the second category was about assigning mentorship. In general, it is found that the white male or general category male do not approach female or mandatory group for the coaching or mentoring.

But when organizations implemented structured mentoring process and managers senior managers were assigned the protege senior manager were assigned for the mentoring work for the younger colleagues. And if these colleagues are from the minority group or from the women group.

They were very forthcoming they took the responsibility of the development of their protege and in the process they also became sensitive towards minorities and the different groups that made them sensitive and that promoted the diversity management work through them.

Encouraging the social accountability for change when the social accountability is fixed about enhancing the diversity at workplace that also works in enhancing diversity management amongst the people. So, these authors give the description about an experiment conducted at MIT. Earlier this company in the MIT premise was not publishing the data about the salary raise given to the different groups.

What they though they found that the raise average raise given to the blacks was consistently lower than the white employees. So, they announced that the salary raise given to the whites and black groups by different groups will be announced publicly. So, people were not a keen people were not at all willing to show themselves as the discriminator and as a result of that the salary increase the difference in the salary raise in the white and the black employees reduced drastically.

In the same way in government of India they keep projecting the departments they keep announcing the departments to recruit and they keep making the drives for recruiting the people from the differently abled groups or different groups other than the general categories.

And that makes the department more conscious of not being perceived as the departments which are not promoting the minorities or not promoting the socially disadvantaged groups and they increase their activity they enhance their activity in diversity management.

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So, social accountability also increases is found to be increasing the diversity management. At the end I would like to quote the work of Bennett Alexander, she is lawyer and teaches business law in the university her advice is what she calls the practical diversity, how we can make people proactive about diversity management in whatever profession or organization they are.

So, what she suggest the first step is to figure out what your messages are; that means, what is my presumptions about different groups we need to write down what are our presumptions about different groups, what we think about other communities, what we think about other caste, what we think about people from coming from the other geographies or other countries.

And then looking at those presumptions and logically examining whether these assumptions are logical correct or not because mostly they are there in our mind and we operate on them without being conscious of those.

Only when we become conscious about our presumptions about different groups we can address those presumptions, we can replace those dysfunctional assumptions with the functional assumptions then only we will become more data based driven more objective data based driven rather than being impression driven.

Second step is stop being so judgmental, difference does not mean they are lesser than us or he or she is lesser than me if he or she is different from me that judgment that understanding must be settled and third equally important thing is following the golden rule not doing unto others that behavior which you do not want to be done with yourself.

So, these are the examples these are the notions about practical diversity and these are the kind of indicators or steps through which we can reduce our unconscious biases that will ultimately help in enhancing diversity in wherever we are working whichever institutions we are operating, whichever organizations we are working.