

## Challenges of Ethnic Diversity

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### **Introduction**

The issue of cultural diversity refers to a situation in which the community members differ in specific characteristics that are associated with indigenous origin, status, and socioeconomic factors. With the rising migration in most parts of the world, the level of diversity in the modern societies keeps on getting high. Understanding the effect of that ethnic diversity has on the economy is a wide spectrum, however, regarding social relations and the living conditions, it is considered to be a priority for the majority of the people. There is negative association between growth and ethnic diversity, confidence, and public goods quality. There is also positive correlation between productivity and wealth and the country of origin. Literature justifies the historical existence of challenges associated with the ethnic diversity.

### **Historical context of problems caused by ethnic diversity in the society and organizations**

Problems of ethnic diversity are observable not only in organizations but also in the society at large. In the past decades, the Western part of the world was affected by increased migration hence resulting into diverse ethnicity. Ethnic diversity, as well as the issue of considerable inclusion of immigrants to the social system of security injected pressure into the welfare of most countries in the region. Similarly, the presence of the foreign groups into local areas tends to weaken the legitimacy of the social security system on the solidarity of the communities. In most of the western states, immigrants are proportionally reliant on support from those who are considered to be the natives of the lands. The fundamental problem caused by the policies on immigration as well as integration is the establishment of a balance between exclusivity and openness of the systems of well-being without compromising the universal happiness of the

countries. There are several studies that provide literature on the issue of challenges associated with ethnic diversity.

Du Tott (2004), indicates that there is a discussion on the potential consequences of inclusion of migrants into the society. For example, in the US, Alesina, and Glaeser (2004) expected that European would find it difficult to accommodate the increasing ethnic diversity because they were initially characterized by ethnic homogeneity. The solidarity with which a country's commitment to public welfare is based starts to diminish when there is ethnic fractionalization in the same country. The connection between the immigration as well as solidarity has equally been examined by research on racism and prejudice. Available research indicates that there is an overall tendency towards group preference since people tend to lean to conceding rights as well as native entitlement groups as compared to the people regarded to be of different origins. The strategies of securing privileges for the members of the groups may be found in most areas of life characterized by competition for the limited resources (Du Tott, 2004). The institutions of welfare, which are charged with the responsibility of distributing collective goods inevitable cause the conflict between the various ethnic groups in the society. Bay and Petersen (2006) have confirmed that social acceptance of the foreigners, as well as the extent to which they are given rights, are directly related to the expected ethnic threats which come about due to the existence of ethnic minorities. In response to the assumed threat, the majority in the society tend to distance themselves from those who are considered to be the minority. They also desire the restriction of civil rights as well as social rights. There are other issues traceable to the history of ethnic diversification.

The public in various societies tends to differentiate between foreigners and the people of the same nationality or the ethnic minorities during provision of the preferred welfare benefits. In the hierarchy of considering those who are more deserving than others, foreigners find themselves falling below the locals in the pecking orders. Research done by Bay and Petersen (2006) indicates the manner in which the benefits of the social welfare depend on the compositions of the groups on the receiving end. Apart from discrimination during the distribution of social benefits, social cohesion is also negatively impacted by ethnic diversity.

With the immigration being considerably high in most western countries, ethnic diversity has negatively affected social cohesion (Bay & Petersen, 2006). In as much as concerns have existed for long in various literature, indicating social withdrawal in the United States communities which has led to anxiety across the board, little information is available on possible solutions that have been put in place to solve the situation. For those working in environments with diverse ethnicity, communication has been reported to be a major issue.

When a workforce is established with different employees with varying countries and cultures, there is an increase in the number of filters of communication as well as language barrier which impacts not only the internal but also external processes (Du Tott, 2004). The work cultures which are considerably heterogeneous often find it easy to communicate since the workers are not charged with tasks of overcoming cultural and language issues. Some organizations are forced to employ diversity trainers and interpreters to assist employees to work through the challenges of communication due to diversity. Other than communication problems, ethnic diversity also leads to cultural resistance.

