Chapter 5

Findings, discussions, suggestions, and conclusions

5.1 Introduction

Workforce diversity and management is an emerging trend in Indian Organizations. Diversity phenomenon is more evident at multinational companies. Diversity has been practiced for decades together in the west. Most IT and non IT companies have already seen the benefit of practicing diversity. As multinational organizations’ global philosophy is adopted at IT organizations in India, we can see workforce diversity inclusion, diversity management programs in IT industry. IT organizations are becoming diversified with the heterogeneous mix of employees in order to compete globally and to leverage potential of human resources. In search of global talent, IT industry is recruiting the workforce from diverse backgrounds. The IT labor market in India has been essentially driven by the integration of domestic activities with global IT related activities. Incorporating diverse people and their perspectives has become a major concern for every organization. It is evident that employers are spending considerable time, money, and energy to manage diversity. As such, present research is conducted from the perspective that emphasizes the need for positive attitude and acceptance of employees towards the diversity. The present study is about investigation of the acceptance of cultural diversity and gender diversity among employees in IT industry. The purpose of this study is to examine acceptance of diversity and to examine significant differences in the employees of different demographic characters, regarding cultural diversity and gender diversity. The study reveals several findings about significant relationship between diversity management practices, obstacles to diversity and the acceptance of diversity. This study provides an elaborated view of the perception of employees towards acceptance of cultural and gender diversity and provides a framework to introduce positive diversity climate in organizations. The present chapter provides the discussion on findings, a few tentative suggestions, implications of research and conclusions.
5.2 Findings and discussions

For the research, 600 employees have been taken from 15 IT services and 15 ITES-BPO services organizations situated at Bangalore. The work place of IT companies constitutes heterogeneous mix of employees from different nation, state, language and religions. More and more women employees are also entering into the industry and there is a need for proper diversity management strategies. As observed by the research work, different programs and practices have been framed by the employers of IT industry to address the cultural and gender diversity issues. It is observed from the research that there are different types of obstacles present in industry which have impact on acceptance of diversity among employees. Diversity management practices and programs have impact on the acceptance of employees towards diversity. The major findings of this study are discussed below.

1. Acceptance of cultural diversity among employees is high, showing the mean response of 4.24 on a 5 point scale, which describes that employees of IT industry are highly receptive to cultural diversity in organizations. Their highly positive response towards valuing and respecting fundamental differences of people of other culture and being comfortable to communicate with the people of different cultures show that the employees’ acceptance to cultural diversity is very high.

2. Regarding acceptance of gender diversity, the mean response is 3.99, indicating a little lower acceptability to gender diversity, when compared to cultural diversity. Employees are neutral to essentiality of gender quota policy in IT organizations and they are also neutral to the statement, that gender diversity is important to the organizations. This shows the need for more awareness towards the importance of gender diversity in organizations.

3. Employees perceive medium level of obstacles to cultural diversity in organization with the mean score 2.21. Employees perceive the problems like favoritism, stereotype behavior, prejudices about cultural factors and lack of social interactions between the different cultural groups and presence of backlash as the major obstacles to cultural diversity in IT organizations. These findings resemble the findings of previous study by Patrick and Kumar (2012) in this field. Other studies also found similar results in context of western organizations (Alderfer, 1980; Howitt, 1990). There is tendency to attract, select, retain, and
reward employees who are similar to those who are already in place and this causes favoritism in organizations. The studies by scholars like Herriot (1995), and Kundu (2003) also found this as a considerable obstacle to diversity acceptance in organizations.

4. Employees perceive a slightly higher level of obstacles to gender diversity in IT organizations, when compared to cultural diversity. The mean value of the response is 2.68, indicating obstacles to gender diversity are more than obstacles to cultural diversity. The work-life balance problems and stereotypic behavior are prominent obstacles and employees perceive lack of adequate information about diversity policies. Employees opine that the male dominated patriarchal corporate structure is also important obstacle to gender diversity. In general, employees perceive medium level of obstacles to gender diversity in organizations. The results show consistency with similar results of previous studies by Khandelwal, (2002), and McKinsey and company reports on gender diversity (2010), which identify the existence barriers to gender diversity because of male dominated corporate structure in Indian organizations.

5. When we investigated the reactions about how strongly cultural diversity programs and policies have been initiated in IT organizations, the overall mean value we got is 3.55. This indicates that employees almost agree that companies have initiated several programs to manage cultural diversity. Mentoring and counseling have been highly initiated in companies and there is environment of celebration of different cultural events and festivals. Employees agree that diversity evaluation is present and diversity training, workshops and seminars are arranged. The findings show that there is low level of initiation of diversity quota policies in recruitment and other HR activities and lower level of initiation of swap in holidays. These results are showing consistency with the studies of SHRM survey reports (2005, 2008) and studies of Meena and Wanka (2013).

6. Employees highly agree that there is protection against sexual harassment and mobbing in IT organizations. Mentoring and counseling, option for flexible working hours, female networking and affinity groups, workshops and seminars, parental leave options are well initiated to manage gender diversity in organizations. Employees agree that there is enough funding to diversity management programs. But, response is almost neutral in terms of the practices like presence of gender quota in hiring, promoting and retaining. While considering
the protection against gender discrimination, the response is almost neutral, indicating the need of initiation of more practices to effectively reduce the gender discrimination. The mean value for gender diversity management programs and practices is higher than the cultural management practices and programs in IT organizations. This shows employees perceive the presence of more diversity programs to manage gender diversity than cultural diversity in industry. The findings are consistent with the reports of IT companies where they announce their responsibility for the safety of women employees. To quote, Infosys business responsibility report 2011-12, announces series of policies and programs to initiate the safety of women employees in IT field and declares responsibility towards the successful implementation of gender diversity.

