Diversity & Inclusion Practices: Insights from Organizations in India

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The paper reports on a study that advances understanding of how organizations in India promote diversity and inclusion. Using a multiple stakeholder approach, content analysis is applied on data from 74 semi-structured interviews with diversity leads, human resource personnel, business heads, and members of minority groups working in 21 organizations across eight industries in India. Organizational mechanisms, processes and practices with regard to diversity and inclusion in the Indian context are highlighted. Considering inclusion as a change process, the enablers and roadblocks to inclusion are also discussed. Providing a contextual visibility to different diversity dimensions, this research on inclusion practices in India aims to further discourse in organizations to help create inclusive cultures.

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Introduction

The need for managing various forms of diversity (Roberson, 2019; Scott et al., 2011) to ensure inclusion takes centerstage as organizations become more heterogeneous (Kochan et al., 2003; Roberson, 2019), and legal frameworks for affirmative action and equal employment opportunity gain force (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Kravitz, 2008). Most organizations and leaders today agree on the importance of diversity; however, it is the achieving of inclusion that eludes them (Brown, 2018). Denoting differences among people, diversity is based on observable demographic characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity or non-observable aspects such as education and socio-economic position (Kreitz, 2008; Roberson, 2019). Inclusion, on the other hand, signifies how accepted an employee feels in an organization (Pelled et al., 1999) and how much of a voice s/he has in the organization.

When the narrative of diversity is focused only on representational numbers with inadequate attention to the deeper organizational mechanisms at play, inclusion is not achieved (Padavic et al., 2019).

Literature on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) in India, as elsewhere, has remained largely focused on diversity practices (Buddhapriya, 2013; Cooke & Saini, 2012; Haynes & Alagaraja, 2016; IIM Ahmedabad & Biz Divas, 2015) with somewhat limited exploration into inclusion (Vohra & Chari, 2015). There are only a few studies in India on inclusion of people with disabilities (Kulkarni & Gopakumar, 2014; Kulkarni et al., 2016). Limited knowledge on inclusion has led organizations to design inclusion practices and policies based on intuition and trial-and-error (Hays-Thomas & Bendick, 2013). This study aims to reduce the echoing concerns of the research-practice gap in diversity management (Klarsfeld et al., 2016; Kulik, 2014) by studying the inclusion practices of organizations in India. Epistemologically, this study is framed by a phenomenon-driven orientation which 'focuses on capturing, documenting, and conceptualizing an observed phenomenon of interest in order to facilitate knowledge creation and advancement' (Schwarz & Stensaker, 2016: 245).

Bringing about inclusion is complex and involves changes in the mindsets of people, processes and policies adopted, and systems and structures.

At the core of inclusion lies the simultaneous meeting of individuals' needs for belongingness and uniqueness (Shore et al., 2011). Inclusion cannot be achieved through tactical interventions and attention to underlying principles of inclusion, namely reciprocal understanding, standpoint plurality, trust, and integrity, is necessary (Pless & Maak, 2004). Thus, bringing about inclusion is complex and involves changes in the mindsets of people, processes and policies adopted, and systems and structures. In effect, inclusion mandates change in organizational culture. This study was undertaken to address how organizations in India attempt to achieve inclusion. Is the process intentional or emergent? Who leads the change? How is resistance to change addressed? Theoretical perspectives of change management (Kotter, 2007; Shwarz & Stensaker, 2016; Styhre, 2002; van de Ven & Poole, 1995) are drawn upon to frame the understanding of processes of inclusion within organizations.

We structure the paper by first highlighting the need for as well as challenges in studying inclusion and then argue how adopting a change management lens could significantly contribute towards a better understanding of inclusion as a process. The findings outline a process of inclusion that enables minority groups, attends to majority group dynamics, and addresses barriers to inclusion. Evidence of the representational focus of diversity preludes the findings on the process of inclusion. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of our findings while highlighting the limitations of the study.

