
DIVERSITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: EXPLORING WORKPLACE INCLUSION AND INNOVATION IN THE IT INDUSTRY

Dr Sushree Sangita Ray¹, Dr Rachita Ota², Ms. Lipsa Mohanty³

^{1,2}Asst. Professor, Amity Global Business School, Bhubaneswar, India.

³MBA Student of Amity Global Business School, Bhubaneswar, India.

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ABSTRACT

In the fast-paced world of Technology, workplace diversity is a key factor in innovation and inclusivity. In the globalization era, valuing diversity goes beyond just checking boxes and involves utilizing the potential of many viewpoints, experiences, and backgrounds to spark innovation and effect real change. This investigation aims to show how diversity may influence success and promote a sense of belonging among the skilled workforce leading to enhanced efficiency and productivity. This study explores the complex relationship between workplace diversity and innovation in the Information Technology (IT) sector. It further examines the transformational potential of workplace diversity in fostering innovation, problem-solving, and sustainable growth within the quickly expanding digital domain through an extensive content analysis. The researchers have conducted a thorough investigation into workplace diversity within the Information Technology (IT) industry, with a specific focus on Wipro and HCL. Utilizing a comprehensive content analysis of secondary data sources, the study scrutinizes the diversity strategies, practices, and outcomes within these organizations. The data interpretation phase entails a rigorous comparison of workplace diversity metrics between Wipro and HCL. Through this comparative analysis, the study illuminates trends, patterns, and disparities in diversity outcomes, offering actionable insights for both companies and the broader industry. This comparative approach underscores the significance of diversity and inclusion in the IT sector.

Keywords: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Workplace, Information Technology

1. INTRODUCTION

The IT sector is a hotbed of invention amid the unrelenting march of technical improvement, where the meeting of diverse viewpoints ablaze the flames of innovation and uniqueness. However, in this world of infinite possibilities, the need for inclusion is much more pressing. Our idea of diversity must change in tandem with the digital landscape, encompassing the creation of inclusive environments that enable people to flourish and share their special gifts. Standing at the nexus of theory and practice, this study aims to solve the puzzle of workplace inclusion in the IT sector by examining the tactics, obstacles, and successes that influence diversity in this ever-changing field. By exploring the mutually beneficial link between diversity and innovation, the researchers attempted to shed light on the future while also igniting significant change and action by the management.

For every successful organization, their talented Human Resources act as a source of competitive advantage and it is crucial to draw in and hold on to the finest personnel, irrespective of the factor or factors influencing the diversity of the workforce. Additionally, creativity comes from all over the world, and businesses that value diversity can boost productivity by utilizing different viewpoints. Diversity is "all the ways in which we differ," (Hayles, 1996). According to him, the concept of variety is not limited to the categories of gender, color, and physical disability that are typically associated with it. In order to maintain a competitive advantage and achieve success, it is imperative to leverage the most crucial resource, which is labor skills. Given the growing significance of diversity in today's workplaces, we must broaden our perspectives and employ innovative approaches to achieve success. By following diversity trends, HR will guarantee that the company stays one step ahead of its rivals. Additionally, there is a strong correlation between diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as well as leadership.

Transformative Power of Workplace Diversity

Diversity in the workplace is characterized as acknowledging, valuing, and accepting individual differences in terms of colour, ethnicity, age, gender, physical and perceptual abilities, and sexual orientation. Diversity can mean different things to different people, but one thing is certain: one of the most important goals of the nation's most progressive organizations is to foster a culture that celebrates the diverse perspectives of people of all racial, age, gender, and educational backgrounds as well as those with physical disabilities.

Diversity in the workplace has an effect on how interpersonal interactions develop, both between employers and employees. According to Worman (2005), employees inside a company have varying levels of ambition, motivation, and sensitivity, and they base their performance on the rewards that their superiors have promised. Today's women is

more educated, independent, and capable of holding her own achievements against men. Ability and age have an impact on how people operate in an organization.

According to Rehman (2013), the company has a "melting pot" strategy for staff diversity, presuming that individuals with varied backgrounds, gender identities, ethnicities, or cultures would inevitably wish to adapt. Diversity in the workforce strengthens organizational culture and improves performance as well as the company's reputation. It is not only about recognizing individual differences; it is also about recognizing individual similarities despite the surface-level discrepancies between people. The wide range of variations in the workforce inspires creative ideas and solutions to overcome obstacles and accomplish goals. Clement (2009) states that "workforce diversity refers to organizations that are becoming more heterogeneous with the blending of individuals with different backgrounds in terms of gender, religion, age, race, and education."

Organizations should prioritize diversity and explore ways to expand their scope, as diversity has the potential to generate increased productivity, competitive advantages, and financial gains. "Effective diversity management in the organization ensures that each employee is valued for his or her culture, character, and skill, and makes them aware that they can fulfill their desire and can readily contribute to the firm's success, regardless of what caste, age, culture, religion, gender, and ethnicity they belong to," (Richard, 1999). Among the human resources tasks that are impacted include hiring, placement, inducting/orienting, training, and developing. Diversity in the workplace holds the department accountable for meeting legal requirements and creates a sense of responsibility in HR managers. Workplace diversity goals may include adjusting outreach or recruitment techniques to identify a diverse pool of qualified applicants. Even, when a company competes in international markets and targets business sectors that demand input from a variety of viewpoints, diversity can give it a competitive advantage.

