Inclusion of Gender and Sexual Minorities in Workplace

A Manual for Employers
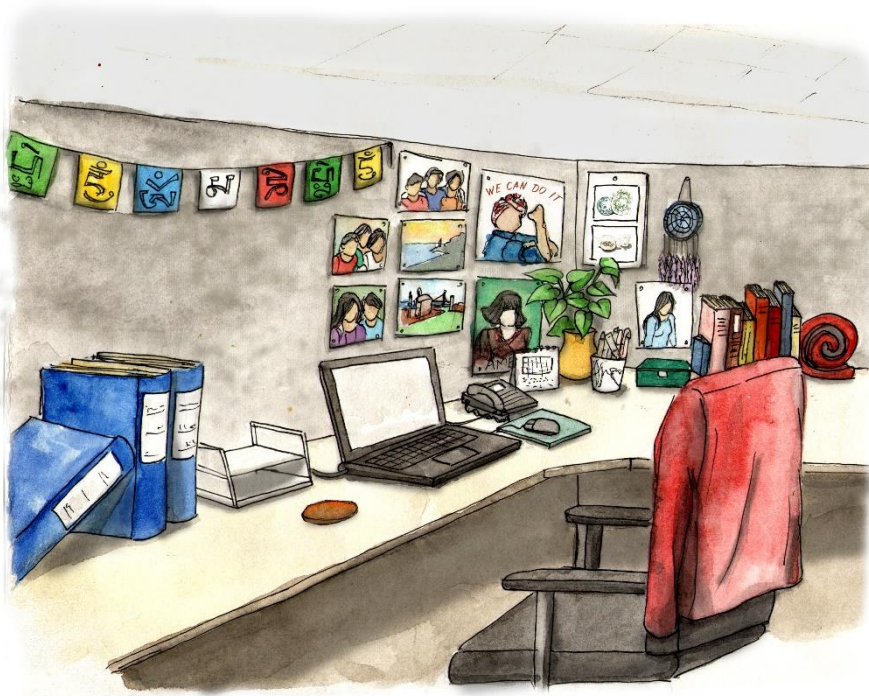
Contents

1. Why should we talk about diversity and inclusion?

Professional is becoming more and more personal

Why is it relevant to talk about one's gender or sexuality in a workplace situation? Isn't workplace about work and only work? Well, it is not!

Most people do not just talk about work in their workplace. They tend to discuss many aspects of their personal lives with their colleagues. They talk about who all are there in their families, what they did during the weekend, health issues, their social lives and more than just their work. They put photos of their family and friends on their desk. Their significant others are invited to office parties.

These daily conversations, tiny gestures and interactions essentially make their gender identity or sexual orientation visible. Photos, rings, talking about the weekend, getting

engaged, having children, family events, anniversaries, phone calls, introducing partners, accompanying partners at events are all examples of this. It would be inconceivable to think that we could hide all of this or pretend it didn't exist. In the case of majority of people who are cisgender or heterosexual, this "coming out" remains largely inconsequential and does not impact their personal and professional lives. However, coming out, intentionally or inadvertently, can have a significant bearing on the lives of gender and sexual minorities.

Diversity and inclusion makes your company a preferred place to work at

In principle, an employee's gender identity or sexual orientation should not affect their working relation or job satisfaction. However, a workplace environment that makes coming out easy may have practical importance for the contentment of gender and sexual minorities.

Many believe that "coming out" is a one-time action that automatically leads to contentment. However, in working life, one meets new colleagues, new customers and new collaborators, which means that people repeatedly must deal with how others will react to their gender identity or sexual orientation.

It is therefore important to build a solid and inclusive workplace environment to ensure the job satisfaction of all employees regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. By reflecting, embracing and valuing diversity, a company can strengthen its brand as a workplace, become more attractive to employees and attract more and better applications.

It makes good business sense

There is a direct link between diversity and **enhanced business performance**. Diverse talent at workplace brings with it a competitive advantage through diverse perspectives. For example, The Mckinsey diversity report, 2015, indicates gender-diverse companies are 15% more likely to outperform their peers and ethnically-diverse companies are 35% more likely to do the same.

Gender-diverse companies are 15% more likely to outperform their peers

Diversity also brings innovation through a paradigm shift in thinking. And innovation, particularly **disruptive innovation**, is a business imperative today! Disruptive innovation cannot happen without a paradigm shift in thinking. Difference of ideas cannot come from the same type of people who originate from the same place, raised in the same cultural context.

Different people from different contexts → **Difference of ideas** → **Paradigm shift in thinking** → **Disruptive innovation**
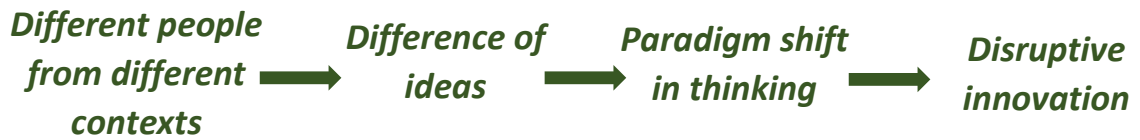
One can do a much better job if they don't need to expend energy on dealing with inappropriate reactions to their gender or sexual identity

A workplace that is aware and sensitized towards the gender and sexual minorities, allows people to be who they are (irrespective if they come out or not), and perform to their fullest capacities. Satisfied employees are more productive. A focus on diversity and respect for individual differences increases **job satisfaction and productivity** in the workplace.

In mature markets outside India, gender and sexual minorities are already seen to be a lucrative market for financial opportunity. In these markets, we are already seeing **targeted marketing** for segments such as Travel-Tourism, Apparel and Fashion, healthcare and well-being products, consumer goods etc. Organizations can no longer assume that their customers, clients, vendors or suppliers are straight or cis-gendered and therefore awareness on this subject is important as it has direct business impact.

In India as well, brands like Vicks, Myntra, Amul, Tanishq, Fastrack, Chumbak, Allen Solly etc. have come out openly in support of gender and sexual minorities by means of LGBT inclusive ads.
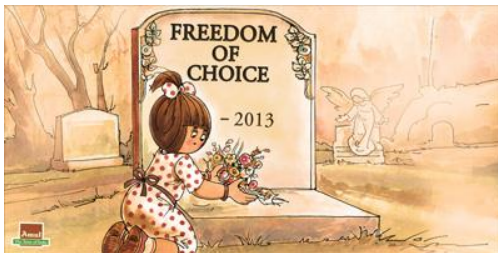
LGBT inclusive advertisements by different brands

Better customers and external relations

Companies operate in a multi-faceted and diverse world. Many of their customers come from gender and sexual minorities. A diverse staff can contribute to understand potential customers and help capture new markets. In addition, working with diversity and the social responsibility inherent in having a diverse workforce can be a parameter that current and potential customers and partners value highly.