(Missing) Emphasis on Inclusion

Studies in India have documented the practices and outcomes of diversity management within an organization (eg. Pant & Vijaya, 2015; Panicker et al.,

2018; Som, 2010), or across organizations from various industries and sectors (Ali et al., 2011; Cooke & Saini, 2010, 2012; de Jonge, 2014; Haynes & Alagaraja, 2016). However, there is dearth of empirical studies on inclusion in organizations (few exceptions being Donnelly, 2015; Ortlieb & Sieben, 2014; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007).

Considered both a process and a condition inclusion is 'an active process of change or integration, as well an outcome' (Deloitte, 2012: 12). In inclusive organizations, identity group status is unrelated to access to key resources, opportunities exist for individuals to have ties across groups, and acceptance of minority groups is not dependent on their conformity with dominant norms (Davidson & Ferdman, 2001; Nishii, 2012). Organizational support, climate, and culture significantly enhances minority group members' experience of inclusion (Jauhari & Singh, 2013; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2010), thereby influencing their job satisfaction, organizational commitment and advancement (Roldan et al., 2004). While diversity can be achieved through tactical changes, inclusion requires change in attitudes and organizational culture (Donnelly, 2015; Maran & Soro, 2010; Roldan et al., 2004).

Schein (1985) defines organizational culture as shared values and patterns of beliefs and expectations, manifested in actual behavior of people, organizational climate, and material artifacts. In inclusive cultures 'people of all social identity groups have the opportunity to be present, to have their voices heard and appreciated, and to engage in core activities on behalf of the collective' (Wasserman et al., 2008 :176). In general, organizational cultures are more accepting of certain 'kinds' of employees and behaviors (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986; Maran & Soro, 2010). Therefore, creating inclusive cultures requires a re-look at accepted values (Pless & Maak, 2004) and dismantling of organization's basic assumptions and arbitrary status hierarchies (Bilimoria et al., 2008; Davidson & Ferdman, 2001; Nishii, 2012). Specifically, bringing about an inclusive culture would require attention to fundamental issues involving how people relate to each other, prevailing majority-minority dynamics, structuring of work (Acker, 1990), and deep-rooted biases (Lee, 2005; Ross, 2014; Sabharwal, 2014). Not much has been documented on what it takes to change mindsets of people around inclusion, what processes would best help achieve inclusion, and what structures need to be put in place to bring about changes that will stick (Podsiadlowski & Astrid, 2014).

The challenge of studying inclusion is akin to difficulties in studying any ongoing human process as compared to discrete efforts (Pettigrew et al., 2001). Studying processes help develop the 'know-how' as against the 'know-what' (Langley et al., 2013). Katila and colleagues (2010) and Jones (2016) provide some insights into the 'how' in the context of academia and Science, Technology, Engineering and Management (STEM) respectively. Extant literature on

the how of inclusion appears to be influenced by methods to increase diversity and considers bringing about inclusion as planned organizational change that is modeled on the lines of 'grand technocratic projects' (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). For example, refer to Gurchiek's (2018) six-step model for building an inclusive workplace, Winters' (2014) inclusion equation, and Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez's (2018) model for inclusive organizations. Inclusion in all of the above models is conceived as a change process driven from the top, is intentional, and leads to a defined outcome with little room for iteration and reflexivity. Deterministic and causal models of change (Kotter, 2007) have limited room for accommodating the emergent nature of organizations and cultural change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). A process view – which focuses on understanding and explaining 'evolving phenomena' as suggested by Langley and colleagues (2013) may be more befitting to study inclusion.

Focusing on 'how' organizations bring about inclusion, we attempt to tease out mechanisms, processes, and roadblocks to achieving inclusion in organizations. Drawing upon Pless and Maak's (2004) principles of inclusion, diverse perspectives within organizations in India were captured to develop an understanding of the process of inclusion. To understand the inclusion process adopted within organizations in India, we aimed at reaching a broad segment of organizations and collecting contextualized data about their inclusion practices and experiences.

