Abstract:
The goal of this literature review is to assess the various elements of diversity. Diversity as a factor that encompasses several variables and such variables do not operate in isolation. Therefore, a concise understanding of the features of diversity is required to address the challenges that arise due to diversity. This paper begins with a formal review of the definition of diversity and then proceeds with various studies that shed light on the multiple layers of diversity. We will review the three dominant forms of diversity that include: Cultural diversity, Demographics diversity and Ethnic Diversity. Appropriate sub-divisions of various variables have been made wherever necessary. Each component of diversity is further analysed in isolation as well as in integration with other systems. The sub-divisions of several components of diversity has been used to gain insight into its core layers, which might usually remain subtle or are unpredictable, for example ambivalent sexism. Finally, in the concluding section an attempt has been made to analyse the current scenarios in which diversity may act as a dependent or an independent variable. Analysis of present scenario is made in the context of improvements in communication and technology and how these developmental processes have influenced the various variables of diversity.

Keywords: Hofstede's taxonomy, Schwartz's taxonomy, Sexism, Culture, Demographics, Ethnicity, In group and Out-group.

I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of “diversity” has garnered much positive attention from researchers all over the world. Understanding diversity is not just limited to government policies; instead, it has expanded to workplaces, communities, academic interactions and even political elections [1]. Therefore, it becomes essential to define the current challenges that are arising due to the components of diversity. The goal of this literature review is to investigate the various parts of diversity and assess its impact on the community in general. Although the existing review of literature documents multiple elements of diversity, however, there has been a lack of an attempt to integrate the various theories and variables under one roof. Since variables in social sciences do not act in isolation, this paper reviews the case of diversity within a continuous and integrated framework.

Review of Literature

Diversity encompasses all those differences that make us unique, including but not limited to race, colour, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, gender, socio-economic status, age and physical and mental ability [2]. Diversity, in general, refers to the variety and is mainly of two types -

- Visible diversity like race and clothing styles [3].
- Invisible diversity like educational level, experiences [3]

In the case of visible diversity, it is worthwhile to note that the perception of people will affect the interpretation of visible diversity present in the surrounding. For example, when it comes to clothing styles, different cultures have different notions of clothing styles, and therefore, a person wearing the traditional dress of Japan will be perceived as different by someone who traditionally belongs to the country of India or China. In the case of invisible diversity, many factors can promote or reduce the characteristics of a person in the context of a particular criteria. This criterion can range from educational degrees two intellectual abilities and might also include intelligence and other forms of skills that are exposed only in certain preferable conditions. The consequences of diversity are both positive and negative [4]. In the case of positive outcomes, members of a particular group increase their chances of survival and development. In the case of negative consequences (which are usually seen in the form of clashes occurring between various diverse groups), the conflicts lead to tension and even violence between the in-group and out-group members [4]. Types of diversity – In this paper, we will review the three dominant forms of diversity that include:

I. Cultural diversity
II. Demographics diversity
III. Ethnic Diversity

II. CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Culture is a dynamic system of rules established by groups to ensure survival, communications, attitude, beliefs and traditions (Matsumoto, 2004). The group as a whole follows cultural norms but can harbour or implement each standard differently. This leads to subgroups within the same cultural group. Diversity in culture is studied by two different forms of taxonomies which are-

- Taxonomy based on differences
- Taxonomy based on similarities

I. Taxonomy based on Differences

Hofstede's collected data from employees of IBM (International Business Machine), which is a multinational corporation [5]. The data was collected from around 50 countries in which IBM had setups. His study found five-dimensional differences based on factor analysis of the collected data [5]. His study findings conclude that the culture is a software, and the human brain is hardware. Though humans are born with the same biological brain (the hardware) but differences among humans arises due to functions of
cultures which act as the software. The findings are significant because Hofstede's results point towards abstract concepts which are present in a culture. These abstract concepts, for example, indigenous practices, traditions, festivals and rituals of a particular culture can, therefore, tend to have influencers on the members of this culture. Software is something whose effect can be seen but cannot be touched. When we talk about software, the prototype image that usually comes to our mind might be related to the software used in computers and mobile phones. On the other hand, when talking about hardware, concepts are well-defined, and therefore, most of these concepts are based on concrete visualisations rather than abstract visualisations. To sum up, it can be said that diversity includes various components, some of which belongs to the abstract category, while some belong to the concrete group.

The five dimensions of culture as per Hofstede's includes:

A. Individualism vs collectivism
B. Masculinity versus femininity
C. Long term versus short term goals
D. Power distance
E. Uncertainty avoidance

A. Individualism vs collectivism
Individualism - individuals in individualism culture pay more attention to self-development than group development [6]. Individuals in such culture prefer to work independently. Example – After marriage, couples in the USA live in a different home than their parents. Collectivism focuses on the overall collective development of a group [6]. The individuals are expected to work in tune with the advantage of the group rather than focusing on personal growth. Countries include Middle East countries and Asian countries like India, Sri Lanka etc. Example- After marriage in India, couples tend to live with the family of the bridgroom as a joint family.

J. Masculinity cultures vs femininity cultures
Masculinity cultures- In masculinity culture, men are encouraged to pursue well-defined career goals and achievements [5]. In femininity cultures, female are encouraged to place more importance on harmony and relationships [5]. In such cultures, women place higher values on social issues like relationships and helping others.