However, according to research experts today, diversity cannot be left to chance; rather, it must be properly handled and well managed. If not, diversity may cause political disputes, social divides, and other issues, as well as cause an organization to fail, face legal action, and waste time resolving conflicts rather than being productive. In addition, undervaluing diversity can lead to wasted opportunities, ineffective marketing campaigns, strained relationships, and losses in revenue, productivity, and time. These days, managing diversity is a need rather than an option if you want to increase its uniqueness and expand its marketability.

A Symphony of Creativity: Harmonizing Diversity

In an era where competition is largely determined by innovation, adaptability, and creativity, diversity is essential to an organization's success. It is thought that effective diversity practices in HR improve both corporate and employee performance. Profits and good diversity practices are strongly correlated, according to recent studies. More innovation, a greater range of viewpoints, improved problem descriptions, more options, and better solutions are all made possible by diversity.

Since businesses must connect with a variety of clientele and cultural backgrounds, diversity is crucial in today's global marketplace. Every aspect of the business is impacted by this diversity management, which leads to increased creativity, original ideas, fresh perspectives, language proficiency, adaptability to a global context, and unique solutions to challenging issues. It also improves market insight, retention of staff, customer loyalty, productivity, and community involvement. Diversity promotes greater creativity, a broader range of viewpoints, improved problem definition, a greater number of problem alternatives, and efficient solutions. In order to reach a common goal, managing diversity entails taking advantage of and utilizing people's cultural differences in ideas, opinions, and creativity. The corporate community, suppliers, consumers, and shareholders are all impacted by internal diversity initiatives. Businesses that do not consider diversity and inclusion to be important may find it difficult to draw in and keep the kinds of workers and clients that make up our ever-changing global community. Inappropriate management of diversity can lead to increased employee turnover, communication problems, and interpersonal disputes within the organization. In general, it will be detrimental to the organization's performance, reputation, and profitability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on diversity in the workplace underscores its profound impact on organizational dynamics, particularly within the ever-evolving landscape of the IT industry in the digital age. Organizational culture is skillfully portrayed by Hofstede (1991) as an intricate web made of beliefs, language, and values, emphasizing the vital role that diversity management plays in fostering employee innovation and creating a competitive advantage (Adler, 1986). Building upon this foundation, McGath, Berdahl, and Arrow (1995) outlines workplace diversity into five distinct categories, ranging from demographic traits to organizational status, emphasizing its potential to enrich team dynamics and decision-making processes (Cox, 1994). Furthermore, Barry and Bateman's (1996) exploration of management strategies underscores the efficacy of network groups and training programs in navigating diversity-related challenges.

Meanwhile, McLeod (1996) underscores the indispensable nature of cultural diversity in strengthening worker performance and adapting to the demands of a globalized marketplace. Confirming this sentiment, Rosemary and Palma Rives (1998) extol the virtues of diversity management in cultivating robust work relationships and driving heightened productivity. Additionally, Schivardi and Viviano's (2011) research highlights the correlation between diversity in top management teams and enhanced financial returns and productivity. Similarly, Quesenberry and Trauth (2012) advocate for flexible organizational approaches to accommodate gender diversity in the IT sector. Barak's (2005) insights emphasize the universal benefits of diversity for organizations, positioning it as a strategic asset rather than a mere obligation. Baklid et al. (2005) further emphasize the positive impact of diversity on decision-making processes and client interactions, affirming its instrumental role in driving business success. Meanwhile, Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) lay emphasis on the imperative of cross-cultural experiences in grooming effective managers, while Ferner, Almond, and Coiling's (2006) findings suggest that diversity in group composition fosters enhanced cognitive processes and creativity. Finally, Henry and Evans (2007) contend that in an era defined by globalization, a diverse workforce isn't merely advantageous but imperative for organizational resilience and growth.

Objective of the study

Based on the detailed review of literature to the workforce diversity, its advantages and challenges and its association with creativity, the researchers were able to frame the following objectives of the study:

- To explore and understand the concept of Workforce Diversity.
- To compare the diversity and inclusion frameworks with reference to Wipro and HCL.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the attainment of the objectives of the study the researchers have undergone a qualitative approach of study, where the data has been collected from various secondary sources. Further to get a better understanding of the implementation of workplace diversity and inclusion in the IT sector, the study has delved deeper into the process of two IT giants named Wipro and HCL. Hence, the research method of this study depends on an extensive content and case analysis which is further explained.

Data Collection: Acquiring pertinent textual resources from reliable sources, including business websites, scholarly databases, and trade journals, was part of the systematic data collection process. To guarantee a thorough grasp of Wipro and HCL's diversity programs and practices, reports, articles, press releases, and other relevant papers pertaining to diversity efforts were gathered.