Sample

The sampling frame of this study comprising small, medium and large organizations from both public and private sectors, across a variety of industries including media, telecom, retail, information technology, financial services, research and analytics, pharmaceutical, education, sports, and transport and infrastructure, was first developed. Over 150 organizations that comprised the sampling frame were contacted over email requesting participation in the study. Many declined on grounds of not having done much towards diversity and inclusion (D&I), being compliant with government regulations, or being under other business related pressures. Twenty-one organizations across eight industries agreed to participate and comprised the final sample for this study. These were organizations with ongoing inclusion efforts. Table 1 offers a snapshot of the participating organizations and industry type.

In each organization, an appointment for an interview was first sought from the D&I head or the organization's HR head, along with suggested nominations for one business head and one or more members from the under-represented groups in the organization, to be interviewed separately. In all 21 D&I and HR heads, 20 business heads, and 50 members from various under-represented groups were interviewed as part of this study.

Table 1 Details of Participating Organizations

	Indian	MNC
Headcount		
> 10000 (i.e. large)	2	6
2000 – 10000 (i.e. medium)	4	4
< 2000 (i.e. small)	0	5
Organization Tenure		
< 10 years	1	7
10 – 25 years	3	2
> 25 years	2	6
Industry		
Engineering and pharma	1	2
Financial services		3
FMCG		2
IT consulting and services	1	2
Real estate		1
Shared services		3
Telecom	2	1
Travel and hospitality	2	1
Total	**6**	**15**

Interviews were mainly semi-structured. Some questions to D&I and HR heads and business heads included when did you start D&I as a focus area? What did you do to increase diversity? What have been your next steps? What have been your challenges in including the diverse groups? How have you overcome them? Sample questions to members of under-represented groups included how do you experience being a minority group member? What are the responses of the team? What has helped you? What has been not so helpful?

Five trained interviewers conducted the interviews in person, over telephone, or via video conferencing depending on the convenience of the participants. One interviewer conducted all interviews within an organization. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of responses. All except seven interviews (from two organizations) were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Of the seven, five interviewees were not comfortable being recorded while two of these could not be recorded because of technical issues. Detailed notes were taken by the interviewer in these cases. A total of 94 hours of interviews were recorded. Interviewers wrote extensive memos after each interview. These memos covered the level and areas of agreement/disagreement among different voices/interviews in each organization. Across organizations, we found high convergence among the various voices within an organization.

Analysis

Four members of the team (of which three were also interviewers) read each transcript and associated memo, independently and then together. A content analy-

sis approach was adopted to generate insights around practice of inclusion in organizations in India. Members disagreed over coding in less than 1% of codes, and all disagreements were resolved by discussion.

Diversity Metrics

Table 2 presents the focus areas and initiatives taken by the organizations towards diversity. Across all participating organizations, D&I efforts had been started not earlier than two years. The reasons cited for organizations promoting D&I initiatives, included access to a larger talent pool (90%), better customer interaction (86%), better retention (76%), building a more positive culture (67%), and getting more business (43%) along with gaining insights about customers, meetings demands of global clients, and increased ability to connect to clients.

Participating organizations focused on six different populations to increase diversity. While all organizations focus on gender diversity, about 57% organizations focus on other demographic diversity such as age, and cultural and language diversity; cultural diversity largely represents the regional cultural diversity in India. About 19% organizations consider differently abled as a focus area under the organization's D&I efforts.

Periodic audits and measures were also undertaken to monitor how organizations were doing on their diversity targets (Table 2). Sixteen organizations (76%) had regular diversity audits in place including monitoring diversity at various hierarchical levels and functions. MNCs (N=12) were more likely to engage in audits rather than Indian organizations (N=4). Three MNCs and one large Indian organization also benchmarked their diversity metrics with external organizations.

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Inclusion Processes

The key emergent themes from our analysis and quotes from participants are presented to describe the process of inclusion. While there is a representational focus of diversity we also found themes around processes to enable minority groups, attending to majority group dynamics, and addressing barriers to inclusion.