Don't the best ideas, the latest knowledge and the most innovative suggestions derive from including different perspectives, experiences and views?

Every citizen of India deserves **Right to Equality** under Article 14 of the Indian constitution, **Right against Discrimination** on the ground of religion, caste, sex or place of birth under Article 15, **Right to privacy and personal dignity** under Article 21 and **Right to Education** under Article 21 (A). Despite this gender and sexual minorities have faced discrimination and harassment in family, school, workplace and other areas of life. Transgenders, particularly, have had limited access to social and political rights.

On 15th April 2014, a landmark judgement was passed by the Supreme Court in India that recognised the rights of transgender people and said they should enjoy all the fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian constitution. The judgment – **National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India, colloquially called the NALSA judgment** – provided legal recognition for third gender. It also gave broad directives to the Central and state governments on affirmative action, public health, social welfare and other services to be made available for transgender people.

2. What are the challenges in creating an inclusive workplace?

Lack of inclusive and anti-discriminatory policies

A survey conducted in 2016 by MINGLE, an Indian LGBT advocacy group, on Indian LGBT Workplace climate shows acute prevalence of harassment and homophobia/transphobia at Indian workplaces. As per the survey, more than half of gender and sexual minority individuals could be legally fired from their jobs on account of their gender or sexuality. Only a small minority 4%, are covered by same-sex partnership benefits and 40% reported having faced some form of harassment. In the face of such hostility, ignorance and lack of inclusion, being fully free to be themselves, like every other person, therefore becomes a very difficult task.

"I dropped out of school in class 8. Despite this, I got a chance to work in a small audio-visual film-making company in Bangalore. My boss used to ask me several personal questions. He used to insist that I stayed late in office so that he could support me with my 'personal and professional development'. He used to often touch me physically on some or the other pretext, which made me uncomfortable. Most of the other colleagues were transphobic and refrained from talking to me. The company did not have any policies against harassment or discrimination based on gender identity. I felt extremely isolated and traumatised that I could not continue for long."

-28-year old Transman, Bangalore

Workplace culture not aligned with policies

Even in companies which are covered by protection policies, most employees are not comfortable coming out - an indication that policies and workplace culture may not necessarily be aligned.

Most companies operate with a notion that all employees are heterosexual and live in traditional family structures. This can make it difficult for people to be open about their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Given that most of the people from gender and sexual minorities are "invisible" in the workplace, it further becomes difficult to gauge if the organization is fostering a hostile environment for them with an unconscious bias, or silent discrimination is taking place.

We tend to carry our biases, apprehensions, misinformed sense of humour etc.   into the workplace

It does not take intentional hostility towards any gender or sexuality to make a workplace oppressive. We tend to carry our biases, apprehensions, and misinformed sense of humour into the workplace. These can manifest in small and everyday acts – like making fun of a movie star's gender non-conformance, or saying "That's so gay!" for anything that we find silly but which unfortunately belittles someone's gender or sexual identity.
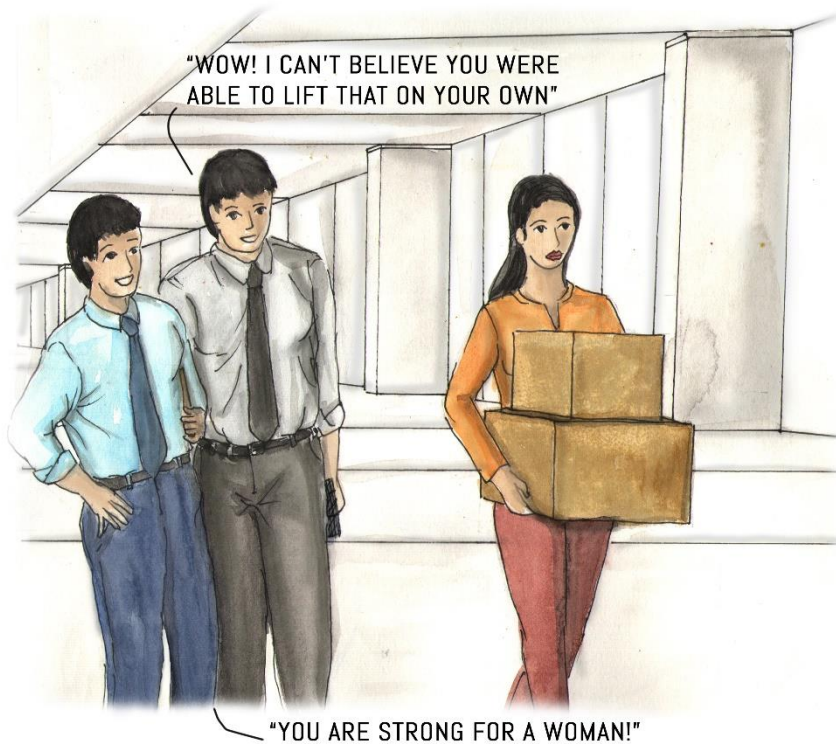
Hidden barriers

Why you can't see what's right in front of you?

We are often biased and see reality in the shape of our own environment and past experiences, making us blind to inequality. Research confirms this: we are unable to see economic inequality, largely in part because of our environment and a tendency to cluster socially with people who are similar to us in terms of income, status or education, for example.

We are also blind to inequality because it's systemic, hidden in our organizational processes and implicit norms.

The discourses on organisation behaviour are increasingly discussing examination of unconscious bias in hiring and performance assessment of employees like *the Mini-Me syndrome*, which refers to the phenomenon of people preferring candidates who are similar to themselves because it is assumed that they will think and behave like ourselves and the *Pigeon-holing prototype bias*, which refers to attaching generalized assumptions about particular social groups to individuals who are assumed to belong to those groups. These lead to inferences about behaviours of others as opposed to relying on evidence.

"I could not complete my school education. Most of us do not have the skills or minimum qualifications that are needed to get jobs in private companies. We often do not have any support from our families. I still managed to get a job of a security guard in a multinational company in Bangalore. However, I faced several challenges there. I had to change into my uniform in a common changing area which was an extremely uncomfortable experience for me. The company might have had policies, my supervisor and other employees were not aware about them."

