

7.1 Gender Stereotypes

In this lesson you will learn :

1. Understand the meaning of gender stereotype
2. Identify the different gender stereotypes in our daily lives
3. Understand how these stereotypes affect our daily lives

What do you know about the meaning of the words gender, sex and stereotypes?

Thinking
Box

Let's learn about the meaning of gender stereotype

What is gender?

When we fill any application form, we need to mention our sex as: male / female / other.

In some places the words sex and gender are used as if they mean the same thing. But they are not! Let us understand the difference between 'sex' and 'gender'.

Sex refers to our physical body and the sexual organs that we are born with. Gender refers to the the expectations that society has from people based on their sex.

For example: A person born as a boy should be masculine, or manly. A person born as a girl should be feminine, or girly.

So, sex is what we are born with, while gender is what society expects and forces us to be! Transpersons are people who are born in one sex, but they know that they belong to another sex. A born male can convert into a female person. A born female can convert into a male person. Transpersons can choose the gender they want to belong to. It is an absolutely natural process.

What do we mean by 'stereotype'?

Stereotype refers to an idea or understanding held by a lot of people about something or someone. It is an idea or belief which may not be true. **For eg: Rice is white in colour.**

Pacific Club

Membership Application

Name: _____

Gender: Male Female Other

Birthday: _____

Email: _____

Mobile: _____ Telephone: _____

Membership options :

1 month

6 months

1 year

2 years

3 years

Special option:

Senior citizen

Student

Payment: _____ Date: _____ Sign: _____

20, Gandhi Nagar, opposite Dmart, Mumbai 200110
Contact: +91 8978654321 | www.pacificclub.com

This is a stereotype - A statement that may be true some of the time, but definitely not all of the time. So, 'Gender Stereotype' refers to fixed ideas or thoughts that society or people have about someone based on their sex.

Why is this a stereotype? It is true. I have only seen white rice.

Yes, some types of rice are white in colour and you may only have seen them. However, there are also black, red and other colours of rice.



Are gender stereotypes harmful?

Gender stereotypes can be harmful and hurtful. They force people to behave in a certain way even when it's harmful for them. It can even stop people from living how they like, or doing what they enjoy. For example, in the past, women were not allowed to become pilots. However, some brave women fought against society and broke the stereotype! Now it is common to see successful women pilots.



Think of 2 common gender stereotypes you have seen in any film or TV show you have seen. Write them below.

1. _____
2. _____

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Let's learn to identify the different gender stereotypes in our daily lives

Hasina, Sunil and Pringchi are 3 friends studying in ITI, Mumbai. One day, Pringchi was angry and upset. She is talking to her friends, Hasina and Sunil.

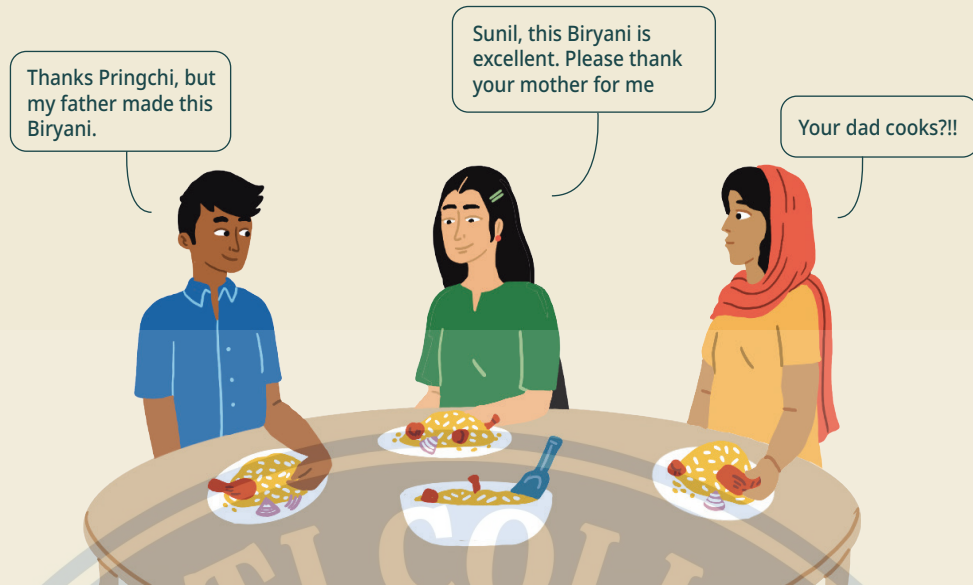
This is a common stereotype - Certain jobs are for men and certain for women.

Hi, Pringchi. How was your interview for A.C technician?