. The issue of resistance to change is a human characteristic and quite common in nearly all the workplaces. As companies get more diverse regarding ethnicity, their relationships, as well as workplace nature, also changes. The resulting changes lead to stress among the employees as well as contributing to the negative relationship at work. It causes the reduction of the employee morale when the changes are not properly managed and planned. It is unfortunate that the problem cannot be controlled by organizational management unless they completely decide to make their institution ethnically heterogeneous (Hendriks, 2008).

Establishments which hire diverse workforce intentionally tend to have the human resource processes to assist in managing the diversity. On the other hand, the companies which turn to be diverse with strategically planning for the same could find discrimination existing between subordinates and the managers as well as among the employees themselves. It should be considered that discrimination, in this case, implies unfair treatment of a portion of the employees due to their distinguishing characteristics. It is only natural that a diverse workforce is likely to experience the higher level of the discrimination among the works. It could be difficult for people coming from minority ethnicities to secure employment opportunities in some societies.

Ethnic diversity makes the prejudiced employers not to offer employment opportunities and jobs to people who are coming from particular racial backgrounds. In most cases, the ethnicities that are considered to be the minority, as well as those which are considered to be inferior, are often the victims of such challenges. Employers in such societies would prefer providing jobs to workers who are either hailing from their racial lines or those who are considered to be from senior ethnic groups in the society. As a result, the labor market fails to

evaluate the ability of employees based on their qualification and skills but rather on the racial lines (Hendriks, 2008). Quality of production could as such be compromised in the long run, and the economic condition of the people from foreign ethnicities may get poor and poorer despite their qualifications in the employment sector. Ethnic diversity has also been observed to propagate police harassment.

Several police persecution cases have been reported in societies that are characterized by high ethnic diversity such as the United States of America as well as parts of Africa. In such societies, there are stereotypes that profile the foreign communities or inferior communities as either being illegally within the countries or as people who are associated with terrorism. Police in such societies tends to bother such minority ethnic groups on the grounds of identification and security checks. On the contrary, most of the minority groups are often harmless and rightful members of the various societies either by birth or by registration. Learning sector also faces challenges of diverse ethnicity.

Learners from the immigrant families or ethnic minorities take a lot of time to get accustomed to the new environments. The apprentices find it difficult to get used to the teachers who are meant to be their development partners for a period. The situation in most cases is reflected on the dismal academic performance of the immigrant families when compared to the children with the local origin.

There is also increasing fear of influence from the immigrant communities or families. Living in diverse ethnic societies, even in cosmopolitan towns inculcates the fear among most people especially the ones from the minority groups, that they might lose their original ethnic identities as well as their lifestyle. The process of getting influenced by the foreign systems of belief or by

other cultures in most cases creates protectionist tendencies amongst the citizens. Additionally, there is always the risk of social conflicts as well as elements in such situations. The chances of social conflict happen because of the difference in religious practices, beliefs, ethnic rituals or the other reasons which may create different groups in the society. Institutions that have ethnic diversity as an integrative policy, should use specific frameworks for ensuring that its members coexist peacefully.

Since time in memorial, ethnic diversity has proved to not only create social tension but also to diminish economic well-being of societies. As demonstrated in the above section, there are various challenges that are caused by ethnic diversity which affects individual's lives directly or indirectly. The problems have been witnessed in most countries hence calling for the need to design a proper solution framework to reduce the negative impacts that are left on the people. The following section will provide possible solutions to the challenges caused by ethnic diversity as well as the manner in which the solutions can be applied.

### **Solutions for challenges of ethnic diversity**

There are various principles which can be applied to assist in controlling the challenges that are associated with ethnic diversity in the various societies. First, governments should lay strategies for addressing both individual and institutional sources of discrimination and prejudice. The sources of discrimination as well as prejudice are mostly rooted in specific historical as well as social contexts and are guided by the institutional practices and structures. Aiming to transform individuals without managing such influential factors or even without engaging the particular issues which guide the intergroup relationships is mostly futile. Contextual as well as institutional forces which could be considered in the implementation and development of

strategies for improving the inter-ethnic relations include practices and structures such as tracking, selection processes at work, assessment practices in the work stations as well as stereotypes, beliefs, and stories which have turned to be the local lore in the society. It is, however, important to keep in mind that designing practices and programs in the power difference, imagined or real are majorly at the heart of the interethnic tensions.