7. Significant differences were found in acceptance of cultural diversity and gender diversity among the employees of different age groups. Employees of age group of 36 and above showed higher level of acceptance and employees of age below 25 years, showed lower level of acceptance to cultural diversity. While considering the acceptance of gender diversity, employees of below 25 years, showed higher level of acceptance, where age group of 25-29 years, showed lower level of acceptance. This finding of the study is in consistence of the findings of other studies like Kundu (2002).

8. Significant differences were found in acceptance of cultural diversity and gender diversity among the employees of different experience. Acceptance is more among the people who have experience of 11-15 years of experience and lower in people who have below 2 years of experience with respect to cultural diversity. While considering the acceptance to gender diversity, it is more among the employees who have below 2 years of experience and lower within the employees who have the experience 2 to 5 years.

9. Significant differences were found in acceptance of cultural diversity and gender diversity among the employees of different marital status. Acceptance of cultural diversity and gender diversity is more among the married employees and less in employees who are single, unmarried and widowed etc.

10. When we consider the acceptance among male and female employees, there are significant differences in acceptance of cultural diversity and gender diversity among them. Acceptance of cultural and gender diversity is more among female employees than the male
employees and difference is significant. This finding is consistent with the findings of the several previous studies like Kossek and Zonia (1999); Kundu (2003); Vidhu (2000), where female employees showed higher acceptance to diversity than male employees in the organizations.

11. To find out the existence of gap in between acceptance of cultural and gender diversity among IT professionals, hypothesis was framed and tested. The result showed that there is significant difference in acceptance of cultural diversity and gender diversity among the total respondents. The findings show that the acceptance of cultural diversity is more among the IT workforce than acceptance of gender diversity. The research studies by Taube (2003, 2004) indicate that employees of knowledge-intensive industries in India, are accepting cultural diversity easily and some ethnic and cultural groups in India apparently are more apt to socio-economic development in IT industries due to their higher appreciation of learning. Because of the nature of adaptability to the cultural transformations, employees have more acceptance to cultural diversity, where the present research shows the similar results.

12. Significant relationship was found between acceptance of cultural diversity, cultural diversity programs and practices, and obstacles to cultural to diversity. Acceptance of cultural diversity is positively and significantly correlated with cultural diversity management programs and negatively and significantly correlated with obstacles, indicating that more obstacles reduce acceptance significantly. A regression equation was obtained to explain the relationship between three, and estimated regression equation is

\[ Y_1 = 3.452 + (0.286) \ X_1 - (0.104) \ X_2 \]

Where \( Y_1 \) = Acceptance of cultural diversity (Dependent variable);
\( X_1 \) = Cultural diversity management programs and practices (Independent variable);
\( X_2 \) = Obstacles to cultural diversity (Independent variable).

This regression model is useful to estimate the acceptance of cultural diversity in organizations.

13. A significant relationship was found between acceptance of gender diversity, gender diversity programs and practices and obstacles to gender diversity. Acceptance of gender diversity is positively and significantly correlated with gender diversity management
programs, indicating that higher programs will result in higher acceptance among employees. Acceptance of gender diversity is negatively and significantly correlated with obstacles, indicating that more obstacles reduce acceptance of gender diversity significantly. A regression equation was obtained to explain the relationship between three, and estimated equation is,

$$\text{Y}_2 = 4.741 + (0.096) \text{D}_1 - (0.429) \text{D}_2$$

Where $\text{Y}_2$ = Acceptance of gender diversity (Dependent variable);

$\text{D}_1$ = Gender diversity management programs and practices (Independent variable);

$\text{D}_2$ = Obstacles to gender diversity (Independent variable).

This regression model is useful to estimate the acceptance of gender diversity in organizations.

14. Beta values of the regression analysis results show that there is more influence of diversity management programs and practices than obstacles with respect to cultural diversity in IT organizations. The regression model explains 28.9% of variation in acceptance of cultural diversity and significantly fit to the data. This result implies that the diversity programs and practices have very significant role in enhancing positive culture of diversity climate with respect to cultural diversity dimension. Employers should focus more on enhancing systematic diversity management strategies to promote positive diversity climate.

15. Beta values of the regression analysis shows that there is more influence of obstacles than diversity management programs and practices with respect to gender diversity in IT organizations. This result shows that employers should focus more on reducing obstacles, so that a positive culture of diversity climate will be formed with respect to gender diversity. The regression model explains 48% of variation in acceptance of gender diversity and significantly fit to the data.

5.3 Suggestions

1. IT organizations have already seen the benefits of practicing diversity in India and initiating different diversity management practices to reap the benefit of the diverse employees. But, a systematic study on the issues, from the point of view of perception of the employees, is crucial. The acceptance of diversity among employees should be evaluated frequently by the
organizations. Organizations usually focus on impact of diversity on organizational effectiveness, organizational profitability, and performance of employees. Organizations do not focus much on investigating the receptivity of employees on different dimensions of diversity. It is suggested that employers should design systematic audit on acceptance of diversity.

2. Now every organization is impacted by the globalization trend and there is a dire need of interventions by the employers to create a diversity environment. Though the Indian constitution does not demand mandatory diversity policy, employers can create a positive diversity environment by identifying problem areas and framing proper initiatives. Organizations can design and support workforce culture where individual differences and similarities are valued. The present research identifies problem areas which significantly influence acceptance of diversity. Hence, the organizations can focus more on some initiatives and programs, which address diversity issues in organizations. When designing the diversity management practices and programs, organizations should take care of addressing each dimension of diversity separately.

3. Organizations should focus on minimizing favoritism and groupism. It might be because of favoring the members within same cultural groups like language groups, religion groups etc. This creates dissatisfaction among the members of diverse groups. When considering obstacles, the research shows that favoritism, stereotype in behavior, prejudices as the prominent obstacles with respect to cultural diversity. Organizations can design diversity programs, workshops, and seminars to reduce these obstacles. Research shows that, by reducing the obstacles, employees’ acceptance of diversity increases; hence, employers may focus on identifying and reducing the obstacles present in organizations.

