



# International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: [www.ijrpr.com](http://www.ijrpr.com) ISSN 2582-7421

## A Study on Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in the Workplace in India

**Yuktha H<sup>1</sup>, Manoj M<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Veena Bhavikatti<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of MBA, AMC Engineering College, Bangalore 560083

<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor, Department of MBA, AMC Engineering College, Bangalore 560083

### ABSTRACT

*Diversity and inclusion in the workplace mean valuing and respecting people of different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Diversity brings varied ideas, while inclusion ensures everyone feels welcomed, heard, and supported. Together, they create a fair and productive work environment. One of the studies in the review surveyed 56 individuals from public and private organizations to understand how D&I technologies affect workplace performance. The key objective of the study is to understand how diversity and inclusion practices influence workplace culture and employee performance.*

**KEYWORDS :** Diversity, Inclusion, Workplace, HRM (Human Resource Management), Equity

### INTRODUCTION

In today's modern world, workplaces are made up of people from many different backgrounds. They may come from different countries, speak different languages, have different religions, belong to different age groups, or have different abilities. This mix of people is called diversity. But having a diverse group is not enough. It is also important that everyone feels accepted, included, and valued — this is known as inclusion. Diversity brings many benefits to a company. When people with different ideas and experiences work together, they can solve problems in creative ways. They bring new opinions and fresh ideas, which can help the company grow. Inclusion is just as important because when employees feel respected and safe, they are happier and more productive. They work better with their teammates and stay longer with the company. Organizations that support diversity and inclusion also create a positive and respectful work environment. This can improve teamwork, reduce discrimination, and help people understand each other better. It also makes the company more attractive to talented people from different backgrounds. However, creating a diverse and inclusive workplace is not always easy. Some workers may not be used to working with people who are different from them.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does authentic leadership help in successfully putting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs into action at the workplace?
- What changes happen in workplace culture when DEI training is given regularly over a long period of time?
- Why do some employees resist DEI initiatives, and what can organizations do to reduce this resistance?
- How well do tools and systems for measuring DEI progress actually work in helping companies stay accountable?

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Dr. Giriraj Kiradoo (2009) Strategies for Achieving and Sustaining a Diverse Workforce**-This research shares useful strategies like DEI goals and flexible work setups to build a more inclusive workplace. It emphasizes how fairness and valuing differences boost engagement and performance.
- **Krithi et al. (2021)- A Review on Diversity and Inclusion**-This review looks at decades of research and finds more focus on diversity than inclusion. It suggests that future studies should explore inclusion in greater depth.
- **Shivani Wadhwa et al. (2023) Impact of Diversity and Inclusion on Workplace Effectiveness**-This paper explains how diversity and inclusion improve productivity, creativity, and financial results at work. It stresses that having a strong D&I program helps organizations stay competitive.

- **Ujjwal Sundas (2023) Perspectives of HRM Professionals on Diversity and Inclusion** -This review explains how D&I has become a key part of HR strategies. While many organizations have made progress, it also points out that biases still need to be addressed.
- **R.S. Pradiksha (2023) - Impact of Workplace and Diversity on Workforce Relations-** The paper discusses how D&I efforts are growing in India, driven by social awareness and reforms. It highlights how marginalized voices are shaping more inclusive workplaces.
- **Ajay Singh (2024) Diversity and Inclusion Strategies in HRM Policies-**This study shows that DEI is still developing in Nepal and faces several hurdles. Interviews with HR leaders reveal a growing but slow shift toward inclusive practices.
- **Dr. Amarjot Verma (2024)- Role of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Workplace-**The paper defines DEI as key to building respectful, fair workplaces where everyone feels heard. Companies that prioritize DEI are more adaptable and better at attracting talent.

