Multigenerational Workforce- A HR Challenge

Managing a multigenerational workforce is a <u>challenge for HR professionals</u> in India.

Workplace diversity has become an increasingly important part of organizations, consisting of diverse socio-economic and cultural groups. Pooling the diverse knowledge and skills of culturally distinct workers together strengthens companies. More than half of the population in India is less than 25 years and by 2020 the average Indian will be of 29 years age. These changing demographic trends pose unique challenges to companies also. It became a necessity for organizations to have multigenerational workforce and managing them and bringing unity in this type of diversity is the biggest challenge.

Having multigenerational work groups means companies have to adopt techniques to understand the needs of the current generation people in twenties and accommodate them with higher age group people.

Needs of 20-30 group people:

- Freedom and empowerment are the top most priority for youth- issues emerging out of this priority are vocabulary, dress-code, flex-time, work-life balance, use of social media and the like.

- Curious to know what and why they are doing and the outcomes.

- Want to derive excitement from work with high aspirations and growth expectations.

- They come from affluent background and are independent and aware of global opportunities, because of which they may have decreasing loyalty towards the companies and increasing focus on short term goals and the traditional type of leadership control is unacceptable to them

A mismatch between the people who take decisions in a traditional way and those who have to implement the decisions is widening. Deloitte and the Confederation of Indian Industries Report titled 'Gen Next Workforce 2013' says if these needs are not met 'attracting, engaging and retaining' the youth would be the biggest challenge.

Management of workforce diversity:

- Constant dialogue and involving youth in decision-making

- Emphasizing commonalities and deemphasizing differences in age and experience

- Senior employees to be more open and make adjustments

- Providing high clarity, sharp direction, in-depth job knowledge and abundant skills to younger employees

- Keeping the youth informed of latest developments

- Make them get excited and involved in work, giving variety in roles and functional areas

- Building a 'salsa' culture- where everyone without losing one's identity, work for common goals.

> **IBM** allows its workforce to use their personal devices and developed internal social networking platform through which employees can interact with each other freely and the new generation identify so much with this network.
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> At **HCL**, training is provided outside of work, which is preferred by youth.
>
> Asia Pacific region firm **Caterpillar** encourages supervisors and managers to get to know and understand the aspirations of employees better.

Diversity at workplace has become a part of corporate culture and companies have to make necessary adjustments to meet the challenges without losing its core values.

> **HR professionals** face constant **challenges**as their responsibilities have gradually become broader and more strategic. Workforce diversity is one of the most important challenges to HR professionals. The HR managers have to adopt proactive strategies which help them to take appropriate actions to face the emerging challenges.

*Source: Amit K. Nandkeolyar. 2014, "India's New HR Challenge, Managing a Multigenerational Workforce", **Knowledge@wharton,** February 2014.*

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