4. Employees perceive a higher level of obstacles to gender diversity. As a part of gender diversity in organizations, there should be more focus to address work life balance problems among female employees in IT companies. It is suggested that organizations, with the help of joining hands with various associations, can provide child-care facilities at convenient locations. By partnering with crèches, pre-schools, and play homes, work-life conflict can be reduced. Extended maternity leave, relaxed working rules for mothers, plan for career development of woman employees will reduce work-life conflicts. IT organizations should
focus on implementing these women friendly practices to get more receptivity to gender diversity in organizations. Some problem areas and suggestive interventions have been explained in table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Suggested Initiatives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Problem Areas</th>
<th>Initiatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prejudices</td>
<td>Awareness programs, Diversity training, workshops, Brainstorming sessions, Seminars</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communication gap, Misunderstandings</td>
<td>Soft skill training, awareness training, Integrative training, Language training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Discrimination between cultural groups</td>
<td>Building culture of sensitivity by encouraging affinity groups, Forums, Multicultural resource networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Discrimination between gender groups</td>
<td>Forums, Gender sensitivity programs, Workshops, Seminars, Conferences about anti discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stereotype, groupism, favoritism</td>
<td>Sensitizing workshops, Sensitivity training, Diversity training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>Code of conduct, Diversity Councils, Formation of organizational level policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Work-life problems</td>
<td>Flexible work hours, Maternity leave policy, Mentoring, Career planning, Partnering with private institutions like preschools, pre nurseries etc. Flexi career time and part time facility, reorientation programmes for women employees after a career break. Mentoring and counseling</td>
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5. It is found that there is lack of adequate information about existing diversity policies among the employees. This indicates the need for diversity awareness training. Respondents feel lack of leadership commitment to diversity and lack of opportunity of higher positions to female employees, it is suggested that leaders and managers should acknowledge their interest in diversity programs. The career growth-map for all the employees should be clearly designed, so that employees perceive diversity positively.
6. Employee affinity groups and networks may be encouraged at IT organizations, which enhance employee engagement. Multicultural resource networks can be framed where employees of various backgrounds and experiences will come together and develop professionally. These networks can also arrange art exhibits, music and dance competitions showcasing rich cultural heritage of the community to enhance acceptance to cultural diversity. Other special events like arranging guest speakers, outings on holidays can be planned by these networks. By encouraging these affinity groups and networks, employee engagement increases, which in turn, reduce conflicts. But, care should be taken in formation of affinity groups to channelize productivity, excellence, personal commitment and corporate values. Employers and managers should guide affinity groups by personal participation.

7. The research shows the presence of gender discrimination in IT companies. It may be because of traditional Indian societal values. By arranging different types of sensitivity programs, discrimination in organization can be reduced. But, there is need for creation of a holistic policy which covers diversity inclusiveness, work-life balance, avoidance of discrimination, and harassment free work environment. There should be a clear structure of reporting discrimination and harassment issues.

8. Diversity training is a very popular strategic tool used in the IT organizations, but, this should not limit to language training and cross cultural training. The gender sensitivity issues and diversity awareness issues should be properly included in the design of the diversity training. Organizations can use proper approach for training, where training should not alienate other employees. After providing an entry level skill, managers and other employees should also be included in different sessions to encourage interaction among employees. Managers and top leaders should participate in diversity programs, so that employees feel a sense of belongingness. Diversity programs have to be top down approach to create a culture of sensitivity. A suggestive design of diversity training has been given below, considering the need of awareness and skill building approach. The training need analysis should be conducted to identify the gaps, so that training yields expected results.
Figure 5.1: Suggestive model of diversity training

Recruitment and selection
- Leadership commitment in diversity inclusion
- Training Need Analysis

Cultural Diversity
- Awareness based training and sensitivity training
  - Cross cultural training.
  - Cultural tolerance
  - Diversity policy awareness
  - Anti discriminatory Laws
  - Respecting values and differences of other culture
- Skill based training
  - Effective communication
  - Language training
  - Diverse Team building, team work skills

Gender Diversity
- Awareness based training and sensitivity training
  - Gender Sensitivity issues.
  - Diversity policy awareness.
  - Equal Employment Opportunities
  - Respecting needs and differences of other gender
- Skill based training
  - Effective Communication.
  - Managing work-life balance.
  - Career planning.

Integrative training.
- To merge diversity training with previous training programs
- To include managers and other existed employees with entry level trainees