Diversity as a representational focus. Across all participating organizations, D&I efforts were found to be of a somewhat recent area of emphasis. While all organizations focused on gender diversity, only a few of them also considered other aspects of diversity including demographic such as age and cultural (largely representing the regional cultural diversity in India), language, disability, and sexual orientation. Multinational organizations in this study were more open to Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and sexual orientation diversity, compared to organizations based only in India. Interestingly, this subject was readily dismissed when

Table 2 Why & Who of Diversity

Measure/Focus Area*	Total (N=21) %	Organization Type		Organization Size		
		Indian (N=6) %	MNC (N=15) %	Small (N=5) %	Medium (N=8) %	Large (N=8) %
Why Diversify?						
Building a positive culture	67	50	73	100	63	50
Talent pool	90	100	87	100	88	88
Better retention	76	67	80	60	63	100
Getting more business	43	33	47	40	50	38
Managing peaks in business	5	0	7	20	0	0
Better customer interaction	86	83	87	100	88	75
Who to Include?						
Gender	100	100	100	100	100	100
Differently abled	19	17	20	40	13	13
Sexual orientation	10	0	13	0	0	25
Age	24	17	27	0	38	25
Culture and language	33	50	27	40	25	38
Business Experience	5	0	7	0	0	13
Tracking Progress of Initiatives						
Internal benchmarking	76	67	80	80	63	88
External benchmarking	19	17	20	20	0	38
Participating in national surveys	24	17	27	20	13	38

* Percentages calculated on total number of organizations under the respective head/sub-head

brought up with local Indian organizations. The flip-flop in the regulation pertaining to the status and rights of LGBT in India (Parthasarthy, 2018) possibly contributed to the organizations' avoiding the subject. We also noticed that the other forms of culturally embedded disadvantage (such as caste) did not find a center stage in D&I discourse beyond meeting legal obligations.

Organizations tracking number of women applying for positions, regional and gender diversity in hiring, number of men and women utilizing flexi-time and sabbaticals, and number of promotions given to women.

Most organizations conducted periodic audits to monitor their performance on diversity targets. In particular, we found organizations tracking number of women applying for positions, regional and gender diversity in hiring, number of men and women utilizing flexi-time and sabbaticals, and number of promotions given to women. In most cases, there were no measures of progress on inclusion. Overall, the focus of diversity appeared to be on increasing representation albeit from a view of using diversity as a taxonomical tool.

Enabling inclusion through devising strategies to support minority groups. Some organizations used the term 'inclusion' in their vision/mission/values, while others named the specific minority groups that were of interest for their D&I initiatives. Official communication from top management was seen as central to highlight the importance of D&I to all stakeholders. Communication through several channels, ranging from newsletters to personal messages and calls from top management and D&I leads, was used as a means to signal intent (Moore, 2003). As one participant noted, communication was used to change attitudes and share achievements: *"*The ladies who do mechanical work, like say climbing up the chiller and things like that, we broadcast that as well with a photograph to spread it across and build awareness across levels. We do this so that more women are interested in mechanical roles."

Communication also showcased top management's commitment to the cause. "During all the collective meetings our CEO would tell the then manager of e-commerce, 'I am still waiting to see women employees in your team. Essentially, it was the CEO's way of directly and yet subtly, communicating the importance of diversity in that team. The manager understood the message and subsequently made efforts to act on it."

Many organizations created support groups (such as for women) and other minority interest groups (LGBT support groups). Such groups created spaces for both members of minority and majority groups to discuss personal or professional issues and revisiting commonly held notions and beliefs.

Most organizations formally focused on mentoring and sponsorship. Senior leaders and external mentors were as-

signed as mentors and coaches. As one business head shared that mentoring was largely used to support inclusion of women. "I coach and guide women managers on what they need to do differently compared to how they are working today so as to go to the next level." Other enabling mechanisms included making accommodations and instituting policy changes. Several organizations modified their physical infrastructure to accommodate differently-abled employees. Modifications included creating ramps at access points, enlarging size of cubicles and washrooms, using ergonomically designed chairs, and sourcing computer hardware and software suitable for differently-abled. "I use earphones to listen to the software (JAWS) and because of continuous use my ears were paining. One day I told my manager and within one week he arranged for better and more expensive headphones."