#### Research Gap

| Author/Year                            | Research Design               | Objectives   | Findings  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Dr. Giriraj Kiradoo (2009)</b>      | Systematic Literature Review  | To explore strategies for building a sustainable diverse workforce         | Recommends DEI training, inclusive leadership, and policy support                             |
| <b>Nisha Nair et al. (2015)</b>        | Literature Review             | To distinguish diversity from inclusion and review evolving perspectives   | Inclusion is underexplored; leadership's role in D&I needs deeper research                    |
| <b>Krithi et al. (2021)</b>            | Secondary Data Review         | To trace historical D&I evolution from 1987–2021                           | Diversity has more literature; inclusion research remains limited                             |
| <b>Shivani Wadhwa et al. (2023)</b>    | Literature Review             | To explore the impact of D&I on workplace productivity and competitiveness | D&I enhances performance, creativity, and financial outcomes; implementation challenges exist |
| <b>R.S. Pradiksha (2023)</b>           | Narrative Review              | To understand the DEI movement in Indian workplaces                        | Societal biases and policy reforms influence progress in India                                |
| <b>Ujjwal Sundas (2023)</b>            | Literature Review             | To analyze how HRM integrates D&I strategies                               | Bias and tokenism persist; calls for better policy alignment                                  |
| <b>Dr. Amarjot Verma (2024)</b>        | Conceptual                    | To define DEI and its workplace value                                      | DEI improves employee support, fairness, and long-term business viability                     |
| <b>Ferdy Leuhery et al. (2024)</b>     | Literature Review             | To identify successful D&I strategies and outcomes                         | D&I boosts innovation, employee morale, and creates inclusive environments                    |
| <b>Samuel Takyi et al. (2024)</b>      | Quantitative Survey           | To examine the role of D&I technology in organizational performance        | Positive correlation between D&I tools and organizational success                             |
| <b>Sobia Irim et al. (2024)</b>        | Systematic Review             | To assess HRM's role in building inclusive cultures                        | Structured DEI frameworks and flexible work models needed                                     |
| <b>Ajay Singh (2024)</b>               | Qualitative Interviews        | To investigate DEI development in Nepalese HRM                             | Early-stage adoption; highlights implementation barriers                                      |
| <b>Caterina Galdiero et al. (2024)</b> | Integrative Literature Review | To map D&I trends in sustainable HRM post-COVID                            | Emphasizes gender-inclusive practices and hybrid work models                                  |
| <b>Shivani Sood (2025)</b>             | Quantitative Survey           | To explore DEI's effect on performance and HRM practices                   | DEI enhances performance; limited impact on retention   |
| <b>Zunaira Saqib (2025)</b>            | Mixed Methods                 | To study D&I as a strategic HR tool in India                               | Inclusive hiring and employee resource groups (ERGs) drive satisfaction                       |

|                            |               |   |   |
|----------------------------|---------------|---|---|
| Palak Khatri et al. (2025) | Mixed Methods | To assess how D&I affects engagement and productivity | Policy-practice gap; calls for actionable HR strategies |
|----------------------------|---------------|---|---|

Table no: 1 Showing Conceptual Model of Research Gap

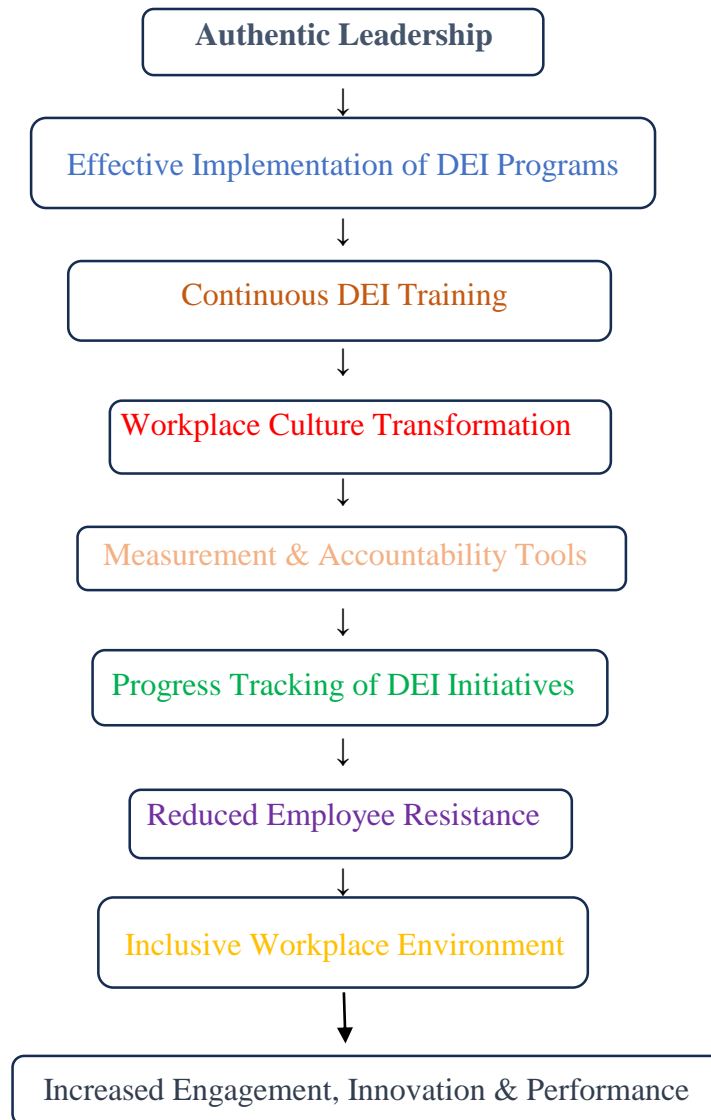
**RESEARCH MODEL****DEI Leadership Transformation Cascade Model**