Diversity Assessment
Feedback

Acceptance of diversity among employees
Informational forms of awareness training enhance cognitive knowledge and improve awareness of behavioral differences, but more intensive learning is needed to move below the surface level of culture. Awareness trainings may be offered to enhance cultural or gender diversity understanding, but more intensive forms of learning such as sensitivity training may be adopted frequently, because these ask people to reach a new level of awareness about themselves and examine both the positives and negatives of their own values and behaviours, when interacting with people who differ from them. The different methodologies can be adopted to make the diversity training effective. A suggestive table 5.2 provides a brief idea of probable methodologies and duration of different training areas that can be designed to build effective diversity environment. These methodologies should address different areas like cross cultural issues, diversity awareness, skill building and sensitivity issues. Care should be taken such that, these training areas should chiefly focus on creating a successful professional environment by building gender and cultural intelligence in the workplace. These diversity training should be designed to support in building mutual understanding and collaborative working between the diverse employees, preventing gender conflicts, cultural conflicts and harassment issues in the workplace. Some of the topics in workshops may include “Gender Intelligence” “Gender Bias” “Handling & Investigating gender harassment” “Inter cultural Competency”, Cross cultural management” etc, so that employees should develop a positive attitude of respecting the differences among them. A suggestive methodology for diversity training has been given in Table 5.2. Though these methodologies have been adopted by IT organizations, the suggestion here is to implement these with intensity, focusing on building supportive working environment to diverse employees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Training Area</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cross Cultural issues</td>
<td>• Area and culture briefing   &lt;br&gt;• Culture assimilation   &lt;br&gt;• Inter cultural competency building session   &lt;br&gt;• Class room Lectures   &lt;br&gt;• Simulation Games   &lt;br&gt;• Programmed instructions   &lt;br&gt;• Culture specific Role plays   &lt;br&gt;• Critical incidents exercises</td>
<td>3 days/6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Diversity Awareness</td>
<td>• Introduction about diversity policies of organization   &lt;br&gt;• Descriptions about Affirmative actions and equal employment opportunities   &lt;br&gt;• Lectures (By executives and experts in domain)   &lt;br&gt;• Video clipping   &lt;br&gt;• Interaction session with legal experts, professionals   &lt;br&gt;• Group discussion   &lt;br&gt;• Role play   &lt;br&gt;• Cast study analysis</td>
<td>3 days/6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Skill Building</td>
<td>• Interaction session by language experts   &lt;br&gt;• Group discussion   &lt;br&gt;• Communication skill exercises   &lt;br&gt;• Language training   &lt;br&gt;• Soft skill exercises   &lt;br&gt;• Critical Incident Techniques   &lt;br&gt;• Games and role plays   &lt;br&gt;• Case study analysis   &lt;br&gt;• Leadership skill development exercises</td>
<td>1 week/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sensitivity issues</td>
<td>• Brainstorming session on valuing differences and similarities in gender.   &lt;br&gt;• Presentation that reflects women’s and men’s needs, interests, and capabilities   &lt;br&gt;• Workshops on gender behaviors influencing factors   &lt;br&gt;• Workshops and seminars on importance of roles, needs and different interests of gender   &lt;br&gt;• Display pictures, diagrams, charts or illustrations that show both women and men as key players in the sector.   &lt;br&gt;• Group discussion   &lt;br&gt;• Interaction sessions with professionals and academicians   &lt;br&gt;• Visual representations   &lt;br&gt;• Case studies and critical incident exercises   &lt;br&gt;• Guest speeches with special focus on the position of women and development of their personal and professional growth</td>
<td>1 week/year</td>
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leadership skills.
9. Research reveals that diversity quota is not uniformly initiated in IT organizations. As a part of organizational diversity policy, employers should focus on introducing mandatory fixing of women quota in recruitment, promotion and retainment. This ensures more inclusion of women employees in organizations and provides strong base for gender diversity in organizations.

10. There are significant differences among employees of different age group, experience and marital status of employees with respect to culture diversity and gender diversity acceptability. This shows that there is a need of framing strategic diversity programs to address different groups of employees, considering age, experience and marital status. The different types of workshops, seminars can be designed focusing the employees of different age group and experience. Experienced employees are encouraged to attend these types of workshops. It was found that unmarried, single employees are accepting diversity lower than married employees, indicating low level of tolerance among employees who are single, unmarried, widowed etc. To enhance positive work climate, these issues should be taken into consideration and counseling sessions might help to reduce intolerance and negative attitude of the employees.

11. There is significant difference in male and female employees in accepting the diversity. Male employees have lower level of acceptance than female employees. Gender sensitive programs should be designed to fill up this gap in between the genders. At the same time, gender diversity management programs should not alienate the male employees. The difference in attitudes of men and women should be considered while designing strategies. Customized diversity programs, which preferably target the need of the individual employees, can be designed.

12. In present study, employees agree that mentoring and counseling has been well initiated in the organization. As the organizational members know the importance and need of mentoring, these should be designed to enhance the positive attitudes of employees towards diversity. Periodical mentoring programs should be the routine ongoing sessions of organizations and they should address sensitive issues of diversity, cultural assimilation, cross cultural sensitivity, anti discrimination and anti harassment, career plan for women employees, guidance for the women employees about pregnancy, pre and post childbirth, child care, day
care facilities, career security etc. These in turn, ensure that the diverse employees stay and grow with the company through the critical period. Mentoring sessions should have the need-gap analysis of the employees. Identifying and solving the need of employees in the professional and personal lives help employees to accept challenges of diversity.

13. The employees may be encouraged to have positive attitude towards the diversity by working in groups. Sensitizing workshops for both men and women breaks stereotypes and prejudices concerning women abilities and suitability for careers and the unique challenges that women face. Thus, measures should be taken to reduce stereotypes and prejudices. Workshops and diversity trainings are more effective in diversity initiatives and they have to be given more importance. It is suggested that the design of workshops should motivate the employees with positive mind set in understanding and valuing the diversity in organizations. The programs should focus on encouraging employees to acknowledge and accept the differences and similarities among diverse groups.

14. There should be continuous employee feedback on diversity issues. Employers should have the concern to bridge the gap. The spontaneous action should be implemented to address the diversity issues. The importance of assessing diversity issues can enable the company to analyze the gap between the current and the desired.

15. Research explains the significant relationship between acceptance among employees, the diversity programs and obstacles. The positive relationship between diversity acceptance and management programs show that higher the programs, higher will be the acceptance. This implies that to introduce a positive diversity climate, management should focus on effective diversity programs. The diversity initiatives should be measurable. No initiative can be sustainable if the efforts are not measured. Diversity initiatives evaluation and audit should not be only for accountability, but, it should record the progress of the initiatives and take those reports and learning to boost motivation of employees.

16. The significant negative relationship between acceptance to diversity and obstacles shows that employers should not neglect the obstacles in the organization. The track of problems and obstacles should be measured and action should be taken to reduce the roadblocks of diversity. This track should be maintained by the company and taken for the improvement of organization culture.
17. Research provides the two regression models which provide tentative direction to enhance acceptance of cultural and gender diversity. It is suggested to make use of these regression models by quantifying present and needed acceptance level of diversity among different groups of employees.