Secondly, institutions should function to influence behaviors of people, including capability and motivation to impact the others without considering their ethnic status. They shouldn't be limited to efforts of increasing awareness and knowledge. When the strategies aiming at improving the inter-ethnic relations fail to particularly include the lessons concerning the ways of acting about the new knowledge and awareness, there are high chances that they will not be effective in transforming the relationships between communities. Majority of the people in the society are not as competent in interacting with others as they perceive to be different culturally. It is for this reason that at times, the people with desired intentions end up doing wrong things. As such, changing behaviors may require the assistance of other people. Additionally, transforming the experience of the people who are victims of discrimination and prejudice will need that everybody in the society contributes to climate tolerance as well as goodwill in the attempt of changing other people's behaviors considering actions and words that reflect ethnic and racial prejudice. It is a call that goes to all institution regardless of their ethnic composition of the workforce.

Thirdly, there is a need to deal with the behavior as well as dispositions all ethnic and racial groups. In most cases, the ethnic relationship programs and activities aim at knowledge and awareness on the behavior specific races or ethics in a particular society. Some of those



programs tend to focus on attitude and treatment towards a particular ethnic community. In areas where there are ethnic and racial diversities, there are opportunities for learning as well as comparing behavior which can assist in avoiding oversimplification and stereotyping. Increasing the awareness of such realities could serve to improve the sophistication of the lessons concerning challenges of ethnic diversities.

Institutions should come up with strategies for controlling ethnic problems, such that all participants should reflect ethnic, racial as well as the linguistic diversity of the context and should be structured so that they ensure the equal status of the roles and the cooperation between people from the different groups. The best-documented strategies for improving the existing racial and ethnic tension should involve the establishment of opportunities for the equal status among the people from different ethnic lines. The strategies are most effective when organizing cooperative events to ensure that those from varying backgrounds are equally contributing to the task involved. Those who take part in the inter-ethnic activities bring to the people with negative experiences and the assumptions about the responsibilities they had which are pegged on the expectations that guide the pre-existing attributions, through stereotyping as well as habits of different groups. As such, the strategies that include cooperative interdependence of among people from different races and ethnic groups should be properly structured to make sure that the various participants are motivated to make a valued and useful contribution to the society. In the situations where strategies which involve competition between the ethnic communities are used to promote cooperation, instances, where ethnically identifiable persons compete against one another, should be avoided.

The strategies set for controlling the challenges of ethnic diversity should have the participation as well as the support of the people and the government. Those with the authorities and power tend to send messages using their deeds rather than their words. Those who are requested to be involved in the learning activities with the aim of improving the inter-ethnic relationships will certainly demand to know what the people who have involved them in the situation have done about the lessons that they are supposed to learn. When the people in the authoritative positions are too busy to engage in the ethnic relation programs, the programs' impact is likely to be undermined unless the records of the leaders on the discrimination issues are clear. People from organizations in which better equity and interethnic relations are advocated will seek to know whether the people in authority are developing appropriate behaviors as well as walking the same talk. They would equally want to know whether qualified people from different ethnic groups are aggressively getting recruited for higher offices. Those who are pursuing equity with enthusiasm should be supported as well as rewarded whereas people who engage in the ethnic discrimination should be considerably sanctions. Through acting as role models, the leaders of institutions and organizations will motivate the rest of the task force as well as the general public to walk the talk of improving equality by considering all tribes as one.