Secondary Sources: To get information and insights about workplace diversity in the IT sector, a great deal of emphasis was placed on secondary sources, such as scholarly publications, industry reports, and case studies. The theoretical frameworks, empirical discoveries, and best practices pertinent to the workplace diversity study issue were made clear by these secondary sources.

Data Analysis: The main methodological technique used to investigate workplace diversity in the IT sector, with a particular emphasis on Wipro and HCL, was content analysis. Using this method, textual documents like corporate reports, sustainability reports, press announcements, and articles about diversity initiatives inside the firms were carefully examined. The diversity strategies, procedures, and results of Wipro and HCL were examined using content analysis, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of their diversity initiatives on a number of fronts leading to a detailed case analysis of the two firms.

Case Analysis: Analyzing Wipro's diversity initiatives and practices began with the adoption of an organized ABCD (Advantages, Benefits, Constraints, Disadvantages) analytical approach. Furthermore, HCL's diversity initiatives and practices were analyzed in order to offer a comparison viewpoint with Wipro's methodology. In order to shed light on trends, patterns, and differences in diversity outcomes, a thorough comparison of workplace diversity indicators between Wipro and HCL was necessary for the subsequent data interpretation. A greater understanding of the relationship between diversity, organizational culture, and creativity in the digital era has been made possible by the insights gained from this thorough investigation about workplace inclusion and innovation in the IT sector.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The following section provides a detailed description of the analysis leading to the attainment of the objectives of the study. The analysis comprises of an extensive description of the workplace diversity in the IT sector, its pattern, benefits and challenges. Followed by a comparative case analysis of two IT giants Wipro and HCL. This case analysis emphasizes the different types of strategies adopted by the both the firms towards workplace diversity and its impact on the creativity and productivity of the technical workforce.

Workplace diversity in the IT industry

The workforce in the IT sector is diverse, consisting of workers from many nations, genders, age groups, races, languages, religions, and ethnic groups. The availability of education, changes in the social dynamics of different regional groupings, women's career orientation, etc., all contributed to the diversity of the IT workforce. In India, this is increasingly apparent now that globalization has occurred. The goal of globalization is the unrestricted flow of all resources, including cash, equipment, materials, and labor, to satisfy the demands of businesses. This caused people to relocate around the world in search of work in response to the need for certain abilities, which led to a diverse workforce across various firms. Over 5.4 million people were predicted to be employed in the Indian information technology and business process management sector in the fiscal year 2023. The nation in South Asia is the most popular place in the world for IT businesses to offshore their work. With its steady growth in recent years, the IT-BPM industry now makes up over 30% of the worldwide market for BPM outsourcing. The IT sector contributed 7.5% of India's GDP in the fiscal year 2023. With more than 36% of employees being women, the sector is essential in fostering diversity within the industry (Statista, 2023).

The Indian IT sector strives to establish a balance between gender diversity during the hiring process. The following are possible important variables that support a diverse workforce in the IT sector:

1. **Increased Educational Prospects:** Following globalization and liberalization, developing nations, like India, saw significant improvements in their technical education systems and educational infrastructure (Agarwal, 2006). People in India were able to obtain the qualifications needed to operate in the IT industry because of these educational options.
2. **Gender roles are changing** as a result of more women having access to education and being able to use their abilities. The hiring process in the IT sector offers equal opportunities to both genders and is the same for both. As a result, there are now more women working in the IT industry.
3. **Human resource mobility:** As MNCs, particularly those in the IT sector, began setting up shop in prospective markets in search of better opportunities, human resource movement also resulted. People must move to new regions all over the world as a result, expanding the variety of the workforce in the industry.

Case: Comparative Analysis

The researchers have tried to undergo an extensive case analysis of the two identified IT firms (Wipro & HCL) on their different strategic interventions related to Diversity and Inclusion.

WIPRO

Wipro is a leading worldwide provider of business process, IT, and consulting services. The company leverages emerging technologies, robots, cloud, analytics, hyper-automation, cognitive computing, and analytics to help consumers adapt to and make use of these tools in the digital age. Mohamed Premji founded the business on December 29, 1945, in Mumbai under the name "Western India Vegetable Products Limited," which was subsequently shortened to "Wipro." a well-known firm throughout the world for its broad range of commercial ventures, strong dedication to sustainability, and responsible corporate citizenship. Six continents are serviced by 175,000-bound staff. Wipro Limited, situated in Bangalore and ranked as the third largest company in India, is led by Azim Hasham Premji, the chairman and managing director of the company. The company is dedicated to maintaining its diverse business model and believes that its success in software and IT services, which make up nearly half of its sales, will determine its future. This growth has consistently outpaced that of other Wipro businesses.

Diversity and inclusion at WIPRO

In 2008, the Wipro Diversity & Inclusion program was formally launched. Promoting inclusivity is an essential aspect of the company; it has continued to be a focal point and a tactical facilitator for ensuring the global expansion of enterprises. Wipro boasts a varied clientele that encompasses different regions, eras, industries, and technical breakthroughs. To manage the increasing complexity of such a diversified clientele, it is imperative to develop a workforce capable of generating a rich mosaic of ideas that enhance originality and lead to higher revenues and more customer pleasure. According to the company, having a diverse workforce is essential to Wipro's operations since it promotes an inclusive culture that is advantageous to all parties.