To facilitate communication with deaf and mute members, one of the organizations created sign language video tutorials for all its employees. Three organizations constructed prayer/meditation rooms to support religious minorities. To accommodate specific religious or health needs modifications in uniforms were also made. A member of one minority group observed that when accommodations were mainstreamed, they did not lead to further exclusion. "I wear a headgear and am from the minority… neither do I feel special nor do I feel singled out…It is that great."

Accommodations were also aimed at attracting women into under-represented roles and tasks. Washrooms and changing rooms were constructed when an engineering company realized that women didn't apply for positions in its workshop because there were no women's toilets and changing rooms. In another case, special kind of boots to be mandatorily worn by employees in the workshop were not available in India in women's sizes. The organization procured these boots, albeit at considerable cost and effort, to attract women candidates to workshop positions. Keeping in mind the women in its sales team, another organization had women's washrooms constructed at its dealer/distributor locations. Several organizations also made special provisions including home-drop facilities and self-defense classes to address issues of women safety, considering the realities on the ground of unsafe public places and public transport facilities at late hours of the day in India.

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Locational flexibility was introduced to ensure that women were able to continue working even when their families relocated. Paternity leave, telework, leave for adoptive parents, and allowing couples (working in the same organization) to choose their shifts provided additional flexibility. One organization changed its appraisal processes to evaluate pregnant women only for the period that they were in office. Organizations drew lessons from implementation prob-

lems and modified D&I policies to limit the role of managers' preferences and biases. As one participant noted: "We have turned flex work policy on its head. Managers don't need permission from senior leadership if they want to grant flex work. Instead, they need permission if they want to refuse for flex work." Such enabling mechanisms which call for changes in policy, went a long way in facilitating a climate of inclusion, where differences and the need to accommodate them were not viewed as a daunting task.

A common theme appearing across participating organizations was the celebration of diversity. All organizations had a holiday calendar marking important dates of different religions and celebrated them. Participants often referred to the secular and pluralistic fabric of the Indian society in support of celebration of festivals of multiple religions. As one religious minority member reflected: "Before I came there was no Eid celebration. When I became a part of the team, they said that we don't do anything for Eid, so let's do something - small things like there will be kheer (pudding) kept in the cafeteria and there will be a greetings email for Eid to all the employees from the top management." Celebrating employees' diversity, making changes in policies, and providing reasonable accommodations signal that minority identities are valued and connote a sense of inclusion.

Attending to majority group dynamics. D&I initiatives can trigger negative dynamics among majority groups. Biases, social pressures, and societal norms can come in the way of achieving D&I goals (Lee, 2005). D&I efforts were resisted by the majority group members owing to unconscious biases at play. As one D&I lead noted: "People would still prefer a male candidate over a female candidate, for example, for a finance kind of a job. On the face acceptability is there, yet people don't take chances."

All organizations conducted mandatory training on Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) to address issues around sexual harassment.

Training was a commonly used technique to address biases. Several organizations conducted trainings towards identifying and addressing unconscious biases to highlight privilege and taken-for-granted assumptions and stereotypes. Training topics also included sharing success stories of minority group members and enhancing gender intelligence and dignity at work. A variety of methods such as theatre, online videos, films, and e-learning were used for training. In one organization, responses from anonymous surveys on instances of experienced discrimination were used to build the context and develop material for sensitization training. All organizations conducted mandatory training on Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) to address issues around sexual harassment.

Mindful of the ubiquitous dynamics of us-versus-them and consequent con-

flicts, organizations devised innovative ways to enhance familiarity and develop reciprocal understanding and trust between majority and minority groups. In one organization, differently-abled trainees were attached to existing employees, and sign language interpreters were brought in to facilitate interactions. Another organization made it mandatory for software development teams to design differently-abled friendly applications.

Barriers to inclusion. Barriers took the form of individuals' intentional resistance to change and/or resistance owing to unconscious biases. In some cases, business heads argued how diversity and inclusion contradicted the business logic. Often D&I initiatives were seen as yet another 'quota' or reservation and making a compromise on capability and quality. One D&I lead observed: "I hear corridor conversations about how a certain person got the role, because there is quota for women." Organizations trivialized inclusion efforts when they resorted to tokenism and used diversity primarily for image building. For example, one organization put members of under-represented groups in client meetings just to impress their client; another appointed the same woman to be part of several committees. It was also noticeable that in most organizations the D&I lead was a woman.