18. As there is difference in acceptance of gender diversity and cultural diversity, common diversity programs will not be successful. The customized diversity programs should be designed with respect to the dimensions of workforce diversity. Different types of seminars, workshops, regional mega events can be designed by the organizations to enhance acceptance of diversity in organizations.

19. Community programs can be encouraged, which allow employees to display their areas of expertise and to receive feedback on their ideas. These should help to foster the development of cultural assimilation, relationships and other common contexts that are crucial to flow of knowledge across traditional boundaries. As such, the central idea of diversity is the variety of ideas that get generated from people with different backgrounds.

In India, the organizations are influenced by the global trend and there is increasing trend of workforce diversity inclusion in every sector. Affirmative actions and mandatory laws can impose legal restrictions, but a proactive diversity policy which has been framed by the organizations in internal level, yields fruitful results in creating and maintaining positive workplaces. Thus, an important suggestive model about designing a diversity policy, which can be formulated at organizational level, and can be implemented by every sector of economy given below.
Figure 5.2: Suggestive model of diversity policy

**Work Force Diversity Policy**

**Cultural Diversity**
- Diversity councils with executive leadership
- Festivals celebration
- Employee network group guidelines
- Cultural diversity training (customized)
- Community reach programs
- College funds and awards for diversity in education
- Education programs
- Affinity groups and forums
- Mandatory mentoring and counseling sessions
- Cultural audit

**Gender Diversity**
- Gender forums and networks formation and guidelines
- Full time, part time and flexi time provisions
- Encouraging participation in conferences and seminars
- Mandatory meetings about anti discrimination and anti harassment stance
- Formulating punishments at organizational level for violation of company rules
- Gender diversity trainings (customized)
- Diversity audits
- Mandatory mentoring and counseling sessions

**Reduction in Obstacles to diversity**

**Effective diversity climate**

**Acceptance of diversity among employees**

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5.4 Implications of the research

Present research increases our understanding about acceptance of diversity among employees in IT industry. It is very important to determine if an organization espouse its formally pronounced value of diversity. The research has several important findings in this domain and the results have implications on academic field, policy makers and HR managers.

5.4.1 Implications for academics

Diversity and inclusion is an emerging concept in Indian organizations. The organizations, which have adopted the western type of administration, have initiated the workforce diversity and management concepts in India. Equal employment opportunity is not diversity management. Diversity management has vast scope than equal employment opportunity. Indian organizations are at the stage of implementing equal employment opportunity according to the mandatory policies of the nation. The diversity management encompasses the concept of changing the organization culture to create an inclusive work environment. It covers to create an environment that allows all associates to reach their full potential. IT industry is one of the industries, which reported diversity inclusion and management. Hence, there is vast scope for the academicians to research on changing organizational culture because of inclusion of diversity. This study is a contribution in this aspect, which studies about the reactions, perceptions of employees of industry towards the diversity pronounced. The results show the difference in employees of different categories towards acceptance of diversity in cultural and gender dimensions. The findings of the study give insight to uncover different dimensions of diversity in organizations. There are numerous researches in western countries which pronounce the positive impacts of diversity on performance, innovation, creativity and competitiveness of organizations. This research inspires academicians to research on emerging issues of diversity and diversity management and employee perceptions in organizations in Indian organizations.

NASSCOM and McKinsey & company have conducted several surveys on the subject of workforce diversity in Indian organizations. This will provide a very strong base for the
academics to conduct more studies in the domain of workforce diversity and diversity management. Diversity offers numerous advantages to the organizations by bringing new ideas, new dimensions, new strategies and new organization culture. Diversity has become a business imperative in the companies worldwide. Fast accessing of information, electronic communications and quick transportation system supports organization’s business transactions and the world has become a single global village. IT industry is supporting every sector of the economy and there is big scope of employment in IT industry for the educated young people. The reasonably good salary package, the economical and sociological changes, influence of the diverse culture has attracted academicians to do several researches. The present research is a new contribution in the field of academics, as the study of diversity is conducted, on the point of view of employee resource of the industry. The diversity in workforce offers interesting area for the academicians to do several sociological, managerial and financial researches.

5.4.2 Implications for policy makers

As diversity and diversity management concepts have been initiated in multinational companies and private Indian companies, the research provides guidance to frame policies and diversity management programs etc. The policy makers of different organizations should understand the difference in perceptions and attitudes of workforce and this should be the guideline in framing policies. Results show diversity initiatives or practices cannot be generalized for all dimensions of diversity. Especially special care should be taken while framing the needs of women, where they may be supported through different policies and practices such that they will be able to balance work-life at the time of childcare, maternity period and the like. Very important contribution of this work is the identification of prime obstacles to acceptance of diversity. This helps employers to focus on reducing these barriers to enhance the gender diversity in organizations. As the research reveals the difference between male and female employees towards accepting cultural and gender diversity in organizations, training programs need to be designed focusing these issues to make cultural and gender diversity effective in IT industry. Perhaps the most important contribution of this research is that investigating acceptance of cultural and gender diversity separately and finding the relationship with management practices and obstacles towards them. Research
also finds that there is difference in accepting the cultural diversity and gender diversity among employees. This implicates that generalized diversity initiatives will not work out effectively in organizations. The different dimensions of diversity should be studied carefully and respective policies need to be designed accordingly. The acceptance of employees, difference in perceiving the acceptance should be discussed at frequent board meetings, so that it should influence on the crucial issue of policy making in field of people management.