Wipro has started a project dubbed "winspire" to accomplish the same, with creativity serving as a foundation. The principles of diversity and inclusion are deeply ingrained in Wipro's corporate values, philosophy, policies, and procedures, and the company is certain to become an equal-opportunity employer. Their COBC and Global Policy on Diversity & Inclusion fairly reflect the organization's commitment to non-discrimination and meritocracy. To develop a vision that motivates action, executive engagement and the society's involvement are necessary. The CEO, Executive Vice President of Human Resources, and Legal Counsel constituted the D & I Council, with President Mr.

Azim Premji serving as the primary signatory. As a member of the Catalyst Global Board of Directors and Chairman of the Catalyst India Advisory Board, the CEO encourages international stakeholders to advance gender equality in society at large.

Best practices of WIPRO

Wipro's diversity initiative is built upon four key pillars: nationality, gender, people with disabilities, and impoverished and disadvantaged communities.

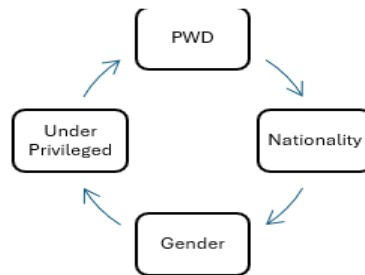


Figure 1: Diversions and Inclusion Framework at Wipro

Persons with Disabilities (PwD) Program: The six main policy areas targeted by Wipro's Persons with Disabilities (PwD) inclusion scheme are Education, Understanding, Recruitment, Accessible Information Systems, Attainable Infrastructure, and Education. The partnership with the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Centre (DEOC) included information sharing about workplace accessibility for employees with disabilities. The inception of this endeavor dates back to 2008. Wipro believes that people with disabilities should apply for every position, and it only hires people on the basis of merit. During the past four years, more than 440 employees have disclosed their disability. To assist the differently abled citizens, the company has also looked at a number of service, preparation, and awareness areas.

1. **Collaboration:** Wipro belongs to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Software and Services Companies National Association (NASSCOM), and the Indian Industry Confederation (CII). In addition to organizing inclusive campus hiring with JSS, Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Technology for Handicapped (AITH), and the National Institute of Speech and Hearing (NISH), it has run job fairs with CII and NGOs such as Sarthak, Capacity Base, and Empower India to help people with different skills find work opportunities. Wipro has partnerships with universities where individuals actively support and welcome students with disabilities.
2. **Barrier-Free Infrastructure:** An employee competition called "Breaking all barriers" allowed them to assess and recommend changes to Wipro's physical infrastructure. The National Center for the Promotion of Employment for the Disabled (NCPEDP) and Accessibility, India have drafted a new draft building code that incorporates international guidelines developed by the United Nations, "Accessibility for the Disabled: A Barrier Free Space Development Manual," into Wipro's Building Codes, which were previously based on the National Building Code 2005. All new advancements are based on these criteria.
3. **Barrier-free Communication:** Employees worldwide can utilize the "Kinesics" site to comprehend sign language methods and apply them to terms often used in the IT industry. It has been updated with an emphasis on improving accessibility to our information systems. To improve communication and interaction among employees, the "Inclusive" program was connected to the company's online enterprise social networking platform. A thriving group of workers with disabilities called Inclusive talks about the accessibility of IT-enabled apps and exchanges ideas and change requests. There are 230 workers on Inclusive's Yammer page.
4. **Engagement:** People with disabilities were given the chance to network at global forums. In 2015, one Wiproite from India was selected to represent the country at the UN, along with four other representatives. A young representative who was deaf gave a paper as part of the Youth Program run by Disabled People's International (DPI) at the Conference of State Parties at the UN in New York. The purpose of the special "Annual Global All Hands Meet" for Wipro's PwDs is to reward and recognize PwDs and their managers for their outstanding work and for helping Wipro become an inclusive workplace. It also serves as a platform for networking with industry experts in the field of disability.
5. **Advocacy:** Wipro provided support for disability projects and campaigns run by other independent entities. For instance, Wipro organized a Deal Foundation Campus Connect for students with visual impairment and funded the Ability Fest, a film streaming festival to create awareness in the disability region, in collaboration with the Ability Foundation. At the NHRD seminar in Kolkata, Wipro participated in a guest session featuring industry executives' perspectives on the topic of "Sourcing non-conventional skills makes business sense."

Nationality: Another crucial component of Wipro's understanding of becoming a truly global organization is its employment of professionals from all over the world to serve customers worldwide. To foster cultural sensitivity, the company has integrated cutting-edge internet resources such as "Globe Smart." Additionally, employees who are going to be working abroad are required to take part in a two-day course called the "Onsite Readiness Program," which covers cultural awareness. All members of the account team participate in specific culture sensitization classes in addition to the Onsite Readiness and Cross-Cultural Sensitivity agendas.

