

Changing Dynamics of Diversity Paradigm

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Abstract: The study is an attempt at developing an understanding of diversity, its dimensions and impact on the outcomes of the organizational behavior and development. Literature reviewed revealed that diversity has a double whammy effect on the performance of organization, which has its own antecedents and consequences. Both positive and negative outcomes have been found with organization that is highly diverse. This study is an attempt to encapsulate the degree or magnitude of diversity on social capital, competency, employee engagement, cognitive learning proficiency and performance. This study proposed that there may be some ups and down in the dimensions of diversity, however, there is a need of outward outlook to understand the dynamics of diversity.

Keywords: Diversity, Social Capital, Employee Engagement, Competency and Cognitive learning.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization is the reason for the development and spread of technology across the globe. The world has become a global village and a single market. People of the world have come closer because of the simplification of the migration policies. This results in diversification. The management of the organizations and education system are working towards the improvement of its constituent. This includes making plan and policies that are important to attain and retain the most competent employees. Hence, managing diversification of workforce has become one of the biggest HRM challenge to survive in neck to neck competition. The organizations that accepts new challenges and are ready with new plans and policies to face them have more chances to get a competitive edge, (Eugene Chew Weiliang, 2011). This is utmost necessary for the organizations to retain the skilled workforce. In the present scenario organizations understand the importance of human capital. They understand that the employees are the asset for the organization. If an organization really wants to get a competitive edge in the market than it should understand that it is its workforce which is going to make a difference by thinking out of the box. As a result of this, the competitive advantage over the competitors can be attained. By the use of diversified workforce organizations not only enhances the performance but also get recognition in the world.

1.1 Emergence of ‘Diversity’

Diversity came from a Latin word ‘Divertas’ which means differences. Merriam- Webster has defined diversity as a condition that has different components. By the mid of 14th century diversity emerge as a noun ‘variation’ and by the end of 16th century it gain its present meaning which says ‘not behaving as per traditional behavior or set standards’. With this diversity has become one of the most interesting topics of study for the researcher. Various researchers have given different definition of diversity. A gist of definitions is given in table 1.1.

Year	Author	Definition
1993	Cox	“The representation in one social system of people with distinctly different group affiliation of cultural significance”.
1999	Thomas	Diversity is a shared blend of similarities and dissimilarities that are used in attaining the goals of the organization.
2000	The University of Maryland diversity database	Diversity as a collection of several groups in a particular environment like a workplace. It may also be defined as the acceptance of the dissimilar cultures and respecting each culture by considering that no culture is superior or inferior to any other.
2003	Dahm	Diversity is a series of emotion and an idiosyncratic phenomenon.

2003	Kundu	Diversity as coexistence of employees from different socio-cultural background.
2011	Weiliang et al	Presently organizations have started taking diversity as a source for either providing good customer service or to have a competitive edge in the market. Diversification makes the organization more fluid.

Respecting, valuing, and acknowledging other cultures by recognizing their richness, empowering employees, allowing them to work with a free state of mind and celebrating these differences rather than considering them liability.

After considering all the aforementioned definitions of diversity we can define diversity as:

It is evident that diversity exists in every workplace. Therefore, its effects on the performance of the organizations are needed to be studied. Various studies have been done that focus on the positive and negative effects of diversity. Hence, we say that diversity has a 'Double Whammy Effects' on the performance of organization.

1.2 Double Whammy Effects of Diversity

O'Reilly (1998) studied demography and diversity in organizations and found that diversity has both negative and positive effects on the organizational performance. With the increasing diversified workplace, it has become very important to manage diversity so as to have healthy working environment. Managing and valuing diversity is the key component for effective and improved productivity. On the other hand if it is left unmanaged it can be a doom for the organization (Bialostocka, 2010). So, it can be said that diversity act like a double edged sword or 'Double Whammy'. Diversity is bittersweet when it comes to an organization. Various researchers have supported that there are various advantages of working in a diverse workplace. For example, in a diverse team, all the members are different coming from different cultural background. By sharing their ideas and knowledge the members of a team can come up with a new method of doing a work or in other words, can add innovation to the working methodology. With this organizations get various advantages.