The research is relevant for designing workforce diversity management programmes in IT industry. As such, the research throws insight into the relationship of diversity management programs and practices with the acceptance of diversity, the management and policymakers can use this result while framing the policies. It will be very useful for the policymakers and management to focus on the gap between diversity inclusion and acceptance. The result throws light on the impact of obstacles which will be barriers to acceptance of diversity. This is very important to frame policies regarding discrimination and harassment. Though there are several legal provisions in Indian Constitution, the incidences of unreported harassment, discrimination are evident at workplaces. To quote, there is prohibition of discrimination in workplace as per the spirit of articles 14, 15, 16 and 30 of the Indian Constitution, but, the incidence of discrimination is very common in Indian organizations. This indicates the importance of awareness building organizational policies, which will be more effective than the mandatory laws and regulations. Thus, the consideration here is, policymakers of the organization should take the responsibility of not just sorting out these cases when they occur, but, actively build awareness about it. The research also investigates the differences in perceptions across demographic categories, and it will be more helpful to policymakers to take attitudinal differences when framing any policies. This study gives an insight into the perceptions of workforce towards diversity inclusion and the need of strategic actions to change the organizational culture that suits to the changing workforce of today.

5.4.3 Implications for HR managers

1. The correlation analysis of data reveals that there is positive and significant association between acceptance to diversity, diversity management programs and practices and respect to cultural and gender diversity. The results also show that there exists negative and significant
relationship between obstacles to diversity. This provides several implications to HR domain of the industry.

HR department of the IT organizations should take up the initiative of improving and enhancing the acceptance of diversity among employees. This can be done by designing and providing effective training programs and workshops. While designing the training programs they can consider the regression equation that has been estimated from the present study. The two regression equations direct the HR managers to design strategies to enhance the acceptance level of employees towards diversity.

2. This will help to enhance the attitude of the employees with regard to diversity. Positive attitude forms the most critical element of success of diversity. High acceptance helps an individual to monitor the job performance, knowledge sharing, and teamwork and become more acceptable and socially networked. Further, it also helps employees, use their positive attitudes and perceptions to facilitate performance by involving people, who are different from the mainstream, towards constructive activities and improving personal performance. Any person highly capable in this dimension would be able to encourage him or herself to do better continuously and direct his or her attitudes in positive and productive directions.

3. Appraisal and recognition of acceptance of diversity among employees influences work related factors interfering with personal life. Appraisal and recognition of acceptance of diversity relates to an individual’s ability to perceive and understand the differences and similarities of the people around them. People who rate highly in this ability will be very open to value differences of others as well as able to cope up with conflicts in workplaces. In the present IT organizations where team based performance oriented work environment is more welcome, an open, trusting and nurturing relationship between the organizational members is more likely to succeed in achieving its goals. It helps in enhancing loyalty and satisfaction and to perform better. Recognition of acceptance of diversity in IT organization is important for those in the Human resource management role. Hence, it is recommended that IT organizations and HR department can reap the benefit of potentiality of diverse employees by conducting continuous appraisal and assessment.

4. Different diversity management programs aim at enhancing receptivity of employees towards diversity. The effort of the HR department to improve the acceptance will result with
several benefits. The people with high acceptance to diversity easily communicate with other employees irrespective of fundamental differences. Such people spend more time on enhancing the performance of their team members by providing proper feedback and offering guidelines for improvement. Managers with such quality devote their time in understanding their employees with empathy. This will further boost the team’s performance, improve organizational commitment, retain talented employees, build a positive and healthy working environment and minimize work – family conflict.

5. The results of the one way ANOVA reveal that there is significant difference in acceptance of diversity among men and women in IT industry. Keeping this in view, the customized programs can be designed which reduces the differences in attitudes.

6. The research reveals work-life balance problem as a critical obstacle to gender diversity. There is a wrong perception that, work – life balance programs are designed only for women and not for men. Employers, who initiated programs to reduce work-life conflict, should involve male employees also. Life becomes more understanding and meaningful only when, both men and women share family responsibilities equally. When a person enjoys a healthy personal life and when his personal life is filled with joy and happiness and free from conflicts, employees are in a better position to concentrate in their professional life. They will be able to perform better, their productivity and quality of work will improve and they will be more loyal to their organizations. Hence, it is recommended that managers and organizations should not discourage male employees from attending the work-life balance programs. Organizations should design a variety of gender sensitive programs and encourage male employees to be involved in these programs, to enhance the awareness of gender differences and to reduce the gap between male and female employees towards attitudes, perceptions and acceptance to gender diversity.

7. The focus of the workforce diversity has changed from equal employment opportunities to effectively managing workforce diversity as an organizational imperative (Torres and Brusells, 1992). The strategy should be aimed at creating change in organizations. To be successful in such type of environment, organizational members must learn to value and respect cultural styles and ways of those differ from their own styles. Managers must be able to tie the issues of managing differences with the needs of the business and long term
strategies. And understanding these diversity issues at the managerial level can increase more inclusive environment and also facilitate strategic changes in organizations.

5.5 **Avenue for further research**

Because of the influence of globalization and westernized management style adaptation, the workforce diversity and management is in uptrend in Indian organizations. Workforce diversity is inevitable in present scenario with the entry of multinational companies in India, and this research provides lots of insights, as well as numerous scopes for further researches in this context.

1. As research shows the positive significant relationship between diversity programs and practices and acceptance of diversity in both cultural and gender diversity dimensions, there is an immense scope to do researches in the field of diversity programs in detail. The advantages, disadvantages of diversity programs and impact on employee effectiveness and organizational effectiveness can be studied.

2. The study is conducted with respect to cultural diversity and gender diversity. The IT organizations in Bangalore have incorporated generational diversity and diversity with disability as other two important diversity inclusion areas. The acceptance of employees towards these two dimensions of workforce diversity can be undertaken by the scholars.

3. This study can also be done exclusively by taking into consideration only the managers and the leadership team of the IT organizations and try to understand the cultural and gender diversity issues.

4. The study on acceptance of diversity among employees in other dimensions of workforce diversity may be undertaken in other manufacturing and service sectors of Indian industries. In fact, sector wise study would be of beneficial, as workforce diversity and management is the need of the hour of in all the sectors of the economy, in context of globalized scenario.