Gender diversity: One of the top IT companies in India, Company, developed a gender-inclusive approach with three guiding principles: empowerment, flexibility, and exposure. These principles drive women's requirements throughout their lives. Groups of decisive action known as "Women of Wipro," or WOW, were first established at each location and business unit under the direction of senior management. This program gives female executives at the organization a platform for a long-lasting career and allows them to channel their passion for personal and professional progress. In order to better address gender diversity, WOW has developed a segmented approach that prioritizes three key elements based on the life stage of the employee: In Life-stage I, Exposure: increasing ambition by making things more visible. Flexibility (Life-stage II): Possibility of expansion through the implementation of adaptable procedures and policies Empowerment (Life-stage III): Improving access to make an impact.

Stage 1: Early career stage exposure: The gender-sensitive organizational program seeks to provide equal employment chances for men and women as well as to create a more inclusive workplace. One of their numerous initiatives, the WOW speaker series, provides networking opportunities in addition to employment rotations that are done in an orderly fashion.

Stage 2: Flexibility (mid-career stage): The company offers specially designed programs to assist women in striking a balance between their personal and professional lives while still ensuring their careers advance. Maternity benefits and mandatory minimum terms are increased, and chances for re-entry following maternity leaves are provided, all in an attempt to support this endeavor.

Stage 3: Empowerment (advanced career stage): programs designed to help women grow in their careers so that they can do more enjoyable work. These initiatives include of career talks, leadership seminars, succession planning, and direct mentoring with upper management in addition to recognizing women in pipelines.

A separate website for the Women of Wipro initiative, Kids@wipro with particular programs for Wiproite children, mentoring, leadership development, WOW networking meetings, and exclusive workshops on diversity and inclusivity are just a few of the offerings in Wipro's unique curriculum. These initiatives support Wipro in establishing a welcoming and comfortable work environment where female employees can continue their jobs. The Corporate Diversity Council, which meets twice a quarter to supervise and offer feedback on the company's inclusion and diversity programs, is composed of senior executives, including the CEOs of Wipro's numerous projects.

Persons from Underprivileged Societies: According to the organization, providing opportunities for individuals from impoverished communities will increase the number of candidates and bring in a highly committed workforce. The essential tactics for expanding the niche.

- Work together with universities and colleges in smaller cities to increase recruiting.
- Work together with NGOs and foundations that provide graduates from disadvantaged communities with skill-building opportunities.
- Work together with state governments in regions such as the northeast to provide trainers with knowledge and instruction.

Table 1: WIPRO's Sustainability reports of diversity and inclusion

Years	Reports
2022-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.0% of women are in top management and senior leadership positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22.8% of women are in mid-management positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 144 nationalities • 769 disabled employees • 1699 employees belong to the LGBTQ+ community
2021-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.4% of women in top management and senior leadership positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.3% of women are in mid-management positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 137 nationalities • 705 disabled employees

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1136 employees belong to the LGBTQ+ community.
2020-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.3% of women in top management and senior leadership positions. • 17.5% of women are in mid-management positions. • 667 disabled employees • 998 employees belong to the LGBTQ+ community.

Source: https://www.wipro.com/content/dam/nexus/en/sustainability/sustainability_reports/sustainability-report-fy-2017-18

WIPRO’S ABCD analysis on Diversity and Inclusion

The following criteria can be used to assess a company's worth in society using the ABCD approach:

- Individual characteristics
- Framework characteristics
- Concept or idea effectiveness
- Strategy Effectiveness

Any type of case study about an organization can be conducted using the ABCD analytical methodology. This analytical methodology is easy to use and can be applied to a variety of business issues or problems in order to find a workable solution. It does this by breaking down the problems into smaller components and identifying the factors that influence them through factor analysis and critical elements through intermediate analysis.

Table 2: ABCD analysis of the diversity and inclusion of Wipro

Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innumerable opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool of talents • Economic development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced creativity • Decreased turnover
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved organizational culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High revenue • Improved business performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity and innovation • Benefits to the shareholders
Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost • Increased conflicts/grievances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological errors • Low productivity • Disruption of work
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication issues • Discrimination <p style="text-align: center;">Creates stress and tension among employee’s Conflicts/grievances</p>

Source: Aithal, P. S. (2017)

HCL:

HCL Technologies is a worldwide technology company of the future that assists organizations in reimagining themselves for the digital age, with its headquarters located in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. HCL Technologies Limited, also known as Hindustan Computers Limited, is a multinational technology business based in India. It is a subsidiary of HCL Enterprise. It began as an HCL research and development branch and became independent in 1991 when HCL entered the software services industry. HCL Technologies is listed among the Global 2000 by Forbes. With a market capitalization of \$18.7 billion as of May 2017 and a combined revenue of \$7.8 billion, including its subsidiaries in 2018, it is one of the top 20 largest publicly traded firms in India. HCL Technologies is present in 52 countries across the globe.