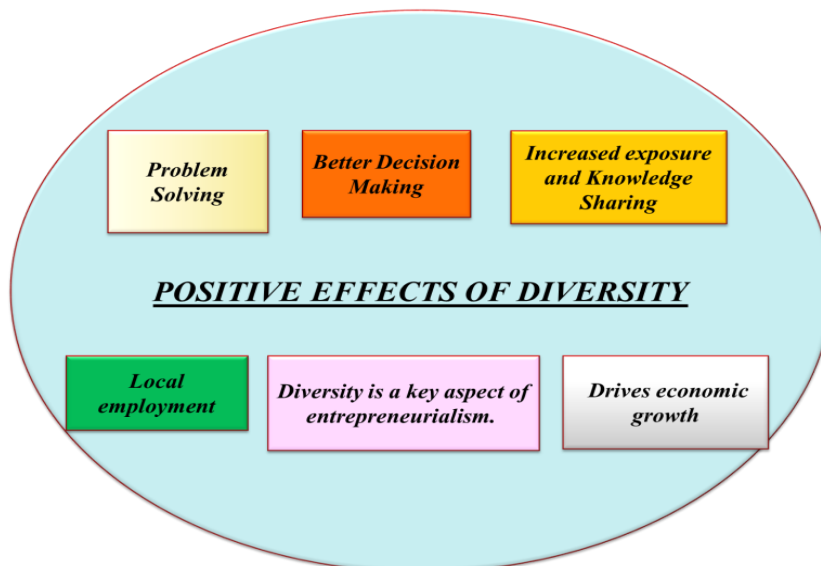


Figure 1.1 Positive effects of diversity

Problem Solving and Better Decision Making

According to Morgan 1989, "Creativity thrives on Diversity". Every person is unique on the basis of his personality, thoughts, attitude and even lifestyle. In a diversified workplace, people of different background come up with a different style of working, thought process and viewpoints. This gives rise to more innovative ideas and as a result more appropriate method of solving a problem can be adopted and better decisions are taken. Innovative thinking makes the individual to think out of the box by using diverse viewpoints to form new and unique decisions. A homogeneous group is likely to have less creative ideas as compared to heterogeneous

groups. Innovation improves process and products. Organizations that adopt innovative style of working are more likely to flourish in their performances (Alder1991, Cheah 2013, Boundless “The Importance of Organizational Diversity.” 2015).

Increased Exposure, Knowledge Sharing and Localization

Diversified workforce has a pool of information or knowledge. Nowadays, organizations are recruiting employees with experience of different countries or states. As a result the information about local resources which was rarely available to the organization is now easily available and hence the employment increases(Leonard et al2004). In a diversified workforce the employees are exposed to new cultures beliefs and background. They learn from their colleagues and hence the productivity of the organization increases (Ruth Mayhew 2016, Burns 2012).

Enhances Entrepreneurship and Economic Development

Entrepreneurs are the set of people of different gender, race, religion, and nationality. According to the Census Bureau, people of color own 22.1 % of U.S. businesses, women own 28.8 % of U.S. businesses, and Latina-owned businesses are the fastest-growing sector of the business owned by women in the market.

A diverse workforce drives economic growth

handare (2015) India is a patriarchal society. It faces a gap in terms of gender equality. The labor force participation of women in India is only 23-24% of the total labor force. This generates a small share of 17% of GDP. According to a new study by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) India can increase its gross domestic product (GDP) by 2025 about \$4.83 trillion, by employing 16% to 60% women to contribute in the economic development.

1.2.2 Negative Aspect of Diversity

Various organizations are facing the chill winds due to diversity. The workforces have a wide range of races, ethnicities, gender, age and many other forms of diversity. This leads to various agree to disagree arguments, discrimination and ultimately conflicts arises. It is clear that diversity has many positive implications but on the other hand it can prove to be an Achilles hill if left unmanaged.

