

## Chapter 6

# Workforce Diversity to Foster an Innovation

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### ABSTRACT

*In global scenario it is necessity for all the organizations to employ diversified workforces. Workforce diversity helps the organization in improving productivity and innovative performance. The workforce diversity and inclusion strategies are directly linked to innovative business; they encourage employees to have different perspectives and ideas which drive innovation. To deal with global challenges through innovative performance, organizations have robust programs and policies to recruit and retain diversified workforces. Through this chapter, the author addresses how workforce diversity is fostering innovation in contemporary organizations.*

### INTRODUCTION

Workforce diversity is a more disputable topic in today's global business environment. Managing workforce diversity is significant task for organizations as it affects organizations performance, productivity and innovativeness. As the term workforce diversity is became a trend after liberalization of markets many researchers have studied this topic from various perspective and disciplines. This chapter deals with conceptual review of workforce diversity and innovation and puts emphasis on how diversity will foster an innovation performance of an organization.

Research indicates that innovation gives the seeds for monetary growth. Innovation in a company context is about remodeling a thinking into a new process, product or

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service to generate a competitive advantage. For that innovation to show up depends as much on collective difference as on combination ability. If people assume alike then no matter how clever they are, they most possibly will get stuck at the identical regionally most advantageous solutions. Finding new and better solutions, innovating, requires thinking differently. If you convey many extraordinary views to a problem, you end up with greater innovative solutions. Workplace diversity can make certain there is a giant pool of knowledge, skills, existence experience, perspectives, and expertise. That's why diversity powers innovation.

## **THE CONCEPT OF WORKFORCE DIVERSITY**

From the time of its evolution there is little argument in defining diversity among researchers and practitioners. In the words of Cox and Beale (1997) diversity is “a mix of people in one social system who have distinctly different socially group affiliations” (p.1).

In defining the term diversity much of the inertia was towards the differences of an individuals, whereas Thomas (1999), incorporate similarities as well as differences while defining diversity: “individuals who are different in some ways and similar in others” (p.5). With the increase in the interest of researchers, teachers in studying diversity in the context of an organization the term Workforce diversity is emerged which emphasized the requirement of new ways of interactions and communication among individuals and groups in an organization.

According to Robbins and Coulter (2018): “Workforce diversity can be defined as the ways in which people in organization are different form and similar to one another “(p.158). The workforce diversity often involved characteristics like race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, ability and sexual orientation. The workforce diversity has challenges which needs to be managed by an organization; managing diversity effectively provides various benefits to an organization in global environment which assist them in gaining competitive advantage.

Robbins and Coulter (2018) enlists the benefits of diversity that organizations are experiencing from three perspectives. (See Table 1)

## **Workforce Diversity and Organizational Performance**

Since the inception of the term workforce diversity, its relation with organizational performance is a most debated topic among researchers. Workforce diversity and organizational culture has been frequently said to be responsible for all manner of positive and negative ills. (Shani and Lau, 2005).The relationship between job

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