-32 year old Transman, Bangalore

3. How do we create a truly inclusive workplace for gender and sexual minorities?
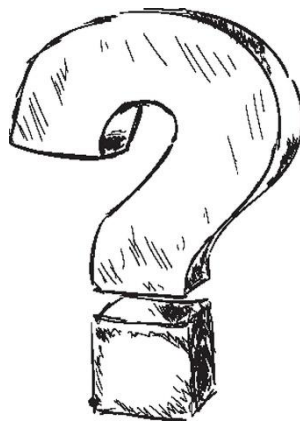
Diversity is about ensuring that an organisation comprises of people of different backgrounds and experiences. Inclusiveness entails taking a step further. It means creating an environment where all employees are accepted for who they are and the value their unique perspectives and experiences bring to the workplace.

What is a truly inclusive workplace for gender and sexual minorities?

- Where no one is compelled to hide their gender identity or sexual orientation
- Where all employees feel safe to talk about their lives, like any cisgender or heterosexual person
- Where everyone respects the gender and sexual identity and expression of others

Understanding gender and sexual minorities

The first step towards creating a truly inclusive workplace for gender and sexual minorities is to understand what this "stuff" is all about. This can be quite tricky since the conversation sexuality, gender identity, expression and identification is constantly evolving and the theoretical landscape is hardly monolithic. Although, there is no definitive way of understanding the nuances of gender and sexuality, here are a few terms that can get us started with the journey towards inclusiveness:

Sex

MALE   FEMALE

Sex refers to the biological, genetic, or physical characteristics that define males and females. These can include genitalia, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics.

Nearly everyone is assigned a sex at birth, and it tends to be one of two choices: Male or female. (Some individuals may be assigned the term "intersex" which refers to a variety of biological conditions in which a person is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy or hormone levels that do not fit the typical definitions of male or female. It is important to know that intersex and transgender are not interchangeable terms.)

The operative word here is "assigned". When we talk about sex of an individual, it corresponds to what the doctor or the family referred to when the individual was born – "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!". The importance of the word "assigned" only gets clearer with the understanding of gender in the next section.

Gender

Gender refers to a set of social, psychological, and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations that classify an individual as "feminine" or "masculine".

We hear about the traditional stereotypes about gender (e.g., women are nurturing while men are protective) all the time. These stereotypes, more often than not, shape our ways of life, attitudes, expectations and even life choices.

When someone steps outside the way that gender is understood in their society, it causes people to get a little rattled. For example, if a boy wants to play with dolls, and not rough sports like football, will have a number of conclusions drawn about him—and perhaps his sexual orientation, or even gender identity—because he's stepped out of the typical space for boys and men.

Gender is a remarkable manifestation of the power that society has on our ways of being and an indication of the possible consequences that happen when an individual (whether as a child or adult) steps outside the boundaries set by the society.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to an individual's emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings towards other people. People who are heterosexual experience these feelings primarily for people of the opposite sex. People who are homosexual experience these feelings primarily for people of the same sex. People who are bisexual experience feelings for people of both sexes. And people who are asexual experience no or very little attraction to either sex.

Gender Identity
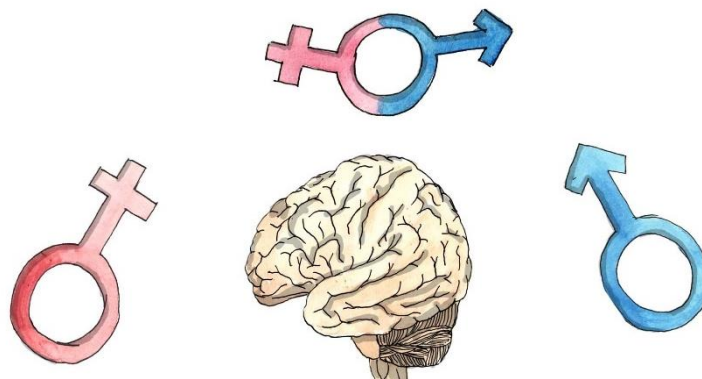
Gender identity is the term that is used to describe a person's deeply held personal, internal sense of being male, female, some of both, or maybe even neither.

The important thing to note here is that a person's gender identity may not always correspond to their assigned biological sex.
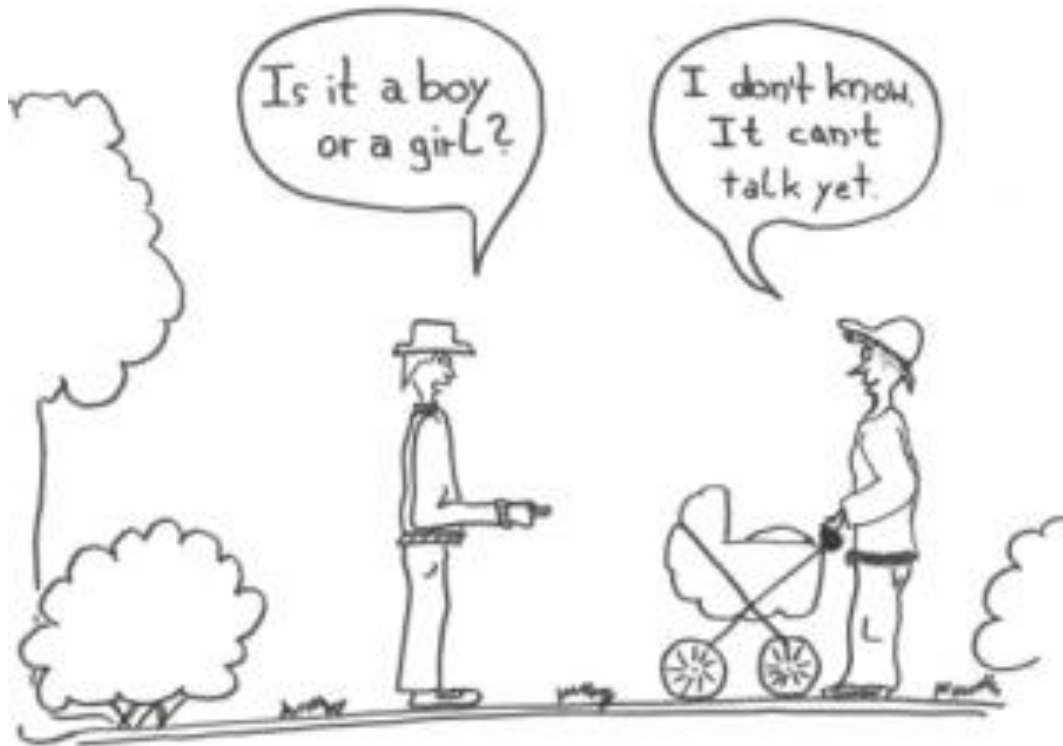
While an individual, at birth, may be assigned the term "male" based on biological characteristics, that person might not necessarily feel as though they are male, or were intended to be male. For them, there's a disconnect that happens between what they may see on the outside (a male body, leading to the assumption that the person will identify as male) and how the individual sees themselves (a person who identifies as female but who is living inside a body that was assigned male).