The strategies that are being set to manage the challenges of the ethnic diversity need to involve children right from their early development stage and age. Those who are new in organizations needs to be reinforced and encouraged to practice inclusive behaviors which do not gesture leaning towards one side. It is important to begin teaching young people the significance of good inter-ethnic relations at their tender ages. Early intervention isn't enough to measure. As young people grow, they get to be more conscious about ethnic issues and the various sources of

discrimination and prejudices they experience and witness in everyday life. In various organizations, new members are often told that the company is committed to positive interethnic relationships. The introduction could involve workshops about diversity or other activities which are targeting facilitation of ethnic harmony within the organizations. When people go through the ethnic tensions or the moment they conclude that the commitment to positive and equal inter-ethnic relationship is not complete, they may get the chance to learn the ways of dealing with such problems. It is not easy to inoculate people from some of the ethnic challenges. Considering the variation in living conditions of the different ethnic groups, together with the general ethnic issues in the society, improving inter-community relationships is a task which needs an ongoing work.

Lessons on peaceful coexistence as well as benefits of ethnic equality should be a part of learning activities which are not only incorporated but also valued in schools, colleges, and other learning institutions. In most institutions, improved ethnic relations are the responsibility of particular officers or instructors. The main strategy observable from the institutions is the involvement of workshops and introductory courses. The strategies of workshops are believed not to be adequate. Conventional wisdom among those advocating for strategies of improving inter-community relationships is that opportunities for learning should be incorporated into the curriculum or within tasks that compose activities that organizations are involved in. In as much as this method is desirable for reducing the challenges caused by ethnic diversity, its success depends on two issues. First, the commitment level varies from one learning institution to another. Secondly, the required expertise to integrate the experiences which promote positive inter-community relationships is limited. As such, the approach should include highly focused

efforts and activities for ensuring that positive intercultural relation properly in the involved organizations.

There is need to examine the differences and similarities within and between the ethnic groups. The efforts of improving inter-ethnic relations mostly overstate the differences among the ethnic groups while neglecting the values and beliefs which are shared across ethnic lines that could unite the people. The hunt for generalizations that can promote sensitivity to variations and promote a positive response to the differences mostly leads to over-simplification. It makes sense that strategies of improving the inter-ethnic relationships fail to deal with the full complexities of intra-ethnic differences; however, ignoring such complexities is a form of encouraging a different stereotyping (Njogu&Ngeta, 2011). The failure to deal with variations within the groups have consequences of understanding characteristics of humans as well as directing the influence of language, gender, and social class based on interpersonal relationships. The members of the society and institutions need to be informed that in as much as their ethnicities are different to some extent, they share various similarities. As such, members of different ethnic groups should view themselves as people of the same ancestral clan hence reduce stereotyping and other challenges of ethnic diversities.

Organizations and institutions should recognize the significance of multicultural as well as bicultural identities of groups and individuals, together with the challenges confronted by the people who live in more than one culture. In America, most people value the concept of “melting pot,” particularly the ones of European origins (Brems, 2013). Immigrants and persons of culture mostly expected assimilation into the dominating white culture while they are resented whenever they exercise their cultural traditions or languages. Assimilation is a powerful tool for

minimizing the challenges of ethnic diversity. The anticipation of assimilation is a refutation of the fact that can be obtained from the diversity of the nation (Njogu&Ngeta, 2011). As people insist that the immigrants need to abandon their ethnic backgrounds, others hold that people have to choose one cultural identity. The approaches to improving inter-ethnic relationships as well as ensuring that the policies and practices which need the people to be identified with one ethnic line, communicate absence of respect for those with multicultural and bicultural identities.

### **Theories, methods, and research used within the summary**

The theory of conflict stands out in the discussion of challenges of ethnic diversity as well as ways of controlling the challenges. The conflict theory is used in describing issues of gender, social class, race, ethnicity, and education. The conflict theory in the context of US examines the various current and past struggles between the white people and the ethnic minorities. The theory explains the causes of wrangles that largely exist between the local or rather ruling ethnicities in particular societies and the minorities or immigrants in the same countries.

The second theory concerned with challenges of ethnic diversity is interactionism. For the symbolic interactions, ethnicity and race offer strong symbols for identification. According to the theory, ethnic prejudice is established through communication among the members of the dominant groups. Without such interactions, individuals from the dominant groups are believed not to hold racial perceptions (Njogu&Ngeta, 2011). The interactions contribute to the abstract image of minority groups which allow the majority groups to support the perception of the minority groups as well as to maintain the status quo.

