

A STUDY OF PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AT SELECTED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES IN PUNE CITY

Swati Vijay¹ & Sayali Gilbile²

*¹Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies Sinhgad College of Engineering,
Pune, Maharashtra, India*

*²Student (MBA HR), Department of Management Studies Sinhgad College of Engineering Studies,
Pune, Maharashtra, India*

ABSTRACT

With the recent trends of globalization, organizations are employing a diversified workforce. As many educational institutes have their employees and students coming from different region, religion, experience, the institutes finds more diversity in terms of age, gender, experience. Hence it was necessary to find out whether the organizations are ready to accept the inclusion of diversity in their culture. This study enables employees and organizations to understand the importance of diversity, different types of diversity and impact of diversity. This study highlights the efforts to be taken by organizations to increase awareness and inclusion about the diversity for the betterment of employees and organization. It was found out that diversity inclusion is not there in many of the institutes.

KEYWORDS: *Workforce Diversity, Cultural Diversity, Age Diversity, Regional Diversity, Diversity Training, Diversity Awareness*

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

According to (Saxena, 2014), Employing a diversified workforce is a very essential of every organization. the organizations that employ quality and competitive workforce regardless of their age, attitude, language, gender, religion, and caste can only compete in the marketplace. To manage diversified workforce is a big challenge for any organization. (Patrick & Vincent, April-June 2012) explored that the differences in a safe, positive, and fostering environment. Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve understanding and appreciating the interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment. Diversity involves not only how people perceive themselves, but also how they perceive others.

(Ongori & Evans, 2007) analyzed workforce diversity management has become an important issue for both governments and private organizations mainly for the equal opportunities at the workplace. (Foma, 2014) pointed out that diversity at workplace brings Many positive aspects, such as exchange of ideas between of the diverse cultures of employees, the development of friendship without discrimination, maintaining a heterogeneous environment in which employees possess distinct elements and qualities. He also mentioned communication gaps due to the language barrier and resistance to change. Similar views are expressed by (Bedi, lakra & Gupta, April 2014).

Current Indian and Global Scenario

According to (Jindal, Bagade & Sharma, July 2013), the entry of the foreign organizations affected working hours, increase of women and aged people employment, organizational structures, pay structures, the composition of the workforce so on. (Rao & Bagali, Feb 2014) analyzed that Indian Information Technology (IT) industry needs talent from throughout the world. Around 30% to 32% of the female workforce has been recruited by IT organizations and it is the major recruiter of women workforce in India. (Dixit & Bajpai, January 2015) have compared diversity practices in Accenture, IBM, Infosys, Citi Bank India. All these organizations have well structured Global diversity programs implemented successfully which leads to flexible work hours, equal opportunities in employment, Leadership commitments, Women diversity initiatives., discrimination-free and harassment-free work environment for all employees globally giving high-performance culture. (Dike, 2013) examined vision and inclusion of diversity in Ford and Coca-cola companies who employees people from all over the world and maintains respectful, inclusive work environment and impact on work-life integration to overcome cultural diversity challenges, challenges for handling issues of Women, Disabled Employees and employees from American and African groups.

RELEVANCE AND SCOPE OF STUDY

According (Patrick & Vincent, April-June 2012) stated that Diversity management is a process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued. (Foma, 2014) mentioned that Workplace diversity means employees possess distinct elements and qualities, differing from one another in an organization These different elements include employees' beliefs, values, and actions that vary by gender, ethnicity, age, lifestyle and physical abilities and same reviews are stated by (Saxena, 2014). She has examined the Impact of workforce diversity in terms of thinking, perception, generation comes together to work at the same place. (Eriksson & Hägg, June 2016) has defined culture, cultural difference, organizational culture and their impact on organizational performance. (Rao & Bagali, Feb 2014) has worked on Gender Diversity Management and understanding, valuing and accepting gender differences and similarities present in the workforce.

