

Thinking Differently about Diversity: A Literature Review

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Abstract : Conventions No. 100 and 111 of the International Labor Organization, passed in 1951 and 1958 respectively, established the principles of equal pay for men and women for work of equal value and freedom from discrimination in employment. Governments of different countries followed suit. For example, in 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed in the United States and in 1972, Canada ratified Convention 100. Thus, laws were enacted and programs were implemented to combat discrimination in the workplace and, over time, more than 90% of the member countries of the International Labour Organization have ratified these conventions by implementing programs such as employment equity in Canada aimed at groups recognized as being discriminated against in the labor market, including women. Although legislation has been in place for several decades, employment discrimination has not gone away. In this study, we pay particular attention to the hidden side of the effects of employment discrimination. This is the emergence of subtle forms of discrimination that often fly under the radar but nevertheless, have adverse effects on the attitudes and behaviors of members of targeted groups. Researchers have identified two forms of racial and gender bias. On the one hand, there are traditional prejudices referring to beliefs about the inferiority and innate differences of women and racial minorities compared to White men. They have the effect of confining these two groups to job categories suited to their perceived limited abilities and can result in degrading, if not violent and hateful, language and actions. On the other hand, more subtle prejudices are more suited to current social norms. However, this subtlety harbors a conflict between values of equality and remnants of negative beliefs and feelings toward women and racial minorities. Our literature review also takes into account an overlooked part of the groups targeted by the programs in place, senior workers, and highlights the quantifiable and observable effects of prejudice and discriminatory behaviors in employment. The study proposes a hybrid model of interventions, taking into account the organizational system (employment equity practices), discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, and the type of leadership to be advocated. This hybrid model includes, in the first instance, the implementation of initiatives aimed at both promoting employment equity and combating discrimination and, in the second instance, the establishment of practices that foster inclusion, the full and complete participation of all, including seniors, in the mission of their organization.

Keywords : employment discrimination, gender bias, the hybrid model of interventions, senior workers

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