It was bad. They said that even though I am qualified, they can't give me the job because I am a woman and I will not be able to go to different shops and houses for repairs!

Oh no! That's unfair and wrong!





This is another common stereotype - Women cook for the family and men work outside.

Some other common stereotypes are:

1. Girls are good at language and biology. Boys are good at math and science
2. Boys are not good at arts and crafts. Girls are not good at sports
3. Women are better at taking care of children than men
4. Men are better leaders than women

Certain stereotypes sometimes refer to physical appearances too.

Eg: Women are expected to be slim and fair while Men are expected to be tall and muscular



Sadly, all of us experience gender stereotypes. What are a few stereotypes YOU have experienced in your life?

Let's learn about how gender stereotypes affect our daily lives

All of us would have been told to behave in a certain way, because of our sex. As a boy, you may have been asked to not cry, not help your mother in the kitchen etc. As a girl, you may have been asked not to play sports, be shy and not speak or shout loudly. As a transperson, you may have been questioned, made fun of or hurt by others.

See this table to understand how gender stereotypes have a strong effect on our life.

Gender stereotype	Impact(s)
Women are soft-spoken and forgiving	Many women go through emotional and physical abuse because they are not expected to raise their voices.
Men should not cry	Boys are discouraged from expressing their emotions, sometimes leading to other emotional health issues.

Women should stay at home and take care of the family	Women are often not educated well and discouraged from working, especially after marriage.
Men are strong, can fight and like to play sports	Men who are soft spoken, don't like to fight etc. are often harassed, called nicknames or insulted at school or work.
Transpersons are not normal or real	Transpersons feel harassed, stressed and extremely unsafe in our world.

How do gender stereotypes spread?

Stereotyping begins the moment a child is born. From the clothes they wear, to the toys they play with, everything has an influence.



As we grow up, comments from society, the movies and serials we watch, the books we read, the advertisements on TV, they all make these stereotypes stronger.

What can we do to address gender stereotypes?

Once you start to observe, you will realize that gender stereotyping is all around us. As a responsible youth, here are some simple ideas to stop or reduce this

- **Talk about it:** With your friends, classmates and family members. Point it out in real life, in media/ social media, in books and in advertisements. Help people around realize this is a serious issue.
- **Lead by example:** Try and stay away from gender stereotyping yourself so that those around you are inspired by you.
- **Act:** If you see someone suffering as a result of gender stereotyping, try and support them in whatever way you can.

Activity Time!

In your house, make a list of all the activities carried out by the members of your family. Do you think there is gender stereotyping in your family too?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

**What I learnt today:**

Put a ✓ if you know this topic well.

1. Sex refers to our physical body and the sexual organs that we are born with.
2. Gender refers to the the expectations that society has from people based on their sex.
3. Gender Stereotype refers to fixed ideas or thoughts that society or people have about someone based on their sex.
4. Gender stereotypes can limit people's capacity to grow as an individual, make life decisions and pursue career interests.
5. We can reduce gender stereotyping by talking about it and by helping people suffering as a result of it.

7.2 Understanding Gender Based Discrimination

In this lesson you will learn :

1. What is discrimination
2. What is gender based discrimination

Have you ever felt that society treats men and women differently? Please describe the event that made you feel so.

Thinking Box



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Let's learn the meaning of discrimination

When someone is treated differently due to their sex, gender, caste, religion, skin colour, income level, abilities, etc, it is called discrimination. Discrimination can lead to division of people, communities and families. It affects the feeling of unity, respect and harmony in society.



Have you seen this happen? In the above example, we can see the following forms of discrimination

1. Discrimination based on marital status. Married Vs. Bachelor
2. Discrimination based on employment - Working Vs Student
3. Discrimination based on abilities - Marks



You must be familiar with such advertisements. Can you list the various types of discrimination in the above example?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

While discrimination is generally negative, it is not always so. For example, what do you do when you see an old person or a pregnant lady standing in the bus? You generally offer them your seat. This is a case of positive discrimination. When discrimination is done to help someone in need, that is positive discrimination.

Let's learn about gender-based discrimination

We have discussed the meaning of gender in the previous lesson. Gender based discrimination refers to discrimination on the basis of gender.

Consider the following situations:

Sindhu and Amandeep are both equally qualified mechanical engineers. They have both applied to the same car making company for a job. Amandeep gets the job. Later, the HR manager tells Amandeep *"everyone believes men are better engineers than women"*.

John and Meera are both equally qualified nursing graduates. They have both applied to the same hospital for a job. Meera gets selected. Later the HR manager tells Meera, *"I think women are better nurses than men"*.

The above two stories are examples of gender based discrimination in employment.

Gender based discrimination can be found in many sectors. It applies to both - men and women. However, we see that women face more discrimination in society.