As there are different types of employees working in various institutes with different age group, educational background, gender, physical disabilities, regional differences, language difference, social background etc. Hence, when diversity is present in the environment it creates a healthy and professional image. But if diversity is not considered/appreciated in any particular institute then it has a huge impact on the organization. It is necessary to study management institutes the roles and responsibilities of the employees and organization culture, norms, roles and responsibilities of employees. It is also important to find out that the impact of diversity and various types of diversity that affects and plays a major role in the workforce, then the creation of ideas, skills is easy to evaluate and make it happen.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to (Rao & Bagali, Feb 2014) advances in technology and the advent of a global economy bring the people of the world closer together than ever before. Hence Diversity, inclusion and managing diversity are becoming strategic issues for the multinational companies throughout the world. (Ongori & Evans, July 2007) reviewed the literature and examined that workforce diversity is a primary concern for most of the businesses and stated that today's organizations need to recognize and manage workforce diversity effectively. (Bedi, lakra & Gupta, April 2014) explored Diversity Management is a strategy to promote the perception, acknowledgement and implementation of diversity in organizations.

Successful diversity management policy and the program will make a huge difference in the communication among employees and the general productivity of the organization. (Dixit & Bajpai, January 2015) stated that, Diversity management emerges out of the need for business to recognize inherent differences in employees, manifested in different dimensions such as race, culture, ethnicity, gender, work experience, background, education, disability and so on. (Ongori & Evans, July 2007) also mentioned the similar view.

(Eriksson & Hägg, June 2014)²⁰ analyzed that cultural diversity affects the performance of an organization and various conflicts can arise due to misunderstandings among the culturally diverse workforce. The knowledge of cultural differences within these aspects will contribute to a better understanding of how these differences can be managed. (Jindal, Bagade & Sharma, July 2013) examined that, a healthy organization is one in which an obvious effort is made to get people with different backgrounds, skills, and abilities to work together towards the achievement of goals or purposes of the organization. (Bedi, Iakra & Gupta., April 2014) analyzed that Contribution of Diverse Workforce towards Organization, which includes, as a Social Responsibility, as an Economic Payback, as a Resource Imperative as a Legal Requirement, as a Marketing Strategy, as a Business Communications Strategy, as a Capacity-building Strategy. They also discussed few Barriers for Accepting Work Force Diversity like Prejudice, Ethnocentrism, stereotypes, Blaming the victim, Discrimination, Harassment, Backlash

(Foma, 2014) opined that workplace diversity should be one of the top things businesses today should address. The main goal of workplace diversity management is the prohibition of discrimination against individuals, which would cause them to be unfairly differentiated from co-workers. (Meena, July 2015) examined that the changing demographics bring in various challenges such as generating in-groups and out-groups, discrimination towards few groups, conflicts between various groups etc. reducing the efficiency of organizations. (Bedi, Iakra & Gupta, April 2014) explored that management being a social discipline deals with the behavior of people and human insight. The managers will be required to shift their approach from treating each group of workers alike to recognizing differences among them and following such policies so as to encourage creativity, improve productivity, reduce labour turnover and avoid any sort of discrimination.

(Patrick & Vincent, April-June 2012) study on diversity management has mostly emphasized on organization culture; its impact on diversity openness; human resource management practices; institutional environments and organizational contexts to diversity-related pressures, expectations, requirements, perceived practices and organizational. They have also examined the potential barriers to workplace diversity and suggests strategies to enhance workplace diversity and inclusiveness.

(Dixit & Bajpai, Jan 2015) analyzed diversity management practices used by top multinational companies in India and explained perception of employees about diversity and how it affects the organization's competitive advantage against its competitors. (Jindal, Bagade & Sharma, July 2013) have mentioned that If Indian companies have to flourish, it has to learn to manage diversity, both within and outside the company. This paper concentrates on the influence of diversity on the organizational work culture, and the behavior of Indian organizations towards work culture. The purpose of (Eriksson & Hägg, June 2014)²⁹ study is ,therefore, to contribute to the current field of cross-cultural management and how cultural diversity is managed. The study investigated four chosen cross-cultural aspects to see how issues within these areas can be minimized.

DESIGN OF STUDY

Statement of Problem

Diversity has a huge impact on the organization's culture which leads to interpersonal relationships between the stakeholders. Educational institutes have employees and students coming from different religion, region, age, sex, and backgrounds. Hence the researcher has decided to study the perception of employees regarding workforce diversity at selected educational institutes in Pune.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

For an effective research of the study, the objectives are stated as following objectives have been finalized

- To understand the employee perception about diversity and cultural differences.
- To identify most frequent barriers to accepting workplace diversity.
- To identify strategies to increase the inclusiveness of diversity in the organizations
- To suggest various majors for managing workplace diversity.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

- Data analysis is based on responses given by respondents
- The research is limited to only selected educational institutes in Pune who are offering Management courses
- No distinction has been made between categories of institutes like private or government college, deemed university and the courses taught there