Workplace diversity at HCL

Respect for each person and fostering a sense of ownership among workers worldwide are values held by HCL Technologies. Everything we do is guided by our EFCS (Employees First, Customers Second) philosophy. HCL

Technologies' diverse workforce gives the company an overall culture score of 62 out of 100, which puts them in the bottom 35% of US companies with 10,000 or more employees for comparably diverse scores. The Diversity score offers information about how diverse workers perceive and evaluate their time spent at HCL Technologies in relation to several aspects of the company's culture. They guarantee equitable recruitment and retention possibilities regardless of gender, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnicity. They have a specialized diversity team that collaborates with numerous stakeholders to carry out a range of diversity and inclusion projects and programs throughout the organization.

HCL's Diversity Aspects

HCL employs 224,700 people from 167 different nations, therefore diversity is vital to the company. Diversity in ethnic backgrounds accounted for 45% of the workforce in 2023. Remarkably, women made up 27.2% of the population and accounted for 25% of leadership roles. Furthermore, thirty-one workers possessed unique skills. Gender, ethnicity, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, multiculturalism, disability, supplier diversity, and community interactions are all covered within HCLTech's global policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion. They work for a workplace where each person feels appreciated and respected through professional development initiatives and an inclusive culture.

Gender Diversity: At HCL gender diversity is a paramount focus, with the company striving for equitable representation across all organizational tiers. In 2023, the workforce saw a significant advancement in gender diversity, with women comprising 37% compared to 32% the previous year, marking a notable increase towards the 2030 target of 40%. Senior leadership positions also witnessed a remarkable 24% rise in gender diversity over the past five years, reaching 29.2% in 2023. This underscores HCLTech's dedication to cultivating gender-inclusive leadership, with a continued push towards achieving a 30% representation in senior roles by 2030.

Age Diversity: The capacity to work in a corporate setting with people of varying ages is known as age diversity. Nonetheless, age diversity in the workplace has not been as well-liked as gender diversity. Establishments are currently striving to preserve a delicate equilibrium among various age cohorts. They are also encouraging improved intergenerational communication. In India, generational diversity is a permanent feature. Nine years ago, the average age of an IT worker in India was twenty-three; today, it is thirty-nine. From the standpoint of generational diversity, the workforce will develop along with the industry. **Ability Diversity:** The fact that this company is actively seeking to hire more individuals with disabilities and is dedicated to creating an inclusive work environment that can meet their needs is truly remarkable. Each of these companies has taken steps to ensure workplace diversity and is providing the required physical infrastructure. Nevertheless, the outcomes have been inconsistent.

Nature & Purpose of Diversity & Inclusion at HCL:

The goal of HCL's Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) initiative is to strengthen the "Employee First" tenet by creating an inclusive workplace that values individual diversity and promotes respect for one another. HCL actively works to uphold and encourage inclusive behaviors that allow individuals from a range of backgrounds to engage, contribute, and grow in an equitable manner. Diversity and inclusion are included in all phases of talent management, including assessment, acquisition, growth, and retention. These phases are all part of the process of planning and monitoring.

Culturally inclusive: A setting that is balanced in terms of culture fosters diversity of opinion and, consequently, innovation. They facilitate cross-border collaboration and aid in integration. When tackling cultural diversity, the following resources are employed.

- Global Smart Tool- Learning Tool used for around 45 languages.
- Culturatti- Idea exchange events
- Symphony- Blog Forum
- Ask a Diversity Coach- 24/7 Coach (8 languages)

Gender Neutral: HCL Technologies, a multinational technology company, has implemented a three-tiered strategy to enhance gender diversity and inclusion results. This has greatly benefited the company and produced a number of favorable results.

The three key elements of HCL Technologies' gender diversity strategy are:

- Devoted leadership and persistent, broad advocacy to address unconscious bias in the workplace.
- Bringing in a number of stakeholders and guiding the agenda in accordance with the unit's diversity and inclusion goals; the framework is global, but the implementation is localized to meet the demands of various businesses and locations; 55% of women are employed as new hires; and
- Two enabling programs for women's leadership development which are based on formal mentoring to fetch more attention.

SCEND is the first program that aims to increase the number of women in senior management through various means, such as peer mentoring, coaching at all levels, and support programs. These programs offer platforms for women leaders to acquire and demonstrate transformational leadership skills.

The second program, dubbed "**Stepping Stones**," is a targeted professional development initiative designed to support mid-level female employees in their developmental path and assist them realize their potential and career goals. It focuses on providing new moms with guidance when they need it to handle the increased demands at work and home. Every month, on average, 160 women sign up for Stepping Stone counseling.

"**iBelieve HCL Women Connect**" seeks to promote a gender-neutral workplace by offering suitable policies and to involve and advance women via development activities. Here, the group offers life coach support, childcare on office grounds, and concierge services while coaching and counseling aspiring young women professionals by exchanging experiences on work/life priorities. Policies including work-from-home options, longer maternity leave, flexible job paths, and adjustable work schedules are also covered.

Under the "**Feminspiration**" program, which is run by the HCL Women Connect Affinity Network, prominent female leaders are invited to speak to staff members and share their opinions on gender issues and successful leadership techniques.