Gender Expression

Gender expression is something you can see. It includes the way in which a person communicates their gender identity to others through external means such as clothing, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions that are traditionally linked to how we read masculinity or femininity.

Some individuals may embrace a gender expression that is outside of these two opposite points, or binaries. Many individuals may have a more androgynous—or gender-neutral—expression. Some individuals may embrace a more fluid expression, at times presenting as female, at others presenting as male. Some people refer to being non-binary, which generally means that they do not see themselves on any of the more traditional understandings of gender as rigid and inflexible.

Biological sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression are not dependent on each other, but can be interconnected

A detailed glossary of terms below will help your understanding further. However, it is important to keep in mind that the terminology is constantly evolving and that some people may have differences in how they understand certain words, and preferences for how they describe themselves. What is crucial is to remember to listen to each individual and respect their identifications.

Detailed Glossary of terms (compiled from resources available online)

advocate – (noun): a person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a marginalized group. (verb): to actively support/plea in favour of a particular cause, the action of working to end intolerance, educate others, etc.

agender – (adj.): a person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. Sometimes called gender *neutrois*, gender neutral, or genderless.

ally – (noun): a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect.

androgyny/ous – (adj.): a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity; occasionally used in place of "intersex" to describe a person with both female and male anatomy.

androsexual / androphilic – (adj.): being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to men, males, and/or masculinity.

aromantic – (adj.): experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behaviour. Aromanticism exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions, and many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demiromantic).

asexual – (adj.): experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behaviour. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions, and many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demisexual).

- Asexuality is different from celibacy in that it is a sexual orientation whereas celibacy is an abstaining from a certain action.
- Not all asexual people are aromantic.

bigender – (adj.): a person who fluctuates between traditionally "woman" and "man" gender-based behaviour and identities, identifying with both genders (and sometimes a third gender).

bicurious – (adj.): a curiosity about experiencing attraction to people of the same gender/sex (similar to questioning).

biological sex – (noun): a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply "sex," "physical sex," "anatomical sex," or specifically as "sex assigned at birth."

- Often seen as a binary but as there are many combinations of chromosomes, hormones, and primary/secondary sex characteristics, it's more accurate to view this as a spectrum (which is more inclusive of intersex people as well as trans*-identified people).

biphobia – (noun): a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express towards bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society.

biphobic – (adj.): a word used to describe an individual who harbours some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards bisexual people.

- Important to recognize that many of our "stereotypes" of bisexual people - they're overly sexual, greedy, it's just a phase - have harmful and stigmatizing effects (and that it is not only straight people but also many queer individuals harbour these beliefs too).

bisexual – (adj.): a person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some males/men and females/women. A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to people of their gender and another gender. This attraction does not have to be equally split or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders or sexes an individual may be attracted to.

cisgender – (adj.): a person whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity align (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to "cis." - "Cis" is a latin prefix that means "on the same side [as]" or "on this side [of]."

closeted – (adj.) : an individual who is not open to themselves or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one's safety, peer or family rejection, or disapproval and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being "in the closet." When someone chooses to break this silence they "come out" of the closet. (See coming out)

coming out: the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity (to "come out" to oneself). It is also the process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others (to "come out" to friends, family etc.).

- This is a continual, life-long process. Everyday, all the time, one has to evaluate and re-evaluate who they are comfortable coming out to, if it is safe, and what the consequences might be.

cross-dresser – (noun): someone who wears clothes of another gender/sex.

demiromantic – (adj.): little or no capacity to experience romantic attraction until a strong sexual or emotional connection is formed with another individual, often within a sexual relationship.

demisexual – (adj.): little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic or emotional connection is formed with another individual, often within a romantic relationship.

drag king – (noun): someone who performs masculinity theatrically, for the purpose of entertainment, usually in a club or bar, etc.

drag queen – (noun): someone who performs femininity theatrically, for the purpose of entertainment, usually in a club or bar, etc.

dyke – (noun): referring to a masculine presenting lesbian. While often used derogatorily, it is adopted affirmatively by many lesbians (both more masculine and more feminine presenting lesbians) as a positive self-identity term.

emotional attraction – (noun): a capacity that evokes the want to engage in emotionally intimate behaviour (e.g., sharing, confiding, trusting, interdepending), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, romantic attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

fag(got) – (noun): derogatory term referring to a gay person, or someone perceived as queer. Occasionally used as a self-identifying affirming term by some gay men, at times in the shortened form 'fag'.

FtM / F2M; MtF / M2F – (abbreviation): female-to-male transgender or transsexual person; male-to-female transgender or transsexual person.

gay – (adj.): individuals who are primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and/or gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men, and can be applied to women as well. An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

gender binary – (noun): the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

gender expression – (noun): the external display of one's gender, through a combination of dress, demeanour, social behaviour, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

gender fluid – (adj.): a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.

gender identity – (noun): the internal perception of one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, trans*, and more. Gender identity should not be confused with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

gender non-conforming – (adj.): a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man)

genderqueer – (adj.): a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

gender variant – (adj.): someone who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, gender-queer, cross-dresser, etc).

gynesexual / gynephilic – (adj.): being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to woman, females, and/or femininity.

hermaphrodite – (noun): an outdated medical term previously used to refer to someone who was born with some combination of typically-male and typically-female sex characteristics. It's considered stigmatizing and inaccurate. See intersex.

heteronormativity – (noun): the assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities. Eg. when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband's name is. Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

heterosexual – (adj.) : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. Also known as straight.

homophobia – (noun): an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have towards members of LGBTQ community. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ.

homophobic – (adj.): a word used to describe an individual who harbours some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards gay people.

homosexual – (adj. & noun): a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. The term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

- Until 1973 "Homosexuality" was classified as a mental disorder in the DSM Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This is just one of the reasons that there are such heavy negative and clinical connotations with this term.

intersex – (adj.): term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

- Often seen as a problematic condition when babies or young children are identified as intersex, it was for a long term considered an "emergency" and something that doctors moved to "fix" right away in a new-born child. There has been increasing advocacy and awareness brought to this issue and many individuals advocate that intersex individuals should be allowed to remain intersex past infancy and to not treat the condition as an issue or medical emergency.

lesbian – (noun & adj.): women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

metrosexual – (adj.): a man with a strong aesthetic sense who spends more time, energy, or money on his appearance and grooming than is considered gender normative.