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

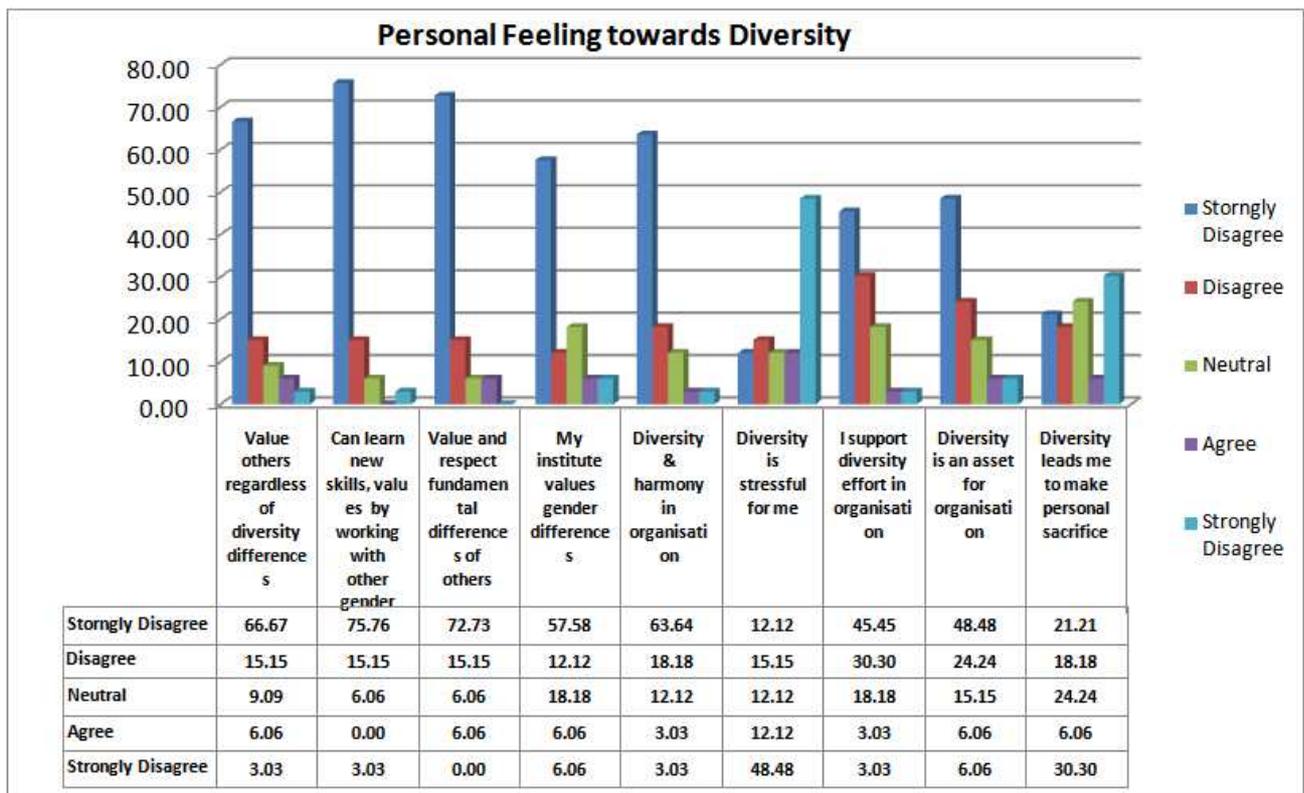
Number of institutes who are offering management education in Pune City is approximately 45. With the Simple random sampling method, 10 institutes are selected for research work. Two categories of employees viz. Teaching and Non-teaching staff are considered. Data is collected from 150 teaching and 48 Non-teaching staff for this study who are selected using simple random sampling method. Questionnaires, Observations, and Interview methods tools are used for collecting primary data. The secondary data is collected by analyzing International and National journals, articles from books, magazines and newspapers, websites and various government policies.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is divided into the analysis of various types of diversities based on Age, Educational, Regional, Language, Social status. Thus a researcher concluded that the maximum numbers of respondents are having their income in between Rs.50, 000 to 1 lakh and they have equal feeling towards the different economical background persons.

General Diversity

The researcher tried to find out the impact on employees and their personal feelings by including diversity in institutes and efforts taken by the organization for creating awareness about diversity. Majority of respondents are in the age group of 25 to 40 years.