Some examples below:

In Education

In India, the number of boys/men who can get education is much higher girls/women. Statistics show us that as education levels increase from School, College, Degree to Masters Degree - there is a drop in female education. Gender is the most important reason for this to happen. Many Indian families still think that educating a girl child is a waste of money.

In Nutrition

In India, more girls under the age of 5 are malnourished than boys. While there are many reasons for this, gender is the most important one. Many Indian families, especially poor ones, prioritise the health of boys over girls.



Can you list some more examples of gender based discrimination? If you need help, go online and search for 'gender based discrimination examples'.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Let's learn why gender-based discrimination exists

There is no one reason for this. Many factors work together leading to this

1. **Social Norms:** In India, gender based discrimination is followed because people still follow old traditions. Moving away from these traditions is not accepted by society, due to fear.
2. **Education:** Many people in India, especially adults, are not educated. This often leads to older ways of thinking about what men and women should do.
3. **Poverty:** Women, especially when uneducated, often have no income. Unfortunately, even if they earn, they do not have control of the finances. This increases their dependency on others. This also reduces their freedom.
4. **Lack of awareness:** People are often unaware of their rights. This prevents them from claiming their rights or their share.

Do you know?

In India, citizens are protected against discrimination as per Article 15 and 16 of the Constitution. Article 15 states that the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds only of race, caste, religion, gender or place of birth.

Article 16 states that all citizens will have equal opportunity for employment under the state.

Let's learn what we can do

Let's talk about it with people around us. We can help them realize this is a serious issue.

- Let's not discriminate on the basis of gender ourselves
- Let's try and help those who have been discriminated against

**Activity
Time!**

Have you ever faced gender discrimination in your life? Have you ever seen gender discrimination happening around you? Note down below.

What I learnt today:

Put a ✓ if you know this topic well.

1. When someone is treated differently due to their sex, gender, caste, religion, skin colour, income level, abilities, etc, it is called discrimination.
2. Gender based discrimination refers to discrimination on the basis of gender.
3. Social norms, Lack of Education, Poverty and Lack of Awareness are the reasons why Gender based discrimination exists in India.
4. We can prevent gender based discrimination by making the change in our own thoughts, belief and actions

7.3 Gender Equality

In this lesson you will learn :

1. The meaning of Equality and Gender Equality
2. Importance or Necessity of Gender Equality
3. Relationship between gender equality and career development

Do you think that all jobs can be done by men and women equally? If yes, why do you think so? If no, why do you think so?

**Thinking
Box**



Let's learn what Equality means

Equality means that in the same situation, people should be treated in the same way. This means that they have the

- same rights
- same status
- same opportunities





We learnt that equality means equal treatment. But equality is also about fair & correct actions, based on past experiences. Equality means understanding that some people have experienced discrimination. Such people deserve and need more help than others for things to become equal now.

For eg: Some people are born different and need extra support. Only then can they achieve their full potential.



What is the extra support needed by the above students?



Do you think that providing this extra support is against equality?

Yes No

Therefore, a better way to explain equality is - Providing people with the rights and opportunities that can help them all achieve the same results. Even if the results are not the same, the chance to achieve it should be similar.

Let's learn about Gender Equality

Gender equality means that no matter what their gender is - all people have the same rights, access to resources and opportunities.

As we learned in the last lesson, discrimination on the basis of gender exists in our society. Therefore gender equality has to be more than just the same opportunities for men and women. It means extra efforts to ensure that women and men have the chance for similar results.

What would be examples of some of these extra efforts?

No.	Discrimination	Possible extra efforts
1.	Girls lack nutrition compared to boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring participation of girls in government nutrition schemes such as mid-day meals. Providing additional nutritional supplements to girls where necessary
2.	Boys and girls are discouraged from studying certain subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing awareness about career opportunities Opening institutes for girls where they can study these subjects
3.	Female enrollment reduces in higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counseling parents to allow their daughters to pursue higher education Providing scholarships in higher education to needy female students



In the previous lesson, you were asked to search for examples of gender based discrimination. Write below the extra efforts needed to compensate for them.

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No.	Discrimination	Possible extra efforts
1.		
2.		
3.		

Let's learn why Gender Equality is important

Equality is a basic human right. It is protected by our constitution also. It saves lives. Equal access to healthcare and nutrition ensures good health of children and mothers. It reduces poverty. Where both genders have the right to work, and to equal pay, the family income will rise.



There are many more such advantages to gender equality. Try searching for 'importance of gender equality' online and write down additional points below.

Let's learn about the relationship between Gender Equality and Career Development

The influence of gender on career starts from education.