'**BlogHer**' is another internal program; it's an internal forum where a lot of topics related to gender-neutral regulations are discussed. These non-hierarchical, fruitful talks help employees and HCL dispel common misconceptions about gender, culture, and other topics in the workplace.

All of these have aided in the professional pursuit or resumption of jobs by young women, particularly those who take maternity leaves. In FY16, these sessions covered about 8023 employees. 24.5% of workers are women, which is a noteworthy accomplishment. There's a turning moment. 80% of the women employed by the corporation are in entry-level positions, with the remaining 20% being distributed throughout the ranks. About 15–18% of this 20% are first- or second-level managers; the remaining 20% are senior managers.

Closing Generation Gap

The organization is spending money supporting and enabling employee resource groups, where people of all ages come together to share interests and exchange ideas. Interactions between workers of different generations can occasionally be highly fruitful and provide a platform for knowledge and experience sharing. Because of India's demographic dividend, which sees the majority of the employable population fall below the 30-year age bracket, it makes sense that these enterprises would employ a younger workforce. It is challenging for firms to instill and foster the proper organizational ideals, nevertheless, if experienced workers are not retained at the top.

Based on the above analysis the comparative analysis between the IT firms – Wipro and HCL the consolidative findings from both the organizations are given below:

Findings from Wipro:

1. In 2020-2021, only 7.3% of top management positions at Wipro were held by women. By 2022-2023, this figure increased significantly to 17.0%. Similarly, the representation of women in mid-management roles rose from 17.5% to 22.8% during the same period.
2. Wipro's workforce comprises employees from 137 nationalities in 2021-2022, expanding to 144 nationalities by 2022-2023. This demonstrates a broader diversity in nationality, enriching the company with diverse perspectives and experiences.
3. The number of disabled employees at Wipro increased from 705 in 2021-2022 to 769 in 2022-2023, indicating the company's commitment to providing equal opportunities regardless of abilities.
4. Wipro's inclusivity extends to the LGBTQ+ community, with 1136 employees identifying as LGBTQ+ in 2021-2022. By 2022-2023, this number grew to 1699, showcasing Wipro's dedication to fostering an inclusive workplace where individuals can be their authentic selves.
5. Wipro's diversity and inclusion efforts have led to tangible benefits, including improved organizational culture, enhanced creativity, reduced turnover, and better business performance. These outcomes highlight the significance of diversity and inclusion as drivers of both business success and social progress.

Findings from HCL:

1. In 2023, HCL Technologies had 224,700 employees from 167 nations, with 45% representing diverse cultural backgrounds, highlighting the company's commitment to diversity and inclusivity.
2. HCL Technologies reported a global women workforce participation rate of 27.2% in 2021, an increase of 0.4 percentage points over 2020. In leadership roles, the representation of women was 25%, unchanged over 2020.

3. HCL's efforts in promoting ability diversity resulted in 5% of its workforce being individuals with disabilities in 2023, showcasing the company's dedication to fostering an inclusive environment.
4. HCL's global policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion covers gender, ethnicity, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, multiculturalism, disabilities, supplier diversity, and community engagements, ensuring equitable opportunities for all employees through various programs.
5. HCL actively addresses the generation gap by supporting employee resource groups and facilitating interactions between employees of different age groups, recognizing the importance of retaining experienced workers alongside the predominantly younger workforce in India.

5. DISCUSSION

The study further attempts to compare the workplace diversity initiatives of the two IT giants – Wipro and HCL. The detailed description of the same is highlighted in the following section.

Table 3. Comparison of workplace diversity initiatives: WIPRO vs. HCL:

Foundational Approach	
Wipro	HCL
<p>Wipro's foundational approach to diversity is anchored in its "Diversity & Inclusion" program launched in 2008.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The company emphasizes inclusivity as a strategic facilitator for global enterprise expansion, recognizing the importance of diverse perspectives in enhancing creativity and driving higher revenues. ○ Wipro's commitment to diversity is reflected in its corporate values, philosophy, policies, and procedures, which are designed to promote a culture of non-discrimination and meritocracy. 	<p>HCL's foundational approach to diversity is rooted in its "Employees First, Customers Second" (EFCS) philosophy.</p> <p>The company prioritizes equitable recruitment and retention opportunities regardless of gender, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnicity.</p> <p>HCL actively engages with stakeholders through a specialized diversity team to execute various diversity and inclusion projects and programs across the organization.</p>
Gender Diversity Initiatives	
Wipro	HCL
<p>Wipro has established the "Women of Wipro" (WOW) program aimed at empowering female employees throughout their career life stages.</p> <p>The WOW program focuses on exposure, flexibility, and empowerment, offering initiatives such as speaker series, employment rotations, maternity benefits, and career talks.</p> <p>Wipro has seen a significant increase in the representation of women in both top management and mid-management positions over the years, with 17.0% of women in top management positions in 2022-2023.</p>	<p>The organization prioritizes mentorship and professional development for women through two important programs, ASCEND and Stepping Stones, as well as leadership advocacy and stakeholder involvement in its gender diversity plan.</p> <p>To assist women in juggling work and family obligations, they provide all-inclusive support services like childcare, concierge services, and flexible work schedules.</p>
Disability Inclusion Programmes	
Wipro	HCL
<p>The Persons with Disabilities (PwD) program at Wipro consists of several activities that focus on recruitment, education, communication, engagement, accessible infrastructure, and advocacy.</p> <p>Wipro emphasizes barrier-free infrastructure and communication, with initiatives like the "Breaking all barriers" competition and the "Kinesics" site for learning sign language.</p> <p>They work with academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governmental bodies to promote</p>	<p>HCL is committed to creating an inclusive workplace for individuals with disabilities, with 5% of its workforce comprising people with disabilities in 2023.</p> <p>The company focuses on fostering an environment where all individuals, regardless of abilities, can succeed and contribute to the company's success.</p> <p>HCL is dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere for people with disabilities by providing suitable accommodations and support, even though</p>