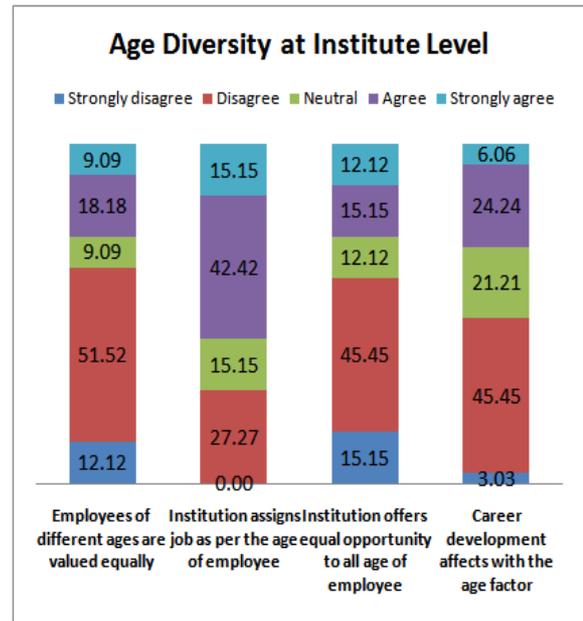
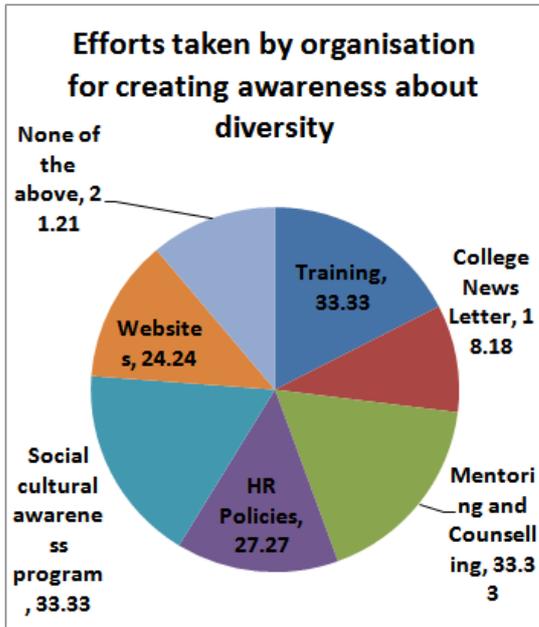
Graph 1: Personal Feeling towards Diversity

It is found out that majority respondents do not value diversity and respect fundamental differences and are not comfortable with other gender bosses. They feel diversity is stressful to them and do not have any understanding of diversity inclusion in the organization and its impact.

From the Graph 2, we can say that Different respondents have given a varied opinion about the efforts to be taken by the organization for creating awareness of diversity. Thus, it can be concluded with the help of training, Mentoring & Counseling, Social-cultural awareness program, Training, Websites and Newsletter, HR policies plays the very important role in creating awareness.

Majority of respondents are in the age group of 25 to 40 years only 3.03% of the respondent of age 50 and above years. The main focus was to find out whether institutes treat employees with age diversity in the same way.

The researcher found out from Graph 3 that 51.52% of respondents do not feel that employees of different ages are valued equally in their institution. 27.27% of respondents disagree towards the statement that their institution assigns job as per the age of the employee. 45.45% of respondents disagree whereas only 12.12% of respondents agree towards the statements that their institution offers equal opportunity to all age of the employee. 45.45% of respondents do not disagree that age affects career development.