Boys are encouraged to study subjects such as science and maths. Girls are expected to study subjects like arts and social sciences. Often, this choice is not related to the students' interest or abilities. It is just expected by society.

When it comes to jobs, girls are encouraged to take jobs such as teaching, nursing, administration, etc. Boys are considered bread winners and pressured to look for higher paying jobs, sometimes out of their hometown.

Women sometimes have to leave their jobs and move, after marriage. This can cause breaks in their career. They usually also have more responsibilities in taking care of children and family. Due to these reasons, women do not get the promotions they deserve. This affects their career development.

There is also one more important difference when it comes to career. Women and men are often not paid the same salary for the same job. This is known as the wage gap and is a very serious issue!

When women are educated and work, the healthcare, nutrition and education level of the whole family improves.

When everybody has the right to follow their interests and select the career they want, then we will achieve equality!

Do you know?

Article 16 of the Indian constitution protects people from gender discrimination in employment. It states that all citizens will have equal opportunity for employment under the state.

Activity Time!

Talk to some people, as listed below.

Classmates - Male and female

Adults over the age of 40 - Female and Male

Adults over the age of 60 - Female and Male

Ask them the following questions

1. Are you working or have you worked before?
2. What was your career? Why did you leave your job?
3. Is this the career you wanted? If not, what was the career you wanted? Why did you not follow that career?
4. What was the income you earned? Was it the same for all people in that role, no matter the gender?

Analyze the answers and see if you can draw any conclusions.



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What I learnt today:

Put a ✓ if you know this topic well.

1. Equality is providing people with the rights and opportunities that can help them all achieve the same results
2. Gender equality means that no matter what their gender is - all people have the same rights, and access to resources and opportunities.
3. Equality is a basic human right. It is also protected by our constitution.
4. When women are educated and work, the healthcare, nutrition and education level of the whole family improves.

7.4 Diversity in Workplace

In this lesson you will learn :

1. Meaning of diversity in the workplace
2. Importance of diversity in the workplace
3. Barriers to diversity
4. How to overcome these barriers

Read the questions below and pick your options:

Q1. When you meet people from a different city, state or country, what do you do?

- Talk to them / Curious to know more about them /
 Make fun of them / Dislike them / Respect them

Q2. When you meet people from a different gender or transgender persons, what do you do?

- Talk to them / Curious to know more about them /
 Make fun of them / Dislike them / Respect them

Q3. When you meet persons with different types of disability what do you do?

- Talk to them / Curious to know more about them /
 Make fun of them / Dislike them / Respect them

**Thinking
Box**

Let's learn the meaning of diversity

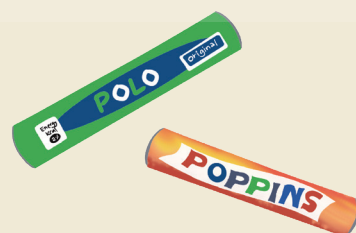
Diversity means that something is made of different types of units. Eg: A roll of Poppins candy has diverse colours and flavours whereas Polo is all the same.

Diversity in the workplace would refer to an organization where people of different sex, gender, caste, class, age, physical appearance, education, abilities and more work together.

Diverse workplace is a place where employees from different backgrounds are hired and they work in a safe and respectful environment.

Look around your classroom at your classmates and teachers. What kind of people are there in your classroom? Boys and girls? Tall people and short people? These are obvious differences.

Can you notice some more slightly less obvious differences?