Training and messaging had to be offered repeatedly, owing to high turnover of employees, and was seen as adding to costs. Providing for women's safety needs and accommodating the special needs of the differently abled were seen as financially burdensome. As one business head noted: "We have a rule that if women are working beyond 8 pm, they've got to be provided home drop along with security. This increases costs. Project managers who have too many women in their teams are cribbing about those kinds of things"'

When changes were made without addressing deep rooted biases and beliefs, it widened the divide between the majority and minority groups. Members of majority groups reported a 'loss of naturalness' when asked to use politically correct language. Minority group members felt uncomfortable when accommodations were made specifically for them. In some cases, minority group members felt singled out and excluded when they perceived a show of sympathy towards them. Perceptions of bias were accentuated when managers made accommodations for minority groups and not for the majority group members.

Discussion

Diversity and inclusion have to be woven together such that outcomes of one are linked to and influenced by those of the other (Roberson, 2019). Though diversity can be achieved by hiring and retaining visibly diverse people, inclusion is a continual process of ensuring that members of minority groups feel valued, accepted, and heard without needing to look and behave like the majority (Pelled et al., 1999; Shore et al., 2011).

Cultural contexts which shape human experiences must be drawn upon to develop a more nuanced and relevant pro-

cesses of inclusion (Ahonen et al., 2014; Podsiadlowski and Astrid, 2014). In an attempt to correct the lack of opportunities for certain social groups, the Constitution of India has made provisions for affirmative action in education as well as employment in public sector organizations. D&I initiatives of organizations are also seen by majority groups as another form of affirmative action. The narrative around affirmative action in India primarily casts the minority groups as beneficiaries. When diversity is considered good for the under-represented group, it may be seen as a favor and/or be resisted by the majority, but when cast as good for the entire organization including the majority groups, the possibility of inclusion is enhanced (Mander, 2014). In this context, the D&I efforts of organizations, however earnest, are likely to be acknowledged in principle but ignored in execution. Although people in the Indian subcontinent are demographically diverse in terms of appearance, language, region, religion, caste, socio-economic status etc., we found organizations predominantly focused on increasing gender representation while caste, language or other contextually nuanced expressions of diversity found no mention. The 'languaging' of diversity in organizations seemed to be influenced by the dominant paradigm of diversity management in the D&I literature grounded in Anglo Saxon contexts.

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Inclusion can best be brought about by changes in organizational culture. Complex phenomenon such as change in culture and mindsets towards inclusion, requires accepting plural perspectives and altering existing routines to integrate old with the new (Pless & Maak, 2004; Styhre, 2002; van de Ven & Poole, 1995). It necessitates simultaneous, reflexive, and dialectical attention to multiple stakeholders and processes which is anchored and facilitated by a leader (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008; Styhre, 2002). Such changes, where differences simultaneously exist, evoke anxiety. Hence, it is a leader's task to help people deal productively with their anxiety as well as create comfort and trust among various stakeholders (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Legitimacy of change towards inclusion was built through the involvement of top management and communication from them. Organizations worked towards creating an inclusive culture by simultaneously working on majority-minority dynamics and changes in policies, practices, and mindsets. Putting structures in place also helped in signaling seriousness of intent, and ensuring continued focus on inclusion. Creating a position of D&I head and instituting grievance councils with representative membership serve as examples of structuring for inclusion.

Minority groups can feel excluded when their needs and motivations are treated as illegitimate (Hitlan et.al., 2006). Not having a creche, performance expectations that include staying after

work or informal networking after office hours, request for assistance to travel late at night being construed as being difficult or adding to expense, all add up to subtle exclusion from the workplace. Feelings of exclusion lead to underperformance irrespective of competence. Therefore, supporting minority groups to perform to their potential is an important piece in fostering inclusion (Pelled et al., 1999). Organizations in this study trained minority groups, created required infrastructure, and made reasonable accommodation (Gold et al., 2012) through policies and practices. Mentoring was also used to enhance performance, improve affective commitment, and reduce turnover intentions of minority group members (Derven, 2014; Payne & Huffman, 2005; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Psychological support was extended by overt acknowledgment of identities, as reflected in celebration of festivals of multiple religions; efforts in this direction helped meet universal needs of uniqueness and belongingness (Shore et al., 2011) and the integrity principle of inclusion (Pless & Maak, 2004).