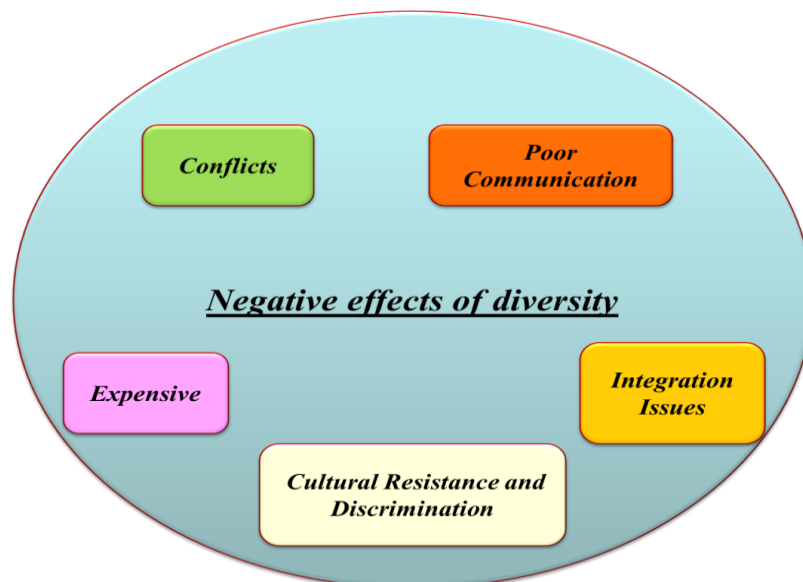


Figure 1.2 Negative effects of diversity

Feigenbaum, (2016) proposed that it is a challenge while working in a diversified workplace. We know that human beings are social animals. They tend to live in a group. They make a group with the people who are similar to them in any form. As a result, this gives rise to the formation of small groups in the organization. The members of the group become reluctant to share the information with the other group members. As a consequence of this a communication gap arises. This gives rise to conflicts. The employees started feeling discriminated, stressed or bullied. The group cohesiveness also reduced. (Ingram 2016). Because of this, they

start switching the job. Consequently, the attrition rate of the organization increases and hence the expenses of the organization increase. Therefore in order to manage diversity, the organizations need to give diversity training to the employees, which again increases the expenses of the organization Kokemuller (2016).

1.3 Dimensions of Diversity

Diversity has become an interesting topic of research for various researchers . Researchers have classified diversity into various dimensions. The most acceptable is the one given by Loden&Rosener (1991). They had stated that diversity differentiate a group from others on the basis of the primary and secondary characteristics. The characteristics that have the most vital impact on the personality of an individual, workplace and society are called primary dimension for example gender, race, ethnicity and age. This can be said that the characteristics with which one is born are called primary dimensions. These are the elementary characteristic that can be noticed easily. Secondary dimension are the dimensions that are acquired from the society. They add value to the primary dimensions. Secondary dimensions include educational background, family status, religion etc. It enhances the confidence and self-image.

Arredondo 2004 defined some tertiary dimensions which are the principles of individuals. These dimensions arises due the impact of the environment on the individual One can notice these traits if one know the individual very well. For example, attitude perception, beliefs etc. Białostocka (2010) proposed that diversity is defined as the combined and comprehensive synthesis of the dissimilarities and similarities on the basis of primary, secondary and tertiary dimensions.

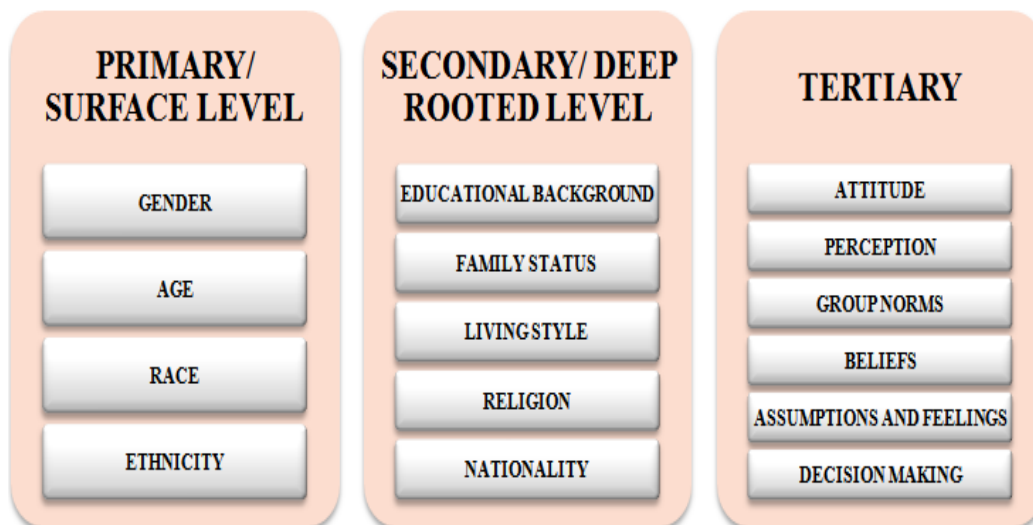


Figure 1.3 Dimensions of diversity

1.5 Antecedents of Diversity

Various studies have talked about the relationship of different dimensions of diversity with the performance of the organization. It is interesting to study various process of organization with respect to diversity. In our study we will be looking at diversity in terms of social capital, competency, employee engagement and cognitive learning.