Fig no:1 Showing Conceptual Model of DEI Leadership

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In recent years, organizations across the globe have increasingly recognized the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in shaping productive and innovative workplaces. While numerous studies have highlighted the positive outcomes associated with DEI—such as enhanced employee engagement, creativity, and organizational performance—there remains a significant gap between theoretical frameworks and actual implementation in workplace setting. Despite the growing body of literature on diversity, the concept of inclusion continues to be underexplored. Furthermore, critical elements such as the role of authentic leadership in guiding DEI initiatives, employee resistance to inclusive practices, the effectiveness of ongoing DEI training, and the presence of accountability mechanisms for tracking progress have not been sufficiently examined. Many organizations also face challenges in aligning DEI policies with measurable outcomes, resulting in inconsistencies between strategy and practice. This research aims to address these gaps by exploring the factors that influence the successful implementation of DEI initiatives and evaluating their impact on workplace culture and

organizational outcomes. By focusing on leadership, employee attitudes, training, and accountability, the study seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of how inclusive environments can be effectively fostered and sustained.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### ➤ Method

#### • Primary Data

First-hand information was collected using an online survey. A structured questionnaire was shared with professionals from both public and private organizations to understand their views and experiences related to diversity and inclusion.

#### • Secondary Data (Review of Literature)

To support and strengthen the findings, a review of literature was conducted. This included analysis of various previous studies, articles, and conceptual frameworks related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The literature highlighted how D&I practices impact employee performance, workplace culture, and organizational success. It also pointed out gaps, such as the under-exploration of inclusion compared to diversity, and the need for effective leadership and training in DEI efforts.

This balanced approach of combining practical responses with existing knowledge helped provide a deeper and more complete understanding of how diversity and inclusion function within Indian workplaces.

#### • Sampling Technique

The study mainly uses a survey method, where 56 people from both public and private organizations were chosen to share their views. This suggests the use of a convenience sampling technique — meaning participants were selected because they were easily available and willing to take part. This is common in workplace studies when researchers want quick and practical access to respondents.

#### • Sample Size

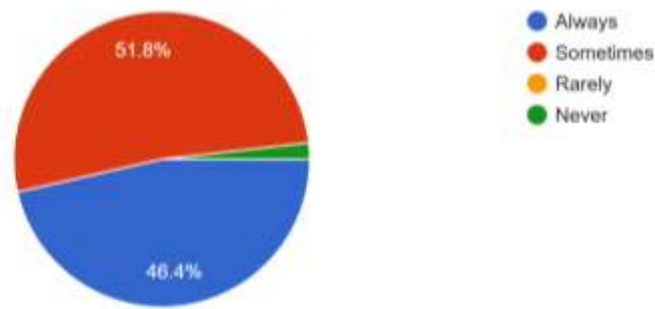
The **sample size** for this study is: **56 individuals** These participants were from both public and private organizations.