inclusive employment practices and offer essential assistance to workers with disabilities.	their disability inclusion programs are not as well developed as Wipro's.
Cultural and Age Diversity	
Wipro	HCL
Wipro emphasizes cultural diversity through initiatives such as the "Globe Smart" tool, which facilitates cross-border collaboration and integration. The company recognizes the importance of age diversity and engages in programs like the "Annual Global All Hands Meet" to reward and recognize employees of all ages for their contributions.	HCL's workforce comprises employees from 167 nations, reflecting cultural diversity. The company actively addresses the generation gap by supporting employee resource groups and facilitating interactions between employees of different age groups, acknowledging the importance of retaining experienced workers alongside a predominantly younger workforce.
Measurement & Reporting	
Wipro	HCL
Wipro provides detailed reports on diversity and inclusion, including metrics such as the representation of women in leadership positions, the number of disabled employees, and LGBTQ+ inclusion. These reports demonstrate the company's commitment to transparency and accountability.	HCL also reports on diversity metrics, including cultural diversity, gender diversity, and disability inclusion. The company's global policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion covers various aspects of diversity and ensures equitable opportunities for all employees.

Source: Author

6. CONCLUSION

Diversity and inclusivity are essential to an organization's success in the fast-paced, intensely competitive commercial world of today. The success stories of HCL Technologies and Wipro show how inclusive workplace environments can be altered by recognizing diversity. Both businesses set a high precedent for others to follow by exhibiting a shared commitment to justice and diversity, notwithstanding any variations in their strategies and intentions.

Wipro's corporate culture is inextricably linked to its persistent commitment to diversity and inclusion. Wipro has established itself as a global pioneer in promoting equality across a range of aspects, including as nationality, gender, abilities, and sexual orientation, through its extensive "Diversity & Inclusion" initiative. The organization has demonstrated its unshakable dedication to equal opportunities for everyone via its programs that encourage LGBTQ+ inclusion, increase the number of women in leadership roles, and foster a welcoming atmosphere for those with disabilities. Wipro's emphasis on diversity and inclusion not only improves company performance, innovation, and corporate culture, but it also advances equality and inclusivity in the workplace, which advances society.

However, the "Employees First, Customers Second" tenet is the cornerstone of HCL Technologies' diversity and inclusion policy. With employees from 167 different countries, HCL understands the importance of utilizing a range of viewpoints and experiences. The firm has demonstrated its dedication to building an inclusive workplace where diversity is accepted and inclusion is ingrained at every level via its proactive activities to promote women, empower those with disabilities, and bridge generational barriers.

The promotion of women in the workplace has been a top priority for both Wipro and HCL. Wipro's "Women of Wipro" initiative emphasizes professional progression and assistance, while HCL incorporates gender equality within its larger diversity framework. Although Wipro has a longer history of implementing disability inclusion programs, HCL has also made great progress in this area and might use more work to catch up to Wipro's level of inclusivity. In terms of culture, both businesses value diversity; Wipro uses "Globe Smart" solutions to facilitate cross-border cooperation, while HCL has a staff that is diversified around the world. Both businesses also recognize the importance of age diversity, finding a balance between young enthusiasm and experience. Integrity and accountability are the defining characteristics of Wipro's and HCL's diversity programs. These businesses show their dedication to fairness and inclusion by offering thorough reports on diversity indicators, which also enable ongoing development and enhancement of their programs.

In conclusion, Wipro and HCL Technologies are excellent examples of companies that view inclusion and diversity as strategic imperatives. Even while they may take different tactics, they are all clearly committed to creating inclusive settings where each person feels respected and empowered. Wipro's well-established disability inclusion programs and

thorough reporting create a high bar for accountability, while HCL's worldwide diversity initiatives and expansive philosophy demonstrate a strong commitment to fairness and inclusion. Both businesses paved the path for more diverse, egalitarian, and inclusive workplaces by their unwavering commitment to and improvement of diversity efforts. They also provided an encouraging example for others to follow in the quest for a more inclusive future.

Organizations that view diversity and inclusion as strategic benefits rather than merely a legal requirement position themselves for long-term success, enhanced resilience, and a more equitable society. As a result, businesses that value diversity of opinion not only thrive in a constantly shifting environment, but they also pave the way for a more successful and inclusive future for everybody.

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