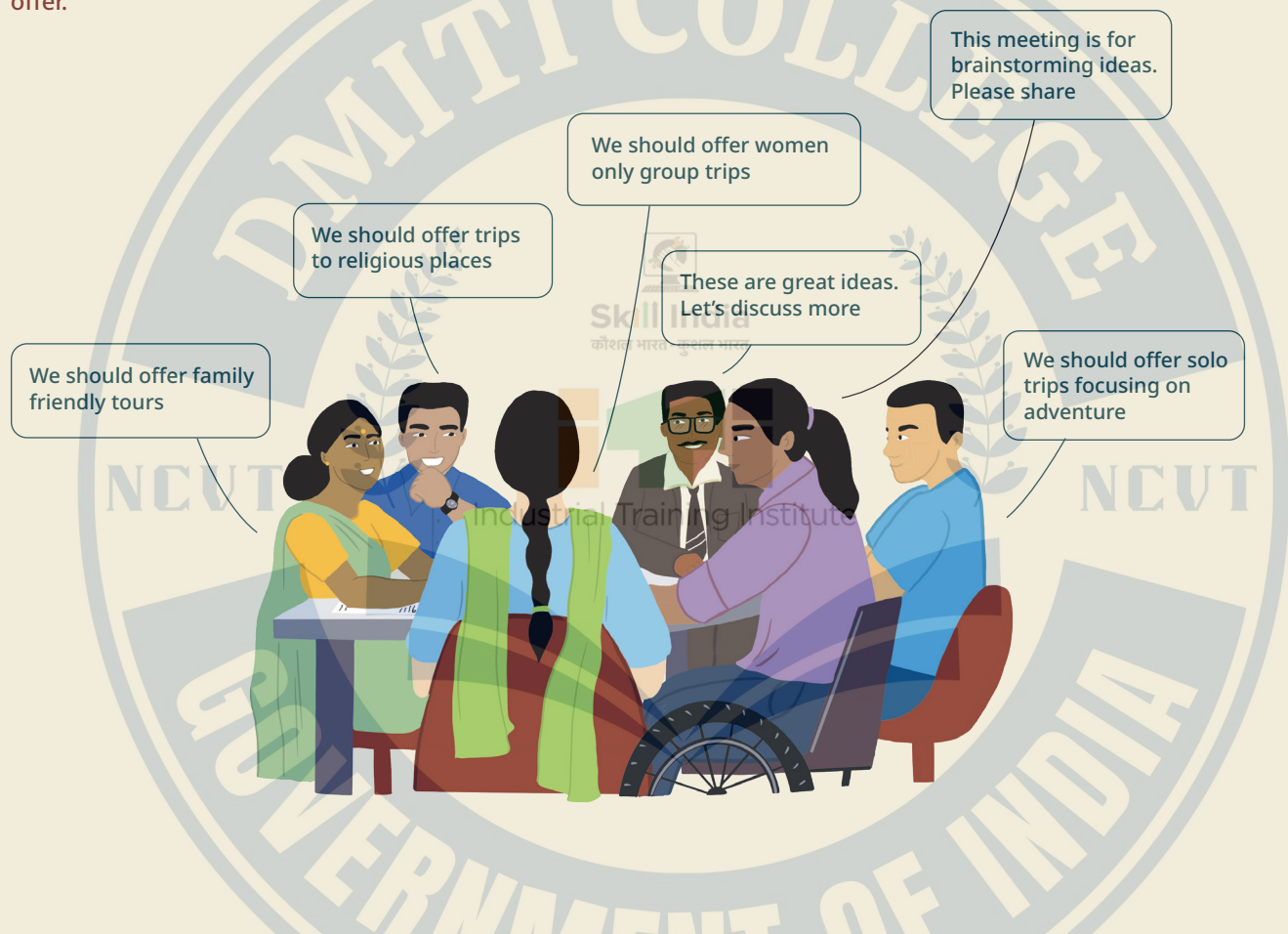


Write down some more differences you can note below.... (Hint: Language, Economic Background, Skills etc)

Four horizontal lines for writing.

Let's learn the importance of diversity in the workplace

Shaheen and Arun run a travel company. They are having a meeting regarding what travel packages to offer.



- 1. A diverse workplace brings together people with different perspectives. This increases creativity and innovation. This leads to more customers.

Suresh is on call with an international tech support helpline. His English is not very strong and he is not able to explain his problem well. The support person, Ryan, transfers his call to his colleague Leela who understands Hindi. Suresh explains his problem confidently and it gets solved. Suresh now recommends this company to all of his friends.

- A diverse workplace not only increases the number of customers but also the chances for customer satisfaction. When a team is diverse the range of people they can connect with is wider.

Thanks for talking to our customer in Telugu Leela. It really helped us get a very good deal for South India.



You are welcome, Ryan. When we speak in the local language, customers show a positive response.

- A diverse workplace increases productivity by ensuring the right person gets the right task.
A diverse workplace increases productivity by ensuring the right person gets the right task.



In the space below, write down some more advantages to having a diverse workforce. If you need help, try searching for 'advantages of having a diverse workforce' online.



Let's learn about the various barriers to diversity

If there are so many advantages to having a diverse workforce, why don't all organizations have one?

There are many barriers or obstacles to having a diverse workforce. It is not easy for people to be comfortable with those who are different from them. This leads to conflicts which ultimately affect the work.

Barriers to diversity are due to lack of understanding and respect for others. **This happens because of:**

No.	Barrier	Reasoning
1.	Prejudice	People often discriminate against others who are different from them. Eg: For many years, certain communities practiced untouchability against other communities and would refuse to work, eat or interact with them.
2.	Cultural Differences	In India, we usually call each other Sir or Madam? In modern offices, everyone calls each other by name. Their age, status or position do not matter. This is a cultural difference and sometimes this leads to conflict.