1.5.1 Social Capital

Social capital is defined as the inherited characteristics in a relationship that help to do the work collectively (Garson, 2006). It can be understood as a network of relationship. We can study social capital by exploring commitment, communication, coordination, team composition, conflicts, cultural empathy, trust, camaraderie, and cohesion. A gist of various studies is taken into consideration. According to the social identity theory, every individual has an identity. People behave differently according to their personality. For example people who are high in cultural empathy are found to have less communication problems while open minded people are reluctant to stereotypes of group. However, emotional stability and flexibility are found to be interconnected with a similarity to consider intercultural circumstances less threatening (Karen Van Derzee, 2004). Moreover, females are considered to have more empathetic attitude towards cultural diverse group as compared to that of males. Furthermore, those who have empathy toward others, value the need for diversity programs more (Swan, 2009). Hereafter, it can be said that by reducing the conflicts on the basis of demographic

differences, by having empathetic attitude towards culturally diverse people and understanding their perspectives can help the organization to be more productive and hence can attain the competitive edge in the market.

At times, it is found that religion frames the attitude of the individual and hence play a vital impact on the performance of the individual. When there is a high religious diversity, it indicates a huge dissimilarity among people on the basis of their identity, norms and values (Asha Rao, 2011). Diversity reduces the level of social cohesion (Dronkers, 2011). People have different demographic background, beliefs, priorities, assumptions about future events and understanding of alternatives. This gives rise to disagreement regarding resource allocation and reward disparity. Moreover, the interpretation of task and the way of doing it is different for different people. This dissimilarity gives rise to the task conflicts. The task conflict is regarded as blessing in disguise as it give birth to discussions for opting the more appropriate approach of doing the work (Lisa Hope Pelled, 1999).

The aforementioned studies concluded that there is a variation in the personality of each individual. Every individual has a social identity which leads to social categorization. People tend to live for their self-esteem. They start making preconceptions for the people who are outside their hypothetical social category. As a result discrimination and intolerance arises. This ultimately leads to conflicts. However, if the positive side of conflict is considered, like in case of task conflict, there is a rise in performance of the employees. They discuss the issues till they get satisfied. And hence more innovative ideas are generated to solve the issue. As a result performance is improved.

1.5.2 Competency

In simple words competency is the trait of the employees required by the employer to meet the organizational goal. Competency is defined as the set of particular behaviors. It provides an organized guidance that enables the identification, evaluation and development of the behaviors. Diversity can be studied by exploring competency through teamwork, leadership, problem solving and decision making skills, motivation, result orientation, and thinking styles.

Organizations like to recruit those employees who are more innovative and are capable to fulfil the needs of the organizational. It is found that the homogeneous teams are less innovative as compared to that of heterogeneous (Gerben S. Van der Vegt, 2003). Ethnic and linguistic diversity highlights the cohesive traits of present societies and the interdependence between their members therefore it provides a competitive edge to the organization (David Smallbone, 2010). Diversity is different from tolerance and openness. However, tolerance, openness and diversity are used interchangeably. But the impact of diversity on innovation and entrepreneurship are different from that of tolerance and openness. The quality and creative thinking leads to a good performance of the business. Two-way communication not only makes the work culture simple but also makes the workplace to value similarities and dissimilarities (Qian, 2012).

From the aforementioned studies, it is concluded that the different dimensions of diversity has different impact on the individual performance as well as the performance of the organization. Functional diversity enhances the generation of new ideas by thinking out of the box for making better decisions and enhances improves problem solving skills. Innovative thinking is the byproduct of diversity. However, it is important to note that every idea cannot be considered good for the organizations. It is important to have a quality of ideas rather than quantities of ideas. Employees sometimes needed to be self-motivated and sometimes the management has to play role to motivate the employees.

1.5.3 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is defined as the methodology of the workplace which makes the environment of the organization favorable to work so that employees can give their best while being committed to the organizational objectives and goals. This keeps the employees motivated and as a result the employees work with more enthusiasm Macleod (2016). It would be interesting to study the approach of the organization towards resource allocation, adaptability, empowerment, learning and lateral thinking with respect to diversity.