MSM / WSW – (abbreviations): men who have sex with men or women who have sex with women, to distinguish sexual behaviours from sexual identities. Often used in HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and treatment.

pansexual – (adj.): a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to "pan."

polyamory / polyamorous – (noun, adj.): refers to the practice of, desire to, or orientation towards having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners).

queer – (adj.): used as an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight. or have a non-normative gender identity. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, it is

not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ community. The term "queer" can often be used interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., "queer folks" instead of "LGBTQ folks").

questioning – (verb, adj.): an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

sex assigned at birth – phrase used to intentionally recognize a person's assigned sex based on biological sex (not gender identity).

sexual attraction – (noun): a capacity that evokes the want to engage in physically intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual orientation – (noun): the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labelled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

sex reassignment surgery (SRS) – (noun): used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person's biological sex. "Gender confirmation surgery" is considered by many to be a more affirming term. In most cases, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance. Some refer to different surgical procedures as "top" surgery and "bottom" surgery to discuss what type of surgery they are having without having to be more explicit.

skoliosexual – (adj.): being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to some genderqueer, transgender, transsexual, and/or non-binary people.

straight – (adj.): a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

third gender – (noun): for a person who does not identify with either man or woman, but identifies with another gender. This gender category is used by societies that recognise three or more genders, both contemporary and historic, and is also a conceptual term meaning different things to different people who use it, as a way to move beyond the gender binary.

top surgery – (noun): this term refers to surgery for the construction of a male-type chest or breast augmentation for a female-type chest.

trans* – (adj.): An umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially defined gender norms. Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).

- Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).
- Trans people can be straight, gay, bisexual, queer, or any other sexual orientation.
- Because sexuality labels (e.g., gay, straight, bi) are generally based on the relationship between the person's gender and the genders they are attracted to, trans* sexuality can be defined in several ways.

transgender – (adj.): A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that assigned at birth based on anatomical sex.

transition / transitioning – (noun, verb): this term is primarily used to refer to the process a trans* person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression.

transman – (noun): Identity label sometimes adopted by female-to-male transgender people or transsexuals to signify that they are men while still affirming their history as assigned female sex at birth.

transwoman – (noun): Identity label sometimes adopted by male-to-female transsexuals or transgender people to signify that they are women while still affirming their history as assigned male sex at birth.

Hijra/Kinnar – cultural identity and community referring to a transwoman who is part of the hijra community. The community is complex and diverse with numerous rituals, customs and rules. The community works under a gharana (ritual 'houses'/'families') system with a hierarchy of 'guru-chelas' (loosely meaning teacher-students).

A hijra person undergoes a 'reet', ritual where a young man enters a hijra gharana through ritual offerings made to the Guru. Usually after such a ceremony it is difficult for young biological males to return to their biological families as the Guru demands total loyalty.

Jogtas/ Jogappas/ Shiv- Shaktis are Hindu hijras who are male temple prostitutes or devdasis. They are mostly male children dedicated to goddesses who ritually cross dress for religious purposes.

transphobia – (noun): the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans* people, the trans* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society.

- Transphobia is often manifested in violent and deadly means. Trans* people are far more likely than their cisgender or LGB peers to be the victims of violent crimes.

transphobic – (adj.): a word used to describe an individual who harbours some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans* people.

transsexual – (noun and adj.): a person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

transvestite – (noun): a person who dresses as the binary opposite gender expression ("cross-dresses"), often called a "cross-dresser," and should not be confused with transsexual.

ze / zir / "zee", "zerr" or "zeer" – alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans* people. They replace "he" and "she" and "his" and "hers" respectively. Alternatively, some people who are not comfortable/do not embrace he/she use the plural pronoun "they/their" as a gender neutral singular pronoun.

This list is neither comprehensive nor inviolable, but a work in progress towards capturing something that is constantly evolving.

Common Myths and Misconceptions

(derived from the SANCHAAR Media Guide developed by The Humsafar Trust as a recommended language manual for improved reporting on Gender and Sexual Minorities in India)

Myths and Misconceptions	Clarifications
Gay people are paedophiles, sexual predators.	Paedophilia is a crime committed by any adult against a child irrespective of sexuality. Organizations like Humsafar Trust support Child Rights and even have an organizational Child Protection Policy.
Child sexual abuse of boys makes them `homosexual'/ gay men are sexually abused in childhood.	Sexual orientation is by birth, like being left-handed or right-handed; sexual abuse/assault does not 'create' a gay person.
Whenever there is a shortage of women combined with an all-male setting, such as hostels, military barracks and shared dwellings like that of migrant labourers, men have sex with each other	Sexual orientation is irrespective of `all-male situation'; it does not change with the setting
Gay men are feminine, women like.	This is a false stereotype, there is no one 'type' of gay men.
Lesbian women are like men.	This is a stereotype, there is no one type of lesbian women.
Is unnatural, against natural roles.	Traditionally in all cultures, reproductive sex has been emphasised upon; however, many different kinds of sexual behaviour have always existed and are natural to those who practice it.
Hijras are born with congenital birth defects that is why they have both male and female	Hijra is a cultural identity and a community where a person joins by choice in order to live her life in a gender role different from

genitals/ambiguous genitalia, hence are cast aside and shunned by the society	the sex assigned at birth. Dancing, singing and blessing for births and marriages and seeking fees for the same and ritual alms are all a part of their tradition; however coercing people is not.
There is a growing trend of LGBT people/ gay people/ "this type of people".	Gender and sexual minorities have always existed but did not assert themselves as a group earlier. Increasing assertiveness should not be seen as increasing prevalence. It's not appropriate to portray being LGBT as a `fashion trend'.
Some psychiatrists see same-sex orientation as a mental disorder and may recommend counselling, and other therapies to change sexual orientation.	These "experts" are clearly uninformed about the gold standards of psychiatric practices as elaborated in DSM Manual of American Psychiatry Association and ICD Manual by Work Health Organization which does not list homosexuality as a mental disorder. It's important to note that the Indian Psychiatrists' Association has released an official statement stating that homosexuality is not a mental disorder and any mental health professional stating otherwise is not in sync with their opinion.
Men/transgender people can never be raped.	Rape and sexual assaults are a form of coercion into non-consensual sex that can happen irrespective of one's biological sex. Men and transgender people too face this.
Same sex behaviour is either an upper class or a lower-class phenomenon. This does not happen in middle class and the educated class.	This impression is generated due to openly out celebrities and people belonging to higher strata of the society. Also, considering sexuality as an `ill' and attributing that to the lower-socio economic and marginalized groups is often viewed as the middle class's approach towards issues.

