

Workforce diversity: how to manage it?

Upamali Amarakoon¹ and Bhadra Arachchige²

Globalization and development of global workforces made workforce diversity inevitable in the present knowledge based economy. What is expected by the management today is not avoiding diversity but effectively managing diversity to gain competitive edge. On the other hand diversity when it is not properly managed creates negative impacts on the organizations.

Objective of this study is to discuss the importance of diversity in contemporary organizations along with effective ways of management of diversity, minimizing the problems and maximizing the benefits. Diversity has been extensively studied in the western world even though it is an ongoing issue around the world. This study is an attempt to address the existing performance gap by looking into workforce diversity related trends and issues in Sri Lanka and giving recommendations for management to bridge the gap.

The study is based on the descriptive content analysis. It incorporates the knowledge contribution on workforce diversity around the world in bridging the empirical gap. The relevant statistical information on Sri Lankan workforce has been obtained from the publications of the Department of Censes and Statistics.

The study discusses different workforce diversity related issues and effective diversity management techniques used in different contexts giving valuable suggestions for meeting the existing performance gap in Sri Lanka.

Key words: Workforce, Diversity, Diversity management, Implementation failures

¹ Department of Industrial Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

² Public Enterprise Reforms Commission, Colombo, Sri Lanka