By employing people with different psychology or by having a psychologically diverse team, more creative and innovative ideas can be acquired and hence performance can be improved. But it has to be managed properly otherwise it can have adverse effects on the performance (Kuřetová, 2010). The interest and values of the group with respect to the organization will be promoted if there is an involvement of more group members in decision-making positions. However, there is a rise in conflicts if the manager has a different demographic background. Moreover, the increase in the number of women and racial/ethnic minorities in managerial positions have an adverse influence on subordinates with dissimilar background (Choi, 2012).

Every individual has his own perception. Sometimes, perception is influenced by the position of the members in the group. Considering the diversity at senior management level, it has an impact on the objectives as well as strategic decisions of the organization. At the non-senior managerial ranks, diversity has a positive side (Richard S. Allen, 2007). There are various changes occurring in the society like change in the structure of population, upliftment of socio-economic and organizational concerns, active movement of women in the workplace, difference of attitude and perception. The glass ceiling still persists in the society, according to which women, minorities and socially disadvantaged are not competent (Kundu, 2003). This gives rise to relational conflict.

It is also seen that people with different personality traits have different opinions regarding diversity. For example, people who are high in openness to experiences are more liberal, prefer diversified workplaces and are less prone to stereotypes. On the other hand, people who are high in conscientiousness are more meticulous, competent, determined, truthful and organized. Agreeable people are more honest, accommodating and compassionate. Extravert people are supposed to be more gregarious, social and even more optimists for foreigners. There is a direct link between personality traits and attitude towards diversity (Ackermann, 2015). This shows that people of different personalities have different attitudes for diversity. For example, those who are high in extraversion are open to people with different backgrounds as compared to people who are low in extraversion. Hence, people of different personalities have different acceptance for diversity.

When the goals are set that are practicable, specific and are considered real by employees then they show higher levels of motivation and performance. On the other hand, if the employees do not get attached to the mission and goals of the organization, it results in an increase in numerous negative individual and organizational outcomes. Hence, policies are ought to be made so that the employees can get with different personality attitudes and cultures can get attached to the organizational mission and objectives. Policies of diversity management have both indirect and direct relations with workforce diversity, goal ambiguity, and employee job satisfaction (Edmund C. Stazyk, Randall S. Davis, (2012).

1.5.4 Knowledge Management

According to Karen A. Jehn (1999) diverse viewpoints are the driving forces for the knowledge creation and discovery of insights. These diverse viewpoints are the byproduct of the rise in education, training and experiences. A difference in level of education is the root cause for the difference of opinion. The homogeneous teams are reluctant in knowledge and experience sharing. They do not encash upon informational diversity. This leads to disagreement either on task content or process. The individuals who value diversity can argue on job distribution and on resource allocations. This ultimately gives rise to the process conflict, task conflict and relationship conflict in workgroups. Different forms of diversity intensify different forms of conflicts which in turn influence both actual and perceived performance, retention rate, satisfaction and commitment. The heterogeneous groups give a better performance on the other hand homogeneous groups give an easy performance.

Organizations that create the environment in which people are willing to share their unique information create a competitive edge. Surface level diversity may have informational differences. People think that the information they have is not unique so hesitates in sharing the information they have, and hence the information sharing lost its importance. In order to use unique information effectively, the sharing of information must have been made a legitimate part of the groups' norms and identity. Managers can undermine the benefits of having surface level diversity. Surface level homogeneous groups do not consider information sharing as important as compared to the surface level heterogeneous groups (Katherine W. Phillips 2006, Amayah 2011)

However, according to Rebecca Mitchell, (2009) when a new idea comes in a group, this leads to some arguments. The use of debated behavior and decision comprehensiveness made the link between cognitive diversity and knowledge creation. Debate behavior is accelerated by cognitive discrepancy. As a result, this makes the team members to challenge the idea of one and prove his point of view correct. However, unshared knowledge and cognitive discrepancies give birth to infrequent communication and conflicts. Debates increase the chances of comprehensive decision making.