⊞ Put it in Writing!

Policies against discrimination and harassment

It is imperative to have a formal policy outlining the organisation's position on tackling all forms of discrimination and ensuring that all employees are treated fairly and equally with regard to employment conditions.

It is further important that the **anti-discrimination and harassment policies specifically reflect sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination**, and provide examples of what homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic discrimination looks like.

Anti-harassment and discrimination policies should be reviewed on a regular basis (at least every 3-5 years) to ensure that policy language remains current, reflective of corporate values, and meets human rights legislative requirements.

A company's policies send a powerful message to staff about its values and commitment to inclusivity.

Policies that promote inclusion and gender diversity


WHICH ONE DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH ?

Global best practices that have been incorporated by top Financial services organisations like Llyods Banking Group, JP Morgan and HSBC Bank and IT giants like IBM and Accenture for inclusion of gender and sexual minorities include:

- establishment of gender-neutral dress code

- all-gender bathrooms
- healthcare coverage for transgender employees. At the most inclusive workplaces, benefits packages include coverage for drugs related to HIV/AIDS (including PrEP) and coverage for transition related costs (including gender affirmation surgery).
- ensure that the propositions offered to employees where spouses and partners are included, are also valid for partners of the same sex.
- rules on maternity leave apply to mothers, fathers and co-mothers, and to co-fathers in case of adoption
- partners of the same sex are also covered if the company chooses to provide time off with pay in cases of death and serious illness in the immediate family,
- cohabiting partners are considered equivalent to spouses in connection with offers and benefits such as health insurance

Policies supporting gender transition
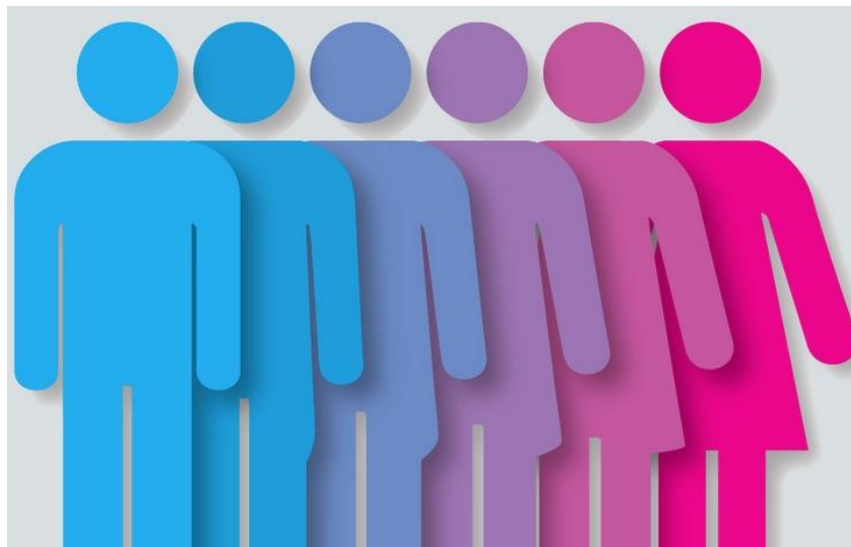
Transgender people and people undergoing gender transition in the workplace face acute stigma and discrimination. This requires specific support from employers. As an organization committed to creating an inclusive environment for all, providing specific gender transition guidelines will be helpful to both the person who is transitioning and their co-workers.

There tend to be two aspects to transitioning for many people:
- **Social and legal transition**
  This includes change of name, pronoun selection, cosmetic modifications to appearance, dress, changes to an individual's vocal tone, etc. For many people, this will also entail legal changes to their name and gender marker on identification documents like driver's licenses and passports.
- **Medical transition**
  This entails introduction of hormones (testosterone for trans men, estrogen and testosterone blockers for trans women) into the body. For some people, it will also involve surgical procedures that align the physical body with one's gender identification. These may include "top" surgery, "bottom" surgery, and, for transwomen, facial feminization.

There is no singular way for a person to transition; this is a personal process that is to be defined by the individual and it is integral that the guidelines and any formal documents communicate that.

These guidelines should clearly outline the processes that may occur within the organisation both before and after the transition:

Having guidelines in place prior to an employee transitioning, signals to prospective and current employees that your organization supports people's diverse gender identities and expressions.

Sample policies *before* transition
- All employees should be made aware of the company's transgender-related policies and the availability of transition-related health care benefits. This is to ensure that anybody wishing to transition understands their rights and benefits available to them.
- The transitioning employee's, supervisor, their immediate and associated teams and the HR team should be made aware of the employee's planned transition
- They should also be familiarized with the company's policies and any other relevant resources that provide educational information about transgender issues
- It is important to create a transition plan that includes:
  - ✓ Time period between which the transition will officially and formally occur. This means the time period between which the employee will change their gender expression, name, and pronouns. The transitioning employee may choose to begin using the restroom and locker room associated with their gender identity.
  - ✓ How, and in what format, the transitioning employee's co-workers should be made aware of the employee's transition and the training that is needed for them
  - ✓ The updates that should be made to the transitioning employee's records, and when they will be made
  - ✓ The dates of any leave that may be needed for pre-scheduled medical procedures
  - ✓ Name and email address changes and update of photographs in the employee records, IDs etc