3.	Additional facilities	A diverse workforce may require more infrastructure. Eg: hiring a person with disabilities or a person from the third gender may require construction of new washroom facilities.
4.	Communication/ Language	There are many languages in India. All of them are equally important. When the company only communicates or respects one language, it makes others feel excluded. Many people make fun of those who cannot speak in English or Hindi. This is another cause for conflict and pain.
5.	Generation Gap	People from different generations think differently. Older people may find technology hard to use. At such times they get discriminated against by youngsters. Similarly, youngsters in an office think and work differently than older employees. This can create issues.

Let's learn how to overcome barriers to diversity in the workplace

1. Make diversity an organizational policy

What does this mean? Just like every workplace has a leave policy, it should also have a diversity policy. This policy should encourage hiring diverse people. After hiring, the policy should also explain how to work with different types of people from different backgrounds in a respectful way.

2. Provide Training

It is natural for people to have difficulties in communicating with and accepting those who are different from them. The right training helps people to accept and respect others.

3. Be vocal about being a diverse workplace

Make it clear that the organisation promotes diversity. This will encourage a greater pool of talented people to apply. It will also ensure that all employees have the right expectations.

4. Lead from the top

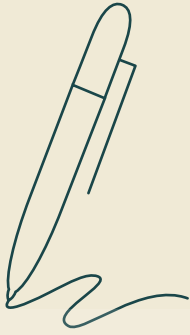
The top most members of the organisation must also be diverse. This means that leadership positions are also filled by a diverse group of people - women, men, transgender people.

Activity Time!

Carefully observe your institute. Would you say that it is a diverse workplace?

Yes No

Note down the various factors that support diversity and the factors that are a barrier to diversity in your institute.



What I learnt today:

Put a ✓ if you know this topic well.

1. Diversity in the workplace would refer to an organization where people of different sex, gender, caste, class, age, physical appearance, education, abilities and more work together.
2. Diverse workplace is a place where employees from different backgrounds are hired and they work in a safe and respectful environment.
3. Benefits of a diverse workplace are: increased profit, better customer satisfaction, innovation and mutual respect.
4. Barriers to diversity are due to lack of understanding and respect for others.

7.5 Inclusion in the Workplace

In this lesson you will learn:

1. Meaning of inclusion in a workplace
2. Importance of inclusive workplaces
3. Creating inclusive workspaces



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What do you understand by the words “inclusion” and “workplace”? Please describe in your own words below.

**Thinking
Box**

Let's learn about inclusion in the workplace

In the previous lesson, we discussed diversity in the workplace. We spoke about its importance and advantages. In this lesson, we take the discussion forward.

Inclusion simply means the act of including. For example, when you celebrate Eid, Christmas, Navroz or Diwali, you include all our neighbors from different religions. The practice of including people with respect and love is called inclusion.

Inclusion in the workplace has a few important rules. **Let's understand.**

Company A and B are very keen on hiring women who have recently been on maternity break (break after childbirth). They actively hire such qualified candidates.

But a majority of these employees from Company A left their jobs soon. The employees were asked why they left.

They said that the company did not have any day care facilities for children. Therefore, it was difficult for them to take care of their children and they had to leave.

When the CEO of company A found out about this, she said, "Childcare is not our business. They have to deal with that themselves"

The CEO of Company B had created a day care center for babies in the office. This helped male and female employees with small children to manage their kids and jobs well.



Q1. Which of the two companies are diverse?

A B Both

Q2. Which of the two companies are inclusive?

A B Both

Both companies A & B are diverse, however only B is truly inclusive. Company A hired women to be diverse. But they were not inclusive in their practice and policy.

Inclusion in a workplace happens when every member of the company gets the same chances to grow in their careers. People with disabilities, women, transgender people, sexual minorities, people from lower class are usually excluded from the workplace. Inclusion means to actively include all the people by providing additional support systems for those who need them.

Inclusion in the workplace can even be from the smallest details such as language. **Eg:** Chairperson instead of Chairman or Chairwoman

Examples of inclusion:

1. A children's day care facility
2. For people with physical disabilities, the workplace must provide special facilities for transportation.
3. Special bathrooms for transgender persons



Can you think of some more such examples of active inclusion in the workplace?

(Hint: Holidays, Prayer breaks, Braille)

Let's learn the importance of inclusive workplaces

In the previous chapter we discussed the advantages of having a diverse workforce.

Suresh is on call with an international tech support helpline. His English is not very strong and he is not able to explain his problem well. The support person keeps asking him to be clear. Suresh gets frustrated and hangs up. Suresh now tells all his friends not to use that company.

Later that day

Oh, you should have asked Leela to help. She knows Telugu.

I had a difficult client today who couldn't speak English at all. Seems like he only knew Telugu.