#### • Variable Discussion

| Variable             | Type                 | Explanation   |
|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Diversity            | Independent Variable | Difference in background, culture, gender, etc. that bring new ideas and creativity.  |
| Inclusion            | Independent Variable | Making all employees feel accepted, respected, and valued.                            |
| Authentic Leadership | Moderating Variable  | Genuine leaders who support and guide successful DEI implementation.                  |
| DEI Training         | Independent Variable | Regular training sessions to build awareness and reduce bias in the workplace.        |
| Workplace Culture    | Dependent Variable   | The overall work environment shaped by D&I practices, influencing how employees feel. |
| Employee Performance | Dependent Variable   | How well employees work, often improved by feeling included and respected.            |
| DEI Technology/Tools | Independent Variable | Digital systems that help track, manage, and improve diversity and inclusion efforts. |
| Resistance to DEI    | Mediating Variable   | Pushback or hesitation from employees that can affect the success of DEI programs.    |

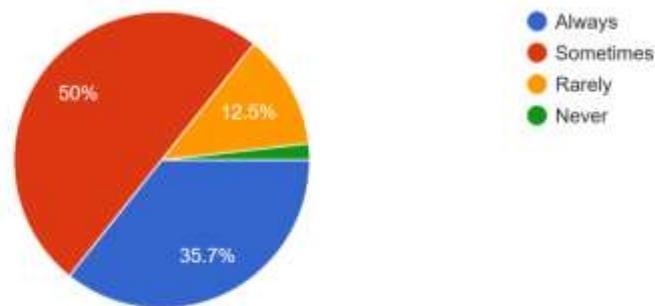
**Table no: 2 Showing Conceptual Model of Variable Discussion**

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION



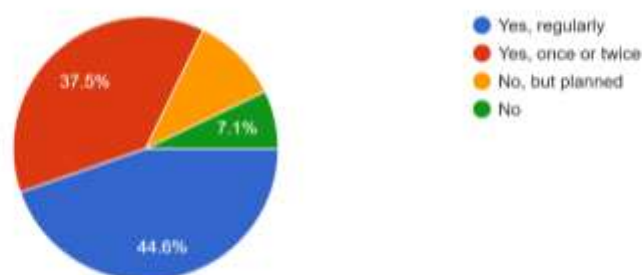
**Fig no: 2 Showing how leaders encourage fairness and respect in the workplace**

**Interpretation:** Most people (about 51.8%) said they "Sometimes" do the activity. A slightly smaller group (46.4%) said they "Always" do it. Only a tiny fraction of respondents fall into the "Never" category, and "Rarely" is almost negligible or not visible on the chart.



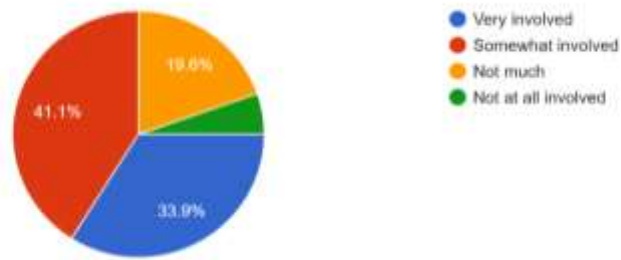
**Fig no:3 Showing whether leaders in the organization open to hearing different opinions and backgrounds.**

**Interpretation:** People perform a certain activity, with responses grouped into four categories: Always, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. The 50% of the participants said they do it sometimes, meaning they engage in it off and on, but not regularly. The 35.7% said they always do it, which suggests a strong habit or consistent behavior. The 12.5% said they rarely do it, so it's something they hardly ever participate in. Only a very small portion selected never, indicating it's almost unheard of for people to completely avoid the activity.



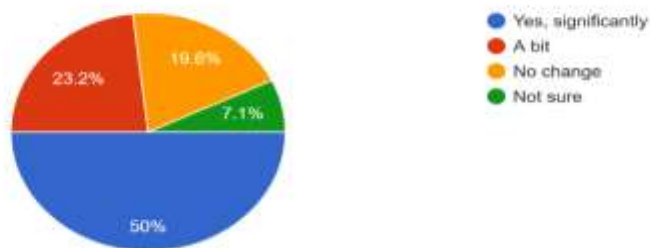
**Fig no: 4 Showing how organization provided any training on diversity and inclusion.**

**Interpretation:** How People engage in a certain activity, with four response options. The 44.6% of the people said "Yes, regularly," meaning nearly half of them make this activity a part of their routine. The 37.5% have done it "once or twice," showing they've tried it but aren't consistent with it. The 7.1% said "No, but planned," which means they haven't done it yet but intend to. A small group, about 7.1%, answered "No," showing they haven't done it and have no plans to.