Finally, the culture of prejudice is a theory that indicates that prejudice is incorporated in human culture. As people grow, they are surrounded by pictures of stereotypes as well as casual expressions of prejudice and racism. It as such explains why people would naturally find themselves contributing into ethnic prejudices and stereotypes regardless of getting exposed to the dangers of doing the same in due time.

### **The influence of culture on attitudes, values, perception, human behavior, and interpersonal relations**

Culture influences the attitudes, perceptions, values, human behavior as well as interpersonal relations concerning the challenges associated with ethnic diversity such as prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping. Cultural practice makes people to develop a sense of belonging to a particular way of life. Additionally, it forces people to develop a negative attitude towards the other cultures. Hence they tend to look down upon the cultures without considering the benefits that they get from the same. The attitude eventually contributes to the high rate of discrimination in which people in a society or organization would want to completely be identified with their traditional cultures hence resulting in the unfair treatment of the other people with different cultures.

Culture has a huge influence on people's perception, hence influencing the challenges associated with ethnic diversity. In particular, culture establishes the notion of superiority amongst members of an ethnic community (Kerwin, 2010). All people have the feeling that their ethnic communities and cultural practices are far much better than the ones of the other groups. It causes the tension as people are not willing to identify the various points in which their cultural practices can emerge. Eventually, it leads to ethnic profiling, discrimination, stereotyping, and

prejudice. It is most difficult to convince people against their culturally inflicted perceptions that indicate their superiority ahead of the others.

Culture influences people's values in society. All ethnic cultures establish the values that define moral standards of living in society. These cultures are established on ethnic grounds hence influencing the ways of life of people in the society and at the organizational level (Shorter-Gooden, 2010). The values that guide activities and actions of people in certain institutions and societies are influenced by their cultural beliefs. In eventuality, ethnic diversity challenges occur due to individual differences in values that end up spreading to the entire society.

Since culture defines the moral standards of human beings, they guide the behaviors of the people in a particular society. Individuals from various ethnic backgrounds tend to have different moral standards, values, and attitudes which tend to influence the behaviors that they exhibit. It is because of difference in culture that people get to perceive the others as less superior and not worthy to participate in some organizational duties and responsibilities. The behaviors thus guide the actions of the people towards exhibiting discrimination as well as prejudice which are major contributors of the challenges associated with ethnic diversity (Brems, 2013).

Finally, culture influences the manner in which people relate amongst themselves in society. Different people from different ethnic backgrounds often share organizations and institutions. Regardless of their different backgrounds, they are expected to coexist with the institutions, societies or people from the same ethnic background share same cultural beliefs and tend to relate well amongst themselves (Brems, 2013). However, the situation gets a little tricky when it comes to crossing cultural borders and relating with people from a different cultural

background. In this case an imaginary boundary between people with different cultures appears to be hence reducing the efficiency of interpersonal relations in the ethnically diverse societies or organizations.

### **The ethical codes and legal standards related to multicultural issues in the workplace and the community**

Maintaining ethical standards and diversity practices is vital to the majority of the business organizations which aim at getting their employees loyalty as well as the trust of the consumers. Ethical codes at workplaces are getting increasingly popular in business, assisting in aligning members of the firm with the broad visions of the organization (Brems, 2013). In the work places, ethics standards begin by the assumption which indicates that all workers live by the basic moral guidelines and behave accordingly within the work environment. Regardless of an organizations size, the unethical actions could cripple the ability of the organization to attract clients (Shorter-Gooden, 2010). Various organizations have different ethical standards which arise and need a set standard. About diversity, the basic codes of ethics demand that organizations treat one another by utmost respect regardless of their difference in ethnic backgrounds. The management should consider employees equal and promotion, as well as other development programs, should be availed to all the employees in equal measure.

Ethnic diversity in the workplaces aims at making people from all socioeconomic backgrounds comfortable, as they work in the organization. The ethical codes in organizations promote equal opportunities for both employees and the potential employees to be promoted and hired by gender, qualification, and creed (Njogu & Ngeta, 2011). The organizational ethical codes hold non-discrimination standards as well as enforcing penalties to curb non-compliance.