Graph 2: Efforts taken by organization for Creating Awareness about Diversity

Graph 3: Age Diversity at Institute Level



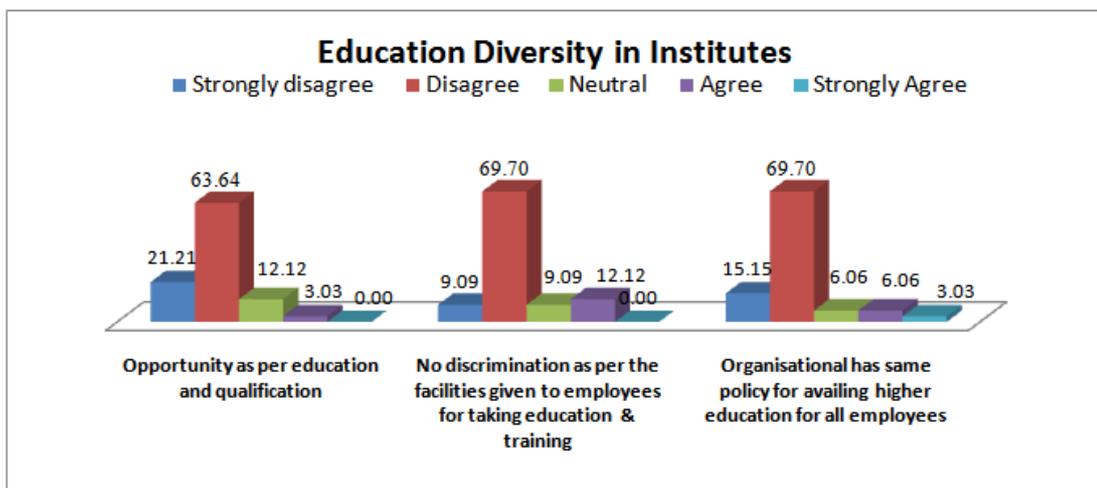
Graph 3: Acceptance of Gender Diversity at Workplace

Table 1

a	Your institution encourages gender diversity
b	Policies of your organization favour gender quota in hiring, promoting, retaining and development
c	There any protection against gender discrimination
d	You face problems related to work-life balance
e	Workplace have a procedure in place for reporting discrimination
f	Involvement and commitment by the top leader for gender diversity
g	You are aware of the policies of parental leave at a time of childbirth and childcare
h	Mentoring, coaching and counseling sessions given to employees
i	Diversity training session should be conducted to enhance awareness about gender equality

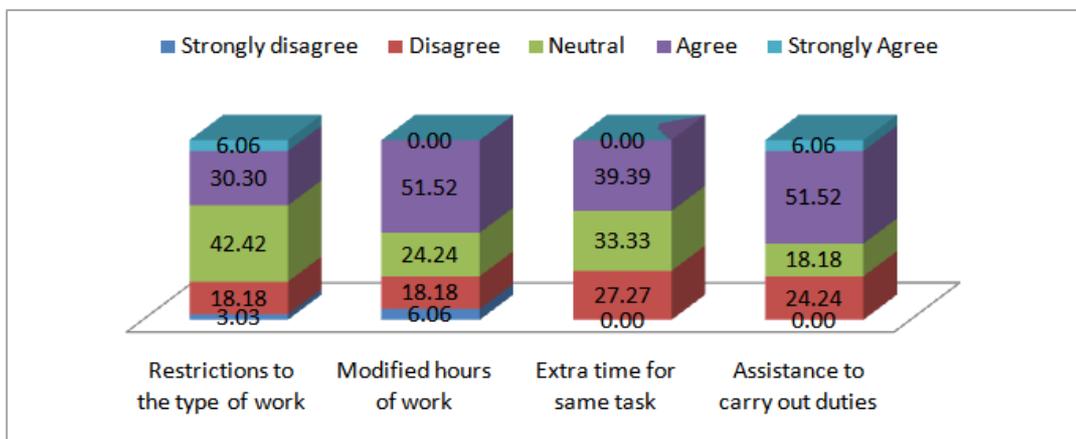
It is found out that 60.61% of respondent feel that their institution does not encourage gender diversity. 45.45% of respondent disagree towards the policies of their organization for a gender quota in hiring, promoting, retaining and development. 51.52% of respondents disagree that there is any protection against gender discrimination and 57.58% of respondents do not find the procedure in place for reporting discrimination. Only 6.06% of respondents face problems related to work-life balance.. 63.63% of respondent disagree and 0.00% of respondents agree towards the statement that they are comfortable to work with opposite gender colleagues. 42.42% of respondents are neutral towards the statement that there are enough funding, involvement and commitment by top leader gender diversity program. 51.51% respondents are aware of policies about smooth, transition before, during and after parental leave at the time of childbirth and childcare. 33.33% respondents feel the need for mentoring, coaching and counseling session given to employees in their organization.