1.5.5 Cognitive Learning

In human beings information is acquired and processed all the time knowingly or unknowingly. Cognitive learning is the process of learning based on the utilization of knowledge. People learn from their experiences. Cognitive learning includes categorization, generalization and observation of the environment. According to Bradley J. Olson, (2007) cognitive diversity is defined as the difference in the perception related to cause and effect relationship with respect to various goals of the organization. The most important element of

decision making is the cognitive diversity of executives that leads to the productive discrepancies. These discrepancies lead to relationship conflict and task conflict. It was found that cognitive diversity is more positively related to task conflict than relationship conflict. Task conflict is enhanced by the competence based trust. Even though there is a positive relationship between task conflict and relationship conflict, decision commitment, decision understanding, and decision quality increases task conflict.

Individual learning helps the individuals to get and use the new information which ultimately increases their competencies and it enhances the range of options present to solve problems. Behaviors like collective experimenting, information sharing and insights, seeking and giving feedback etc. promotes individual learning performance. There is a difference in viewpoints, cognitive orientations, reasoning, logical analysis and cultural norms and preferences in a diversified group. Power and status differences have an influence on the individual's willingness to learn something (Felix C. Brodbeck, (2011)). The adaptive organizations are better than those of efficient organizations as they are open to new technologies and new ideas. In a stable world, efficient organizations are said to be successful as they follow a scientific method or a well-structured method of working. In present changing world it is necessary for the organizations to become adaptive. Adaptability is said to be a proactive process. It makes the organizations more fluid. Adaptability is disruptive in nature as it makes the organizations to search for new opportunities, competition, developments, technologies, philosophies, and methods that may either improve or introduce new products and services or completely change the routines (Min Basadur, (2014)).

In a study Delise (2015) Cognitive style diversity among team members has an impact on the experiences of team interaction and perception of the teams. Cognitive style diversity had negative impact on cohesion. With the help of conflict management an improvement in the diversity-cohesion relationship has been noticed. When teams lacked conflict management, cognitive style diversity impacted cohesion. The relationship between the interaction of cognitive style diversity and conflict management on viability has been facilitated by the cohesion. As a result this can be said that there is a more impact of cognitive style diversity on interpersonal relationships than on those of objective outcomes.

1.6 Critical Analysis

The discussions above have played an important role in understanding the reason for the formation of preconceived notions while being in a group. An individual has his own personality which he had inherited from his parents and society. Since then he has made a hypothetical self-identity. They categorize other people on the basis of this social identity. They pair up with only those individuals who match with their categorization. This categorization is the basic reason for the differences. Some people accept these differences and some does not.

In organizations, people come up with these social identity and social categorization. With this groups are formed. Group composition is homogeneous in this case. This leads to a similar working style and similar thinking. The scope of commitment towards organization is more as people are comfortable in that group. But due to certain organizational policies if heterogeneous groups are made the level of comfortableness reduces. This leads to various other problems like high attrition rate, absenteeism, monotony and performance will be adversely affected. It has become necessary to find out the extent to which there is a change in the perception of employees towards social capital.

There are various dimensions of conflicts that are related to the diversity and performance of the teams. It is found that task conflict is positively related to informational diversity, knowledge creation, constructive debates and comprehensive decision making which makes the performance better. The relationship conflicts arise due to social categorization and lead to negative impact on the performance of organization. But the relation of informational conflicts with the dimensions of diversity and performance is still unexplored. Various studies supported that every individual is unique and possess some of the unique information. This information must be shared in order to get maximum benefits. But due to some reasons this information is not shared properly. On the other hand, information is sometimes not interpreted properly. So this leads to informational conflicts. Informational conflict is defined as the conflict which arises due to lack of proper information or misuse of the information or misinterpretation of the information. The role of informational conflict with respect to the diversity in the performance of organization is needed to be studied.

Need of the hour

It is very important to make our employees to feel valued and respected. This can be done by involving them in decision making. This act as a motivating factor for them and they work with more enthusiasm. The level of employee engagement in various activities of the organization like decision making, problem solving etc. with respect to diversity is needed to be studied. Secondly, when we talk about cognitive learning, the first and the foremost thing that come in our mind is learning with experience. The positive and negative experience

of the employees with the other employees makes him to learn new things. Moreover, it has a deep impact on the work style of the employees. Hence, it is important to assess the magnitude of cognitive learning with respect to diversity. With all these factors, the organizations are trying to make good relations among the employees. They are working on the collaboration of employees for various activities. Hence social capital with respect to diversity has a great value in keeping the working environment sound and good. Therefore, it is important to evaluate social capital with respect to diversity. By looking diversity with this new perspective we can use it for improving the relations of employees with other employees and employers. This ultimately improves the performance of the organization.

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