5. The study reveals the negative correlation between acceptance of employees towards diversity and obstacles to diversity with respect to both cultural and gender diversity. This area gives insight to frame policies to reduce several obstacles like discrimination, harassment, stereotypic behavior, and prejudices etc. The problems like work-life conflict also effecting sociological as well as organizational and personal life of the employees. This area
provides more scope for further research to the academicians. The study on the negative impacts of diversity inclusion can be undertaken.

6. The research reveals the difference in acceptance among the employees of different age group, experience, gender, and marital status. The further study has the scope to consider other demographic groups like educational groups, generational groups, and occupational groups.

7. The acceptance of diversity and impact on job satisfaction, employee satisfaction can be undertaken. This helps to get different perspectives about improvement in the working environment of the organizations.

8. Workforce diversity management strategies and their impact on organizational culture in other modern industries will be undertaken, as it will be an interesting study which throws light on the organizational change efforts.

9. A comparative study between male and female employees with respect to acceptance of diversity and emotional intelligence will be a fascinating subject for the academicians.

10. The research on workforce diversity and organizational commitment and organizational effectiveness can be studied.

11. A research on acceptance of diversity and impact on organizational ethics will also enhance the knowledge in the domain of workforce diversity and management.

5.6 Conclusion

Diversity in IT industry is influenced by globalization, talent availability, customer acceptance and changing demographics. There have been transformational shifts in focusing cultural diversity and gender diversity in all the organizations. With internationalization of IT industry and increasing number of women engineers entering IT industry has been a favorite place for diversity inclusion. Diversity management programs and practices need to be designed such that employees value, respect and accept diversity voluntarily. It is very important to value similarities and differences among the diverse work force such that there will be cordial workplace ambience. Accepting the diversity is prominent to frame a healthy diversity climate and good working environment, which will contribute to the healthy society at large.
The workforce in IT organizations are becoming more diverse because of the advent of globalization, talent preference, changing demographics, competitiveness and changing customer expectation along with open market. With central interest to this thesis, as a first step there was an exploration to understand the diversity inclusion in IT industries, Bangalore. It was observed that IT companies of Bangalore show multicultural organizational environment with employees of different nations, different languages, regional differences and different religions. IT industry has provided more than 30 to 32% employment to female employees (Dataquest/news/2011). This type of cultural diversity and gender diversity is not common in other sectors of India. IT industry is the largest recruiter of female employees. The diversity has been included by the employers as business imperative and different diversity management practices and programs have been initiated by the employers. India is a country, which is always showing high level of cultural assimilation from years together and showing high level of acceptance to cultural differences. But, when we consider the gender issue, women have been discriminated in India for centuries. In a survey conducted by McKinsey and company in IT industry of India, “Women Matter: Gender diversity, a corporate performance”, reveals that 70% of the female employees rate their performance equivalent to their co-workers, while 70% of the male employees rate themselves higher than their co-workers. The predominant structure of male dominated corporate structure fascinated me towards important empirical question, is, to determine the extent to which employees of IT organization accept pronounced diversity in workplaces.

Using exploratory and descriptive research methodology, the data was collected. Focus group interviews with IT employees and expert opinion surveys with HR managers of various IT companies were conducted to get preliminary idea about the acceptance of diversity, diversity management programs and practices and obstacles to diversity in IT organizations. The cultural diversity and gender diversity were taken as the dimensions of workforce diversity to be studied. The survey questions were designed, after having discussing with several HR managers of different IT companies working in Bangalore. The questionnaire was constructed to reflect the theoretical framework and objectives of the study, as well as to test the hypothesized relationships between the variables. It is important to note that in each variable, the study has separate subsection divided with respect to cultural diversity and gender.
diversity. For example, there is section to examine acceptance of diversity, there are two subsections separately grouped, where subsection A, covers items to describe acceptance of cultural diversity and subsection B covers to items to describe acceptance of gender diversity. Thus, questionnaire has subsections in variables diversity management programs and practices and obstacles to diversity to explain cultural and gender diversity separately. The items in each subsection were combined to create several variables for the purpose of measurement and operationalization of complex concepts. A pilot study was conducted with sample size of 100, to check the reliability of questionnaire. Cronbach’s alpha for the variables was obtained to ensure reliability. Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.79 to 0.89 were obtained for all variables, indicating a moderate to high level of internal consistency. As commonly used in attitudinal research, a five-point Likert rating scale was used to record survey responses. With some moderate corrections, questionnaire was administered to 900 employees through personal contact and email, where survey return rate was 78%. Totally 600 sample size was taken for final data collection. In addition, company data and published interviews with top leaders of several companies were collected. Information was also collected by personal discussion with several HR managers of different IT companies to supplement the information from survey. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent samples ‘t’ test, paired sample ‘t’ test and regression analysis.

There are five research questions in the present study. Important four objectives were framed and these were restated into null and alternate hypotheses. The acceptance of diversity has been studied under separate dimensions of cultural diversity and gender diversity. Hence, separate hypotheses were formed with respect to cultural and gender diversity.

The first hypothesis was to investigate whether there is significant difference in acceptance of cultural diversity and second hypothesis was regarding acceptance of gender diversity among employees of different age group, experience, and marital status. The statistical test used was one way ANOVA. The test result supports to reject null hypothesis, thus, the data supported the alternate hypothesis indicating that there were significant differences in acceptance of cultural diversity among IT professionals of different age groups, experience and marital status. The results indicate that the acceptance of cultural diversity is more among the
employees of age group 35 and above and least among the employees of age group below 25 years. It is more among the employees who have experience of 11 to 15 years and are married. This shows the need for more focus on cultural diversity awareness among the entry level employees.

The second null hypothesis was framed, thus, there is no significant difference in acceptance of gender diversity with respect to age group, experience and marital status of employees. The analysis was done using one way ANOVA. The results rejected null hypothesis and support that there is significant difference in acceptance of gender diversity with respect to age group, experience and marital status of employees. The results show that the acceptance of gender diversity is high among the employees of age group below 25 and below 2 years of experience and among married employees. This shows employees at entry level and less experienced are more positive to receive gender diversity in IT industry. The results show that there is necessity of gender sensitivity programs and more awareness towards gender issues among the employees to make gender diversity inclusiveness successful.