Sample policies *after* transition

- High-level management openly shows support and solidarity for the transitioning employee
- Co-workers respect the fact that that the transitioning employee will be presenting themselves in accordance with their gender identity
- Co-workers use the new name and pronoun of the employee in all communication – written, oral and informal
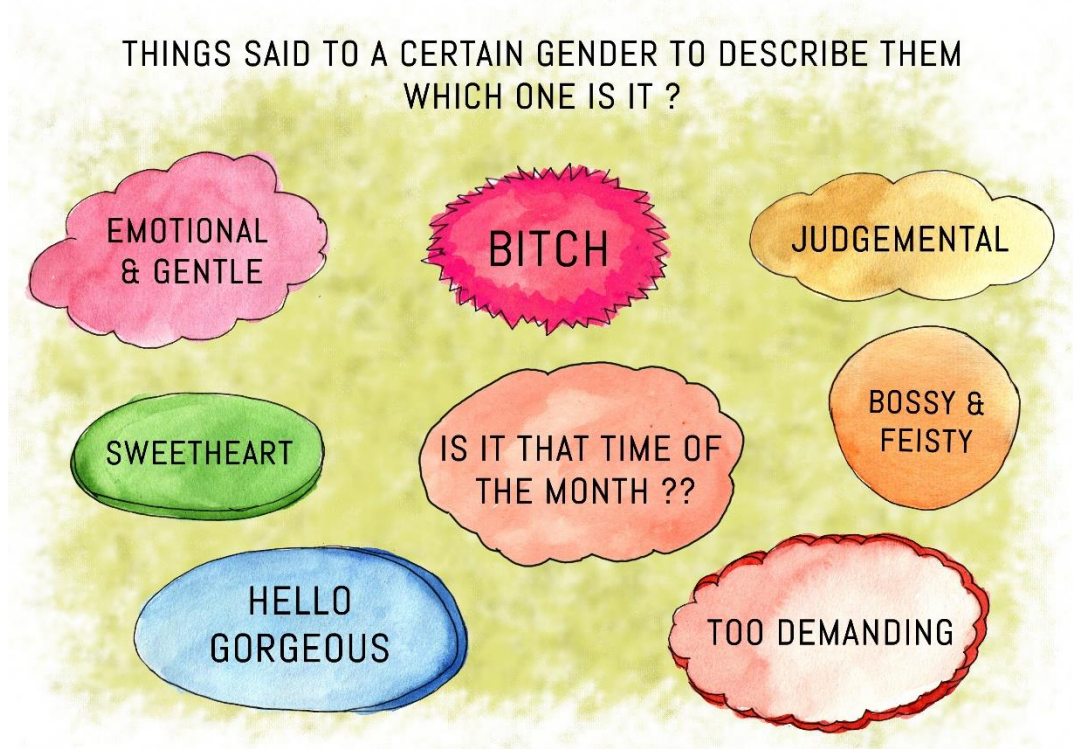
- Organisations non-discrimination and transition-related policies should be periodically reviewed

Policies that address the unconscious bias in recruitment

The typical recruiting and hiring practices in most organisations is likely to have an unconscious bias against gender and sexual minorities. Recruiters and hiring managers should be trained on the many forms of unconscious bias that play out in the hiring process to ensure they are selecting the best person for the job, regardless of differences.

- Address the issue of **gendered language in job postings** - It is important to reach out to a diverse range of communities and people, including gender and sexual minorities while posting to job portals and relevant publications
- Check if applicants dressed in **clothing that is not considered "gender appropriate"** are removed from the candidate pool
- Check if people are excluded in telephone interviews because the **tone of their voice** is either too high or too low or doesn't match assumptions of what someone should sound like
- Train your recruiters on **how to interact with references** who might not be aware of a previous employee's gender transition (i.e., a candidate's previous employer knew them by a different name and as a different gender).

Communication and language

THINGS SAID TO A CERTAIN GENDER TO DESCRIBE THEM
WHICH ONE IS IT ?

EMOTIONAL & GENTLE

BITCH

JUDGEMENTAL

SWEETHEART

IS IT THAT TIME OF THE MONTH ??

BOSSY & FEISTY

HELLO GORGEOUS

TOO DEMANDING

Not only is it extremely important to communicate to all employees about how the company values and supports its employees and is strongly committed to inclusion of gender and sexual minorities, it is also crucial to evaluate internal and external communication and language use. The questions that we can ask ourselves are:

- Is all company communication inclusive? For example, are there fields on the website where it is only possible to choose between "man" and "woman" as an identity?
- Is there an implicit assumption that all employees and customers are heterosexual?
- Do company marketing materials signal that they are based on the assumption that everyone is cisgender or heterosexual, or is everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, reflected in company marketing?

The goal should be to embed inclusive content into a variety of messages, from company newsletters to team updates so that communications on gender and sexuality inclusiveness no longer seem like a side-topic, but are embedded in business-as-usual.

The language we use influences whether one feels included in or excluded from a community.

Some important tips:

- Identify and avoid **microaggressions** ("social exchanges in which a member of a dominant culture says or does something, often accidentally, and without intended malice, that belittles and alienates a member of a marginalised group.")

"That's so gay"   "You're not a 'typical' gay guy"

"Who is the man in the relationship?"

"What is your real name?"

"you people…"

- Avoid Offensive & Inaccurate Language (find out the correct or preferred term)

✗	✓
Homosexual lifestyle	Lesbian, Gay
Gay Marriage	Marriage equality
Sexual preference	Sexual orientation
"A transgender"	Transgender person
Sex change	Transition

- Respect a person's gender identity by **using the correct pronoun**. Ask the individual what would be the preferred name and the preferred pronoun and refer to the individual using the same, even if this is different from what is mentioned as the birth name/noun in the documents, or what you perceive based on their voice, appearance etc.
- Always use the gender pronouns people currently identify with, even when describing them in a context prior to their transition.
- Never use quotation marks around a transgender person's chosen name or the pronoun that reflects their gender identity.
- It is prudent to **use gender-neutral terms in oral communication** with prospective employees, new employees or colleagues to signal that it is not taken for granted that their partner is of the opposite sex.
- In addition, organizations are encouraged to **review their dress codes**. Rather than stating what is appropriate and professional dress for men and women, why not state that all employees must dress to meet professional standards, without dictating whether people should wear skirts or pants?
- **Confidentiality on aspects of gender and sexual orientation** should be ensured by the workplace.

Gendered language enforces stereotypes and erases the existence of gender queer and gender non-binary people within organizations

Beyond the policies

Having the right policies in place is definitely the first step in the direction of inclusion. However, it is not enough. While policies bring political correctness, being inclusive is a mindset.

Being inclusive goes beyond being politically correct.

What makes the workplace truly inclusive is developing a culture of inclusion. This requires a multi-pronged approach.

Policies made accessible

Policies should be made easily accessible through intranet sites or all staff communications, and should set out roles and responsibilities for compliance. It is important to ensure that all employees are aware of the bullying and harassment policies and that they know how to react and to notify management if bullying or harassment related to gender identity or sexual orientation take place. There should be multiple avenues for employees to report concerns like complaint/grievance cells or an HR ombudsperson who can be approached in instances of crisis.