Education Diversity at Workplace



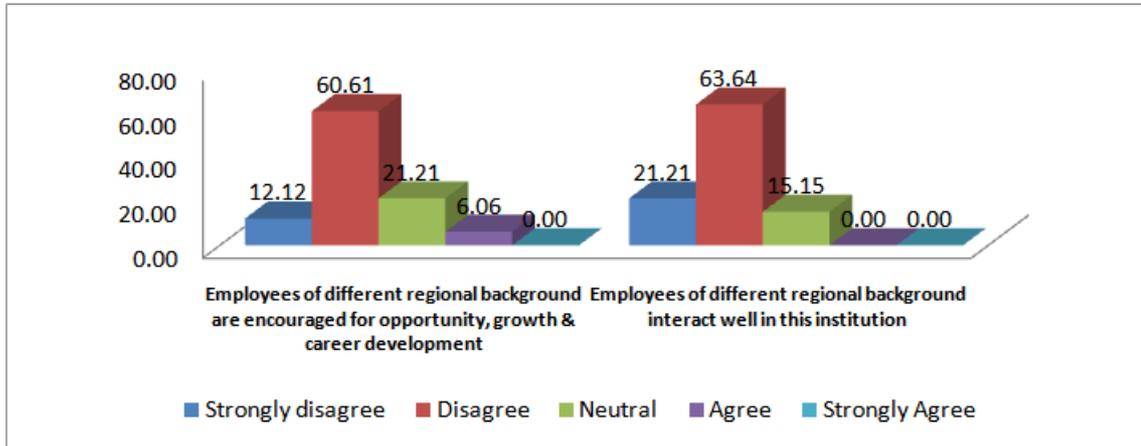
Graph 5: Education Diversity in Institute

Analysing the Graph: 5.5, it is found out that 63.64 of respondents disagree for the opportunity given to them as per education and qualification. 69.70% of respondents feel that there is discrimination as per the facilities are given to employees for taking education & training. 69.70% of respondents opined that their organization does not have has the same policy for availing higher education for all employees.



Graph 6: Institution Support in for Physical Disability Diversity

It is observed that majority respondents agree that institute understands the restrictions on the type of work in case of disabled persons. 51.52% of respondent disagree the statement that their institutional support for modified hours of work and 51.52% of respondent agree that their institution does not support Assistance to carry out duties. 39.39% of respondent disagree and 27.27% of respondent agree towards the statement that their institutional support in Extra time for the same task.



Graph 7: Regional Diversity at Workplace

It is observed from the above graph that majority of respondents do not feel that Employees of the different regional background are encouraged for opportunity, growth & career development in their institution. And Employees of different regional background interact well in their institution.

FINDINGS

- Majority of employees are married & post graduate. They have an income between Rs. 50, 000 – Rs. 1 lakh. The maximum employees were having 5-15 years of experience, whereas very few employees have experienced more than 15 years.
- Respondents have a personal feeling that diversity is stressful and it has a great impact on shared responsibility for the assignment and goals. Age diversity factor needs to be considered during the job assignment, Career growth, equal opportunity. The gender equality and gender diversity don't exist in the organization.
- While structured HR policies for diversity are not found in most of the institutes, The awareness about diversity needs to be increased with the help of training, mentoring & counseling and social-cultural awareness program.
- The maximum number of people had not attended the equality and diversity training due to various reasons like no training offered, too busy, they don't feel that they would learn anything new, etc.
- Regional diversity exists in the organization and the majority employees of different regional backgrounds feel the difference in career and opportunities as well as interaction with colleagues due to diversity attributes. Respondent also does not find opportunities as per education and qualification.
- Many institutions do not have facilities for the disabled person and do not support employees in modified hours of work, restriction to the type of work. Hence physical disability diversity is not seen their institute.

- Majority respondent has proficiency in all 3 languages. The respondent's colleagues usually communicate with them in English, Hindi, and Marathi in their institution.
- The institutions of employees help with financial support and provide training and development. Maximum respondents had an equal feeling towards the different economic background.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Equality and diversity training should be provided to employees regularly in every semester of the year. Training and awareness programs regarding gender diversity/equality should be provided to employees.
- More faculties having work experience of 15-20 years should be available in the institution for their expert guidance. The Organization should provide facility for higher education of employees for their career growth.
- Organization should support and provide facilities for physically disabled persons.
- Employees with different economic background must be encouraged for opportunity, growth and career growth. Organization should provide support to employees who need financial help. Also, financial support for training and development should be provided.

CONCLUSIONS

Researchers studied various types of diversities such as gender, age, education, physical disability regional language and social status. From this study, it is concluded that, Majority of institutions are not ready for accepting various types of diversities. Structured HR policies and infrastructure support are required to adopt diversity. Diversity awareness and training program will play a significant role to increase related awareness among employees.

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