The third hypothesis was framed to investigate the difference between male and female employees towards cultural diversity acceptance and 4th hypothesis was to test gender diversity acceptance. As there are two groups, we have used independent sample ‘t’ test and results substantiate the alternate hypothesis in both the cases, and there is significant difference in accepting cultural and gender diversity among male and female employees. The acceptance of cultural diversity and gender diversity is more among female employees than the male employees. This shows that female employees have more positive perceptions for the inclusion of cultural diversity and gender diversity in IT industry.

The fifth hypothesis is to find out the gap between acceptances of cultural and gender diversity among IT professionals. The null hypothesis was framed as there is no difference in between acceptance of cultural diversity among employees. The statistical test used was paired ‘t’ test and the results support in rejecting the null hypothesis. The acceptance of cultural diversity is more among employees and the gap is significant. Thus, results reveal that, in IT industry the employees are more receptive to cultural diversity than gender diversity. Though there is different kind of gender diversity management programs in IT industry, they are not successful in managing the gender diversity inclusion, indicating the
presence of patriarchal corporate structure. As the employees receive cultural diversity more positively than gender diversity, this necessitates the need of framing more effective gender diversity management programs in organizations.

The sixth and seventh hypotheses were to investigate if there is significant relationship between acceptance of cultural diversity among employees, obstacles to cultural diversity and cultural diversity management practices in industry. The statistical techniques used are Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. The association between cultural diversity management practices and programs, and cultural diversity acceptance is positive and significant. The association between obstacles to cultural diversity and acceptance among employees is negative and significant. By running multiple regression analysis, it is found that the model significantly explains 28.9% variance in acceptance of cultural diversity. The regression equation has been derived and gives a probable view of the relationship between acceptance of cultural diversity, obstacles and diversity management practices present in IT industry.

\[ Y_1 = 3.452 + (0.286) X_1 - (0.104) X_2. \]

Where \( Y_1 \) is acceptance of cultural diversity, \( X_1 \) is diversity management programs and practices and \( X_2 \) is obstacles to cultural diversity.

These results show that the diversity management initiatives are influencing acceptance of diversity among employees. The obstacles are influencing acceptance among employees negatively. To create a very positive workplace, where employees accept diversity in a high magnitude, the obstacles should be reduced and diversity management initiatives should be enhanced in the form of effective programs and practices. This implies that IT professionals receive diversity inclusion with more positive attitude when management introduces more effective diversity programs and focuses to reduce diversity obstacles.

The eighth and ninth hypotheses were to investigate if there is significant relationship between acceptance of gender diversity among employees, obstacles to gender diversity and gender diversity management practices in industry. The statistical techniques used are Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. The association between gender diversity management practices and programs and gender diversity acceptance is positive and significant. The results reveal that obstacles are negatively and significantly effecting
acceptance of gender diversity. By running multiple regression analysis, it is found that the model explains 48% variance in acceptance of gender diversity. The regression equation has been derived and gives a probable view of the relationship between acceptance of gender diversity, obstacles and diversity management practices present in IT industry.

\[ Y_2 = 4.741 + (0.096) D_1 - (0.429) D_2 \]

Where \( Y_2 \) is acceptance of cultural diversity, \( D_1 \) is diversity management programs and practices and \( D_2 \) is obstacles to gender diversity.

These results indicate there is positive and significant relationship between acceptance of diversity and diversity management practices with respect to both dimensions of workforce diversity (i.e. cultural and gender diversity). Also there is significant and negative relationship between acceptance of diversity and obstacles to diversity in both the dimensions of workforce diversity.

The research provides important insights about workforce diversity, diversity management programs and practices and acceptance of diversity among employees, which influence employers in framing strategies of diversity management in organizations.

1. Diversity acceptance is high among the employees of IT organizations. The importance of diversity has been understood by the employees. Employees value and respect individual fundamental differences.

2. Acceptance of diversity varies among the employees of different age group, experience, and marital status with respect to both cultural and gender diversity. A common diversity program will not yield fruitful results.

3. Acceptance of cultural and gender diversity is more among the female employees than the male employees of the industry.

4. There is a significant difference in acceptance of cultural diversity and gender diversity. Employees are more receptive to cultural diversity than gender diversity in IT scenario.

5. Acceptance of diversity among the employees is positively and significantly correlated with diversity programs and practices with respect to both cultural and gender diversity.
6. Acceptance of diversity among the employees is negatively and significantly correlated with Obstacles to diversity with respect to both cultural and gender diversity.

Thus, present research investigates about the vast area of workforce diversity and how employees accept the diversity in Indian IT organizations. The most significant outcome of the diversity movement in India is its emerging importance and symbolic role. As India is one of the countries which have been beneficiary of the globalization process, there is higher degree of integration of the Indian economy in the global village. Since more and more multinational companies, Indian private organizations have started their operation in India and they are big recruiters of Indian workforce. Following the western organizations, these organizations are framing diversity management programs and they need to know the differences in perceptions and attitudes of Indian workforce towards diversity inclusion and initiation of diversity management programs. There are some grass root level obstacles persist in our nation, which influence diversity and diversity management. The diversity movement has brought the issue of equitable treatment of diverse groups in the workplace. By striving to create value in accepting diversity, organizations can provide evidence that they care about their employees. Advocating such a value system attaches prohibition to openly express hostility and prejudice in the workplace. Thus, acceptance of diversity is a concept which creates appreciation and value to the similarities and differences of diverse employees at workplaces. The acceptance of diversity might be in any dimension, if practiced by all the sectors of Indian economy, it has the potential to transform today’s organizations and society at large. I am sure, the experience and the results of the present study would help other sections to manage the human resources effectively and efficiently.