Madsen and Desai (2010) and Sitkin (1992) discuss the processes of learning from successes and failures. Organizational change towards inclusion, as found in this study, was not achieved by a linear, n-step processes, instead, organizations started off by taking a few initial steps such as flexi-work policies and then adapting to emerging realities based on intermediate outcomes (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Reflexivity was shown in addressing issues arising out of starting a program (example work from home for women) and changes (work from home for all) were made to address the concerns of majority groups.

Addressing resistance through efforts at the micro (individual), meso (group), and macro (organizational) levels is an integral part of change management (Kotter, 2007; Styhre, 2002). Concerted efforts of leaders championing cultural change, encouragement of coalitions of minority and majority groups, ensuring fairness in processes such as recruitment and performance appraisal, and empowering of organizational members to call out deviations, were some of the processes organizations adopted to address resistance. Systemic, micro-level efforts to overcome biases (Lee, 2005; Reis et al., 2011) included training for awareness of unconscious biases and their consequences. At the meso level, resistance was proactively handled by creating safe spaces for dialogues among majority and minority groups. Nudges were used to achieve equality by creating opportunities for majority and minority group members to work together (Bohnet, 2016). Policies and procedures, such as modifying the vision statements and instituting a policy of no tolerance to discrimination, were aimed at addressing resistance to inclusion at the macro level.

It is also necessary to engage with the basic unsaid assumptions of how work is conceived and organizations are designed, if real progress has to be made towards making the workplace truly inclusive (Acker, 1990; Padavic et al., 2019). When changes are made to the

existing systems, inherent business tensions get introduced. For example, there is a cost involved in making reasonable accommodations, which many argue go beyond the benefit derived from employing minority groups. Line managers often demonstrated such struggle as reflected by one manager, "I find it difficult to explain to my team why we have to focus on diversity especially when business is down; some days even I think (silently) why can't we just focus on the business."

Culture change works at several levels. In the background, coordinating mechanisms are put in place and means to keep the change as a priority in the face of other important and urgent business issues are secured. In the foreground there is expression of excitement, positive affect, and symbolism of change and progress (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

Future studies on inclusion can focus on comparisons of organizations where inclusion practices have been successful and unsuccessful. This would help understand boundary conditions in bringing about inclusion. Given the size and contribution of public sector organizations in the economy, it may also be pertinent to initiate dialogue on D&I policies and practices of government run/ owned organizations (Haq, 2012).

Conclusion

When the journey from representational diversity to ensuring inclusion is viewed not just as a taxonomical tool, but as an instrument for justice and a mechanism to aid in access and equal opportunity, it is much more likely to be met with success. This paper studies how organizations in India bring in inclusion. Based on an analysis of interview data of D&I practitioners, business heads and minority group members spread over 21 organizations across eight industries, we offer insights into achieving inclusion as a process. Driven by the need to understand the phenomenon of bringing about inclusion, this study focused on the practice in the field and eclectically drew upon various theories to understand the process and thus contributes to a body of knowledge about how bringing about inclusion is most likely to be successful in organizations (Schwarz & Stensaker, 2016). Applying the change management lens and drawing from lessons in changing organizational culture, we observe that it is best to move away from deterministic models of change, and conceptualize and implement inclusion in an emergent and reflexive manner. Principles of inclusion may be treated as guideposts for practitioners to design their interventions. The importance of overcoming barriers to change, attention to majority group dynamics, and examination of the role of unconscious biases, to achieving inclusion was highlighted. The D&I narrative must evolve to be adaptive and incorporate cultural situatedness to be meaningful in its practice.

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