Policies made part of the work culture

Respect for all employees should become a part of the work culture. It should be made clear that it is not acceptable to gossip about employees' gender identity or sexual orientation, or to ask inappropriate personal questions.

To truly transform, one needs to integrate and embed the right behaviours, attitudes and outcomes in the life and work of every employee, every manager, every supplier, every client that works with the organisation. Rather than stating the minimum expectation of the law by outlining what is prohibited, the policy should articulate clearly and confidently the behaviour that is expected from everyone, values are integrated into performance achievement process, these values are positively reinforced and teams are held into account to bring inclusiveness.

Training on policies

It is important that the employees are trained on inclusion policies:

- Integrating training on gender and sexuality into all business training and promotion milestones enforcing the message that gender and sexuality inclusivity is part of the organisation's culture.
- Having a module specifically focused on gender and sexual orientation at the time of orientation for new joiners
- Inviting sessions by speakers or advocates from gender and sexual minorities to share their personal experiences with employees
- Introducing reverse mentoring programs where a senior manager is mentored by a more junior individual from gender and sexual minorities
- Having employees volunteer with organisations/groups which work with sexual minorities is an excellent way of creating awareness on the subject
- Creating employee champions who could talk about gender and sexuality and could be go to people within the organization for information could ensure access, especially for people who want to talk through sensitive things with respect to gender and sexual minorities
- Using informal settings, movies, gatherings and fun activities to create awareness ensures greater engagement and participation. Activities which promote the breaking of gender stereotypes could be also used as an effective way to build understanding of gender and sexuality related policies

Employee networks and Resource Groups

Employee networks and resource groups comprising of gender and sexual minorities and their allies play a vital role in delivering workplace equality and an increased understanding of gender identity and sexual orientation. Typically, the work of these networks can be tied into people strategies or HR metrics around engagement, retention, attraction and inclusion. Their aim is to openly support gender and sexual minorities in all aspects of workplace inclusion thus contributing to a safe, equitable and respectful work environment in which all employees can bring their whole selves to work.

It is important for the network to be visible within the organisation and the existence of the network needs to be communicated to all the employees.

Equip the management
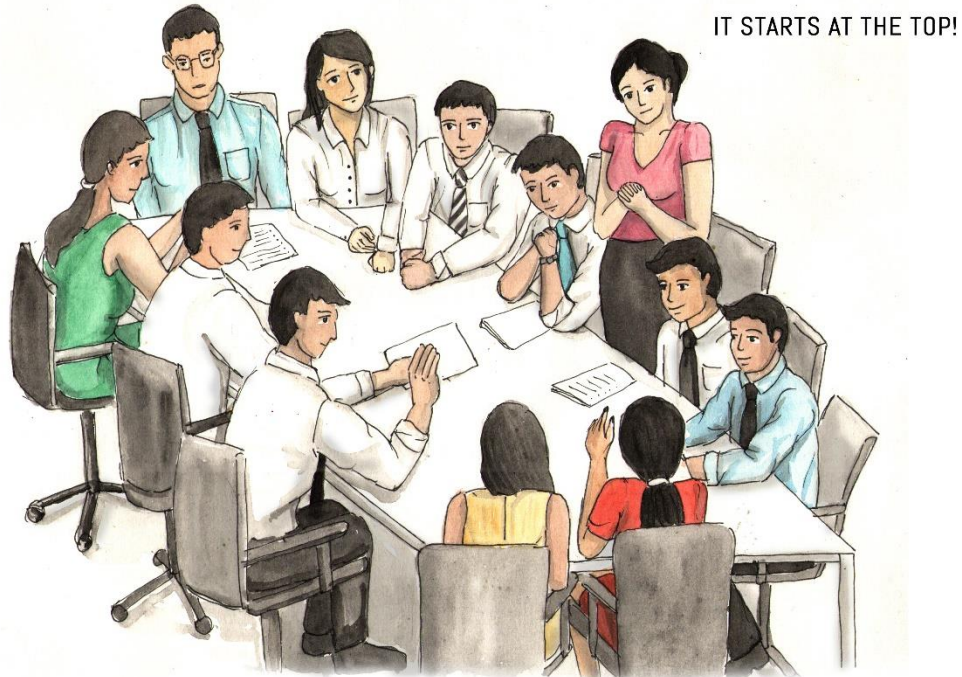
IT STARTS AT THE TOP!

IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT MANAGEMENT IS EQUIPPED WITH UPDATED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WORKPLACE DIVERSITY INITIATIVES.

It is important to make sure that management is equipped with updated knowledge about workplace diversity initiatives. Advise managers at all levels on how to identify and handle any phobia against gender and sexual minorities.

An increasing number of organizations now look at the inclusivity of individual leaders as part of their review. This might include looking at each leader's efforts to promote inclusion within their team and creating equal opportunities for all team members.
Having "out" leadership, encouraging leadership development of "out" employees through mentorship programs and targeted outreach for leadership opportunities can also demonstrate an organizational commitment to inclusion gender and sexual minorities and help attract and retain other key players.

There is also a need for specific training and involvement of people managers since they are invested in the care and well-being of those who work for them and are responsible for ensuring their teams interact in a professional and respectful manner. Specific diversity and inclusion training for people managers helps ensure they fully understand this responsibility and know how to act on it. People managers must be aware of the organization's discrimination and harassment policies and their specific role in ensuring compliance. People managers are often the first point of contact for questions around health benefits, dress code,

use of washrooms, etc. so it is important that they can answer questions confidently and respectfully, and know where to direct an employee if further support is needed.

Include your stakeholders

While many organizations have a formal code of conduct for employees, fewer extend this code to their suppliers (eg. Places from where the organization orders office supplies, goes to for catering, hires for cleaning, etc.). Ensuring suppliers align with your organizational values around gender and sexual minorities goes a long way toward inclusion.

Constant monitoring and improvement

One must remember that building a culture of inclusion is a journey and does not happen immediately – the key to success is relentless focus on implementation and constant monitoring of success.

One could use anonymous surveys to check the overall pulse of the organization with respect to inclusion of gender and sexuality. Creating strong employee resource groups where employees can talk about issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and work to end homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia also provides platforms for monitoring and improvement. The employee resource groups can advise on policy review and development (i.e., how to change employee benefits packages so they are more inclusive) and suggest potential partnerships with organizations that can support inclusion efforts.

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