I doubt Leela could have solved the problem anyways. She has been hired just to add diversity of women to this team. Anyways the man should have known to speak English!

If an organisation is not inclusive, an atmosphere of respect will not exist. Employees may discriminate against each other. Employees may hesitate to speak up and share their ideas.

Inclusivity is the magic ingredient that can make a company truly diverse and alive. Think of diversity as a bulb. Inclusivity is the electricity necessary to make the bulb glow.

Finally for the employee, an inclusive workplace is essential for happiness and growth at work.



Let's learn how to create inclusive workplaces

Some of the steps that can be taken for an Inclusive Workplace are

- 1. Inclusive leadership:** The leadership team at an organisation must be inclusive. This means that
 - they must be diverse
 - they must be inclusive themselves
 - they must understand the importance of an inclusive workforce
- 2. Policies aimed at Inclusion:** Inclusion must be incorporated into every step of the organizations working
 - Hiring to be diverse and inclusive at all levels
 - Promotions and growth to be inclusive
 - Equal pay for equal work
 - Culture specific holidays
- 3. Celebrate Diversity:** This could be through celebrating different festivals, sharing food etc.
- 4. Training:** All employees at all levels should receive training on inclusion, its importance and how to support it

5. Design: Design your physical workplace to be sensitive to people’s needs. Simple changes can make huge differences.

A few examples are:

- Use ramps instead of/along with stairs - accessible for elderly and wheel chair/crutch users
- Make signboards large. Use multiple languages and contrasting colours - easy to use for visually challenged
- Wide doors with lever handles that people can use even without full mobility in their hands
- Adjustable tables and chairs for people of all sizes
- Multi sensory safety alarms: **Eg:** a typical fire alarm siren would not be effective for a person with hearing difficulties. We may have to also include flashing lights.

6. Constantly evaluate: Check if your organisation is truly inclusive. Examples for this could be:

- Are all employees sharing their ideas in meetings?
- Do some employees cut off others while they are speaking?
- Is work assigned fairly among all employees?
- Are chances at leadership positions offered equally to all deserving employees?

Activity Time!

Observe your classroom for all of today. Is your classroom inclusive? Use some of the indications shared in the chapter to check. Write down your observations below.



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What I learnt today:

Put a ✓ if you know this topic well.

1. Inclusion in a workplace happens when every member of the company gets the same chances to grow in their careers.
2. Inclusion means to actively include all the people by providing additional support systems for those who need them.
3. If an organization is not inclusive, an atmosphere of respect will not exist. Inclusion is essential for happiness and growth at work.
4. Some ways to create inclusion in workplace are: leadership, policy, cultural practices, mutual respect, office design etc.

7.6 Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace [POSH]

In this lesson you will learn :

1. Meaning of sexual harassment in the workplace
2. Provisions of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act
3. Do's and Don'ts under POSH Act

What do you think Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act covers? Pick 1 option.

- Safety from violence
- Safety for women from sexual harassment
- Prevention of accidents
- Childcare at the workplace

**Thinking
Box**

Let's learn about Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act

The Indian government passed the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act in 2013. In simpler terms, it is often called the Prevention of Sexual Harassment or POSH Act.

Let's learn what is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is a serious issue that affects an individual's mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. It also affects people's ability to perform effectively in the workplace.

POSH Act defines sexual harassment as any one or more of the following unwelcome Acts or behaviours committed directly or indirectly against a woman in the workplace.

- Physical advances and contacts
- Demands or requests of sexual favours
- Showing pornography
- Passing of sexually coloured remarks
- Directly or indirectly offering preferential treatment in employment
- Directly or indirectly threatening unfavourable treatment in employment
- Directly or indirectly threatening future employment prospects
- Creating a hostile work environment or constant interference in work
- Humiliating treatment likely to affect health and safety

Meena comes to office in the company cab. She spends the entire morning in the office. She goes to lunch with her colleagues. She goes to another office as part of her work. She returns home in the company cab.

In the above example, throughout the day, Meena is under the protection of the POSH Act.

Under this Act, there is a wide definition of the term workplace.

Workplace = office space + all the places visited by an employee for the purpose of work + the transportation provided by the employer

Workplace = Any place related to work

The A.C at Alice's office is stuck at 16 degrees. She calls the repair person from the AC company to come fix it. When the repair person comes, Alice explains the problem to him and tells him that everyone is feeling cold. The repairperson tells her to come close to him and she will feel hot.

1. Do you think the repairperson sexually harassed Alice?

Yes No

2. If yes, do you think Alice can complain about this under POSH?

Yes No

Discuss your answers. Try and search online if you are confused.