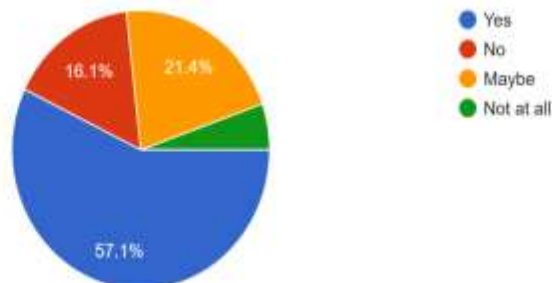
**Fig no: 5 Showing how the leaders are involved in DEI activities.**

**Interpretation:** The largest group, 44.6%, responded "Yes, a lot," which shows that nearly half the people feel strongly connected or impacted. 35.7% said "A little," meaning they relate to it but not deeply. 16.1% answered "Not really," suggesting minimal connection or relevance. A small portion, only a few percent, said "Not at all," meaning it doesn't apply to them at all.



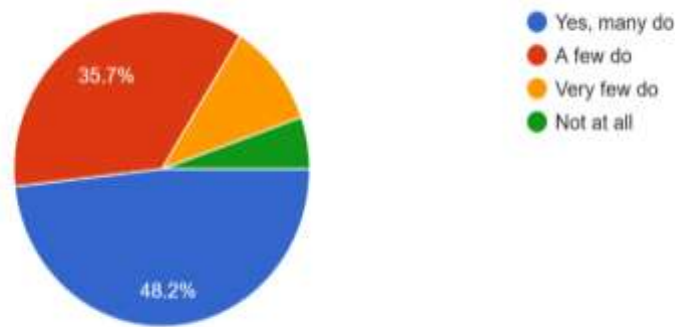
**Fig no: 6 Showing how training helped change people's behavior at work.**

**Interpretation:** The majority, 57.1%, answered "Yes," which shows strong agreement or confirmation. 21.4% chose "Maybe," indicating they are unsure or undecided. 16.1% responded with "No," showing they disagree or don't support the idea. A small portion selected "Not at all," meaning they strongly reject or do not relate to it whatsoever.



**Fig no: 7 Showing the feel more included at work after attending DEI training.**

**Interpretation:** The 48.2% of respondents said "Yes, many do," indicating that nearly half believe this activity is common. 35.7% answered "A few do" meaning a noticeable number participate, but it's not widespread. A small portion, 10% or less, said "Very few do" or "Not at all," showing that for a minority, the activity is either rare or completely absent.



**Fig no: 8 Showing how will you think that some employees resist diversity and inclusion efforts.**

**Interpretation:** The survey results about how many people do something (the exact activity isn't specified). The 48.2% of respondents answered "Not at all". 35.7% answered "Yes, many do".

## CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATION

### • CONCLUSION

The study clearly shows that diversity and inclusion (D&I) help improve workplace performance, employee satisfaction, and teamwork. Companies that create inclusive environments are more likely to succeed. Leadership support, proper training, and D&I tools play a big role in making this happen.

### • LIMITATIONS

Some employees still resist D&I changes, and there's often a gap between what companies plan and what happens. Also, most research focuses more on diversity than inclusion, and some results may not apply to all types of organizations or industries.

### • IMPLICATIONS

This study shows that companies need to take diversity and inclusion (D&I) seriously if they want to grow and stay competitive. It's not just about hiring diverse people—it's about making sure everyone feels included and supported. Organizations should invest in regular D&I training, use proper tools to track progress, and encourage leaders to create a respectful and fair work culture. These actions can improve employee morale, attract top talent, and boost overall performance.

### • FUTURE RECOMMENDATION

Future studies should focus more on the concept of inclusion, as most research has mainly explored diversity. More practical research is needed to understand how DEI efforts affect different types of workplaces over time. Companies should also work on reducing employee resistance by making D&I part of everyday work life, not just a one-time effort. Lastly, better tools and methods are needed to measure the real impact of D&I programs and ensure longterm success.

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