



EMPLOYMENT OF DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Equality and Empowerment attract best talents and create "Great Place to Work" brand for Corporates. Managements must devise codes of conduct shunning discrimination of human resources in terms of gender, race, religion or color. Nationality, physical and mental capabilities act as a mandatory pre-criterion for job qualification in defence and police establishments, whereby, employing people of other countries except as per laws of that country may not be possible. Also barring such specific jobs, no discrimination based on physical fitness should be made. Differently abled persons must necessarily be placed on the "must recruit" list of every enterprise.

It is paradoxical to state "one size fits all". Every prospective employee is different in their capabilities and performance. Employers should therefore match their job calls with suitable candidate specifications to build a diverse workforce.

Discriminatory employment practices are witnessed in areas like referrals, remuneration, career progression, migration, termination and threaten creation of a "secure and liberal work environment". Employment empowers individuals to fulfill financial needs, earn social status and recognition through career growth. These goals cause ego clashes and power struggles resulting in vulnerability of the weak and subjugation by the strong. These traits are not merely attributable to a specific gender as a male employee can feel as much harassed as a female or a disabled or transgender employee can.

For an employer; individual traits, ulterior motives, whims and fancies cannot define its organizational behavior or defeat its goal of being a fair employer. To wipe out an insecure and oppressive work environment, employers shall carefully draft policies for performance appraisals, career progression, shift timings; create fool proof infrastructure in core and remote locations with effective back up and monitoring systems; ensure cultural and value inculcation; and avoid process/procedural slippages and misses. Employees are entitled to right to employment, but are also bound by obligations imposed by employers for their well being. They shall adhere to stipulated safety and process controls, when present at their work premises.

Various regulations like Factories Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Sexual Harassment of women at workplace, Persons with Disabilities Act, the Transgender persons (Protection of rights) Bill, etc. in India provide guidance and tools that pave a path for employers. These Acts also penalise misdeeds of employees and employers failing to provide an impervious work environment.



[INTERNAL AUDIT OF FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES]

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in UK monitors human rights, protecting equality across 9 grounds - age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. The Equality Act, 2010 of UK that applies to public authorities and bodies mentions these 9 grounds as protected characteristics and propagates abolition of any discrimination.

Many multi-nationals establish norms and procedures preventing direct or indirect discrimination. However policy intentions may be defeated, if tendencies for violation exist in the minds of its employees. These internal systems go a long way in aligning the ethical goals of the corporation and refine employee mindset. Human resources policy should ensure creation of a diverse, civilised, accommodating, tolerant and cross cultural workforce. These actions place the company on a special pedestal and league when it is rated for 'Doing Business in a Responsible manner'.

Apart from directly recruiting from a diverse pool, employers may channelize their corporate social responsibility spends towards funding research institutions and educational institutions specializing on treatment and skilling of differently abled/women, and provide facilities and requisite tools to lead a financially independent life. Protection of human rights is a basic principle for conducting any business, whether as a corporate or as a trust.