Let's learn about the various rules under the POSH Act

- Every organization must have a POSH Policy which contains the following
 - Definition of sexual harassment
 - Complaint resolution process
 - Rights of employees as per Act
 - Details of IC members
 - Do's and Don'ts as per the industry and organizational culture
- As per the Act, any workplace that has 10 or more employees must constitute an Internal Committee (IC).

The important features of the IC are as following:

- Minimum 4 members with at least half of the members being women
 - IC to have a Presiding Officer who is a senior female employee at the organization
 - At least one member to be outside the organization. This member must have experience working on issues of sexual harassment.
- Every organization must submit a report annually on the number of POSH cases filed as well as Actions taken to the district officer.
 - Efforts to be taken by the organization to improve awareness on POSH among employees.

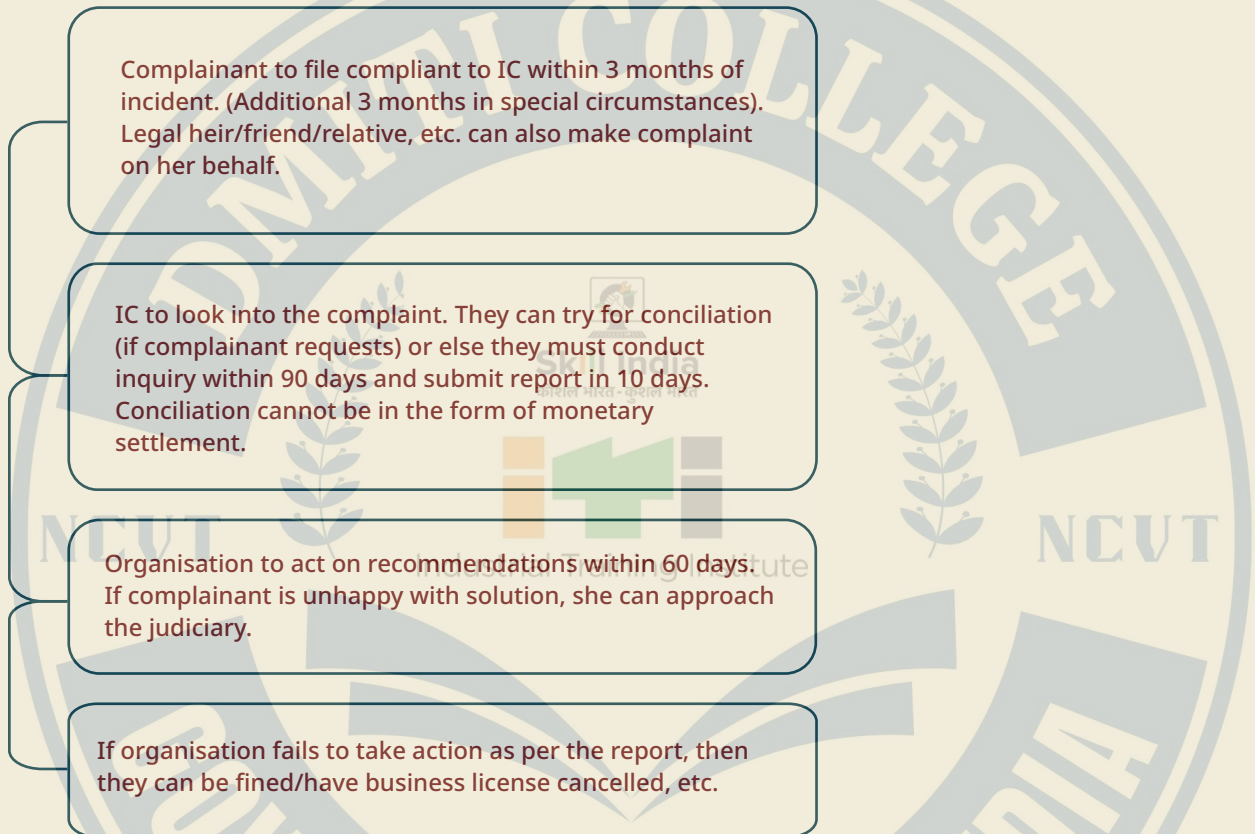
Organizations with less than 10 employees can seek the services of the local complaints committee set up in each district as per the Act. Where the complaint is against the employer, then also the local complaints committee can be approached.

What if the person committing harassment is not an employee?
 Even then, the complainant can approach IC. It is the responsibility of the committee to forward the complainant's complaint to the police.

So clearly, in the above question related to harassment faced by Alice, she can complain about the repair person to the IC under POSH even though he is from a different organization.

Let's learn How to Seek Protection under the Act

The Act works in the following way:



Take a look at the POSH policy in your institute. Write down the list of IC members as well as Do's and Don'ts in the policy

Activity Time!