Above the legal compliance explored in the various workplaces diversity, organizations could benefit from promoting more than customer demographics, internal performance, methods as well as business partners. All organizations and institutions that are characterized by exposure to many cultures, levels of education, and demographics can make the future opportunities of the organization better by proper management of the diversity in the workplaces (Brems, 2013). The main aim of an ethical code in guiding organizations, especially those that are characterized by ethnic diversity is to motivate everybody to achieve the same organization standards, to work collaboratively and to reduce discrimination and prejudice.

There are training programs for ethnic diversity and ethical codes. Organizations should have written ethics and create standards for nondiscrimination practices and ethnic diversity. The ethics should be included in the handbooks of employees as well as new hire materials in which employers make the employees sign on the organizational policies for the company. Other than writing the ethical codes, employees should be trained on diversity challenges, effects of the challenges, and the ways of avoiding such issues within the work environment (Kerwin, 2010). There should be the continued provision of the tools that assist in dealing with difficult decisions and conflicts hence help in mitigating future challenges concerning ethics and ethnic diversity.

Regarding legislative standards, the human rights legislation is majorly enforced at workplaces for purposes of protecting people from discrimination. The legislation seeks to guarantee equality and fair treatment regardless of specific identity or particular historic oppression to employment opportunities, employment offers as well as other instances that are non-employment related. Majority of the human rights complaints are associated with the workplaces. As the organizations seek to establish better communities by their missions and

vision statements, it is vital that they commit to the achievement of inclusive workplaces which are not only respectful but also welcoming to the vast ethnic diversity. The available legislation attempts to outline the legal requirements for employers (Shorter-Gooden, 2010). However, the bigger goals are not just the legal compliance but rather nurturing cultures of acceptance in all workplaces.

### **Impacts of Contemporary cultural diversity issues and research on improvement of public safety delivery**

Staying abreast of the various contemporary cultural diversity issues imply keeping up to date with the various recent facts and information concerning specific cultural diversity issues. Engagement in research will assist in improving the public safety delivery, particularly in connection ethnic diversity. Staying abreast with contemporary cultural issues assist employees to be conversant with the significance of respecting the different cultures of people from different ethnic backgrounds are very noteworthy. Research helps in improving awareness and equipping the people to operate safely in diverse work places (Antonsich & Mavroudi, 2015).

Workers in the various organizations should stay abreast of the contemporary cultural issues to enhance recognition as well as respect for cultural differences in the workplace. Such initiatives are important in maintaining healthy organizational structures as well as the health of the human resource. Organizations characterized by employees from culturally diverse origins recognize advantages of having personalities from different perspectives with varying creative skills as well as problem-solving skills (Antonsich & Mavroudi, 2015). Research is critical in assisting those employees from various backgrounds in understanding and respecting every other difference to learn to be collaborative as well as to achieve the organizational goals.

The awareness of contemporary cultural diversity could be detrimental to the global affiliations and partnerships. Society and organizational leaders could benefit from understanding the contemporary cultural diversity such as the differences in cultural behaviors of various groups that compose their organization (Kerwin, 2010). It would assist in understanding the manner in which the organization should treat workers so that they are assured of equality and fairness. Contemporary cultural issues are not limited to racial relations and ethnicity but extend to matters such as religion, sexuality as well as the geographic upbringing of people. Understanding the contemporary cultural issues of ethnic diversity will enable people to demonstrate sensitivity to others who express their concerns concerning the issues of interaction both within the organizations and in the society at large.

## **Conclusion**

Conclusively, there are various challenges associated with ethnic diversity in the society. Some of the challenges of ethnic diversity as discussed in this paper include discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping that lead to ethnic tension either within the organizations or in the society at large. There are various principles that can be observed in the attempt to curb the problem of experiencing cultural and ethnic challenges in the society. Realizing tangible milestones about the reduction of challenges of ethnic diversity require the efforts of all members of the society without considerations of age and the place of origin. It is important that people observe the measures of reducing the effect of cultural challenges in the society. Individuals should improve interpersonal relationships especially with those who are from different ethnic backgrounds.

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