K. Long term goals vs short term goals
In cultures that favour long term goals, individuals pay more importance to long-term future goals. Examples of such countries include Japan, South Korea and India. The culture that favours short term goals encourages individuals to pay more importance to short term goals than long term future rewards. Examples of such countries include Canada and the USA. Critical analysis of the differences in cultures based on the type of goals reveals that the socio-economic status of a country also influences the purposes of its citizens [7]. For developing countries, the head of the family must be engaged in an occupation which will go on in the long run to serve the needs of the family. However, in developed nations, citizens can afford to enjoy the premium services that include safety, security and right working conditions. These differences in availability of services and facilities to the people can, therefore, be a factor in choosing the type of long term or short term goals.

L. Power distance-
Power may refer to social status, wealth and strong physical characteristics. Power distance is the extent to which the individuals accept inequalities based on power [8]. Based on power distance, there are two types of cultures- Low power distance cultures in which people don't place much emphasis on power inequalities in such cultures, and others are perceived more or less to be similar [5]. Example include countries of the USA and Canada. In low power society, it is common to address others by their first name even if the other person is senior in position or age. In high power distance cultures, inequality is based on access to power [8]. Example in Asian countries like Middle East countries, India, and China and so on so on it is typical for people to address senior persons with respectful titles and prefixes. The type of power also seems to influence the perception of the people in such cultures. Scholastic or academic achievements person may be seen as a dominant position in a particular culture but might not be seen as a dominant position in another culture.

M. Avoidance of uncertainty
Avoidance of uncertainty refers to the extent to which individuals want to reduce uncertainty. Uncertainty avoidance is inversely proportional to risk-taking behaviour [9]. This means that people who like to play it safe will be more prone to reduce the uncertainty as compared to those people who are more impulse and have risk-taking attitudes. Based on uncertainty avoidance, we have two types of cultural environment [9] - Low levels of uncertainty avoidance - individuals in such cultures generally accept the fact that some degree of uncertainty is unavoidable. Examples include countries of Singapore and Jamaica. High levels of uncertainty avoidance - individuals in such culture tend to reduce uncertainty. Examples include countries of Greece, Portugal and Spain. Hofstede's was the first person to attempt to examine global cultural differences based on statistical techniques like factor analysis [10]. His taxonomy has served useful for understanding the cultural differences. However, his research also has some demerits. The sample used by Hofstede's in his research is not an accurate representation of cultural diversity. The sample was taken from IBM company only, and therefore, such samples contain only skilled or educated persons. Any factor that reduces the representatives of the sample can have dramatic effects on the outcomes or results [11]. Therefore it is required that while replicating the study of Hofstede, a particular emphasis should be given for correcting the issue of accurate sample representation.

II. Taxonomy based on similarities
Another type of taxonomy, namely Schwartz's Value Framework, is based on the similarities seen in culture [12]. His research sample included about twenty countries. He found ten universal values that correspond to every culture.

These ten values are-
Power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security [13]. Schwartz found the following similarities in the cultures - Cultures in which universalism is favoured to tend to accept people from other cultures more favourably as compared to cultures with a low tolerance for the out-group [12]. Example of such cultures is seen in the countries of Singapore, Japan and India. The universalism factor, therefore, asserts that the perception of people based on in-group and out-group differences are less likely to manifest in severe conflicting conditions when group members favour universalism. Universalism, therefore, becomes a factor that fosters a positive relationship between the in-group and out-group members. In terms of security, the culture of Germany and
Israel share similarities in terms of ratings about fear of war [12]. War is seen equally threatening to safety in these two cultures. One apparent reason can be attributed to the historical events that significantly shaped these two countries. While Germany was profoundly affected by the Second World War [14], Israeli citizens, have a history of suffering from discrimination and violent attacks in different eras [15]. The countries of India and Japan share similarities when it comes to valuing customs and traditions of ancestors [12]. Schwartz's taxonomy has the distinct advantage that it aims to find similarities rather than dissimilarities among the culture. However, his findings cannot be generalised for large groups because large groups are not entirely homogeneous [12].

III. DEMOGRAPHICS DIVERSITY

Demographics relates to the structure of a population or group. This structure consists of multiple components like age, sex, gender, class, ethnicity, language etc [16]. While considering diversity based on demographic variables, it is essential to know that demographics diversities does not operate in isolation. Instead, it is often implemented as combination qualities like religion and language or gender in class and so on. Similarly, it can be argued that demographic diversities affect different persons differently [17]. Also, for the same person, experiences can be different at different points of his or her life. Therefore, while studying the variables of diversity, it is recommended to consider these variables as a continuous and integrated system rather than treating such variables in isolation.

J.J. Diversities seen among gender

Gender is based on sociocultural influences. Gender is not equal to the term “sex” (Schneider, 2005). Sex is used to denote the biological distinction of being male or female, while gender refers to social and learned characteristics that are associated with being male or female (Schneider, 2005). Gender inequalities occur because boys are modelled by the society to be masculine (that is independent and assertive), while the girls are shaped to be feminine (that is caring and dependable). In terms of power and social position, males are naturally preferred for higher positions like CEO of a company or commander of an army [17]. Such gender inequalities generally stem from gender stereotypes. At the same time, the practice of gender discrimination can itself lead to the origins of new forms of gender stereotypes and prejudice [18].

II. Sexism

Another variable that is closely related to the gender category is “sexism”. Sexism refers to biased against others based on sex [19]. Sexism is of several types - Hostile sexism - refers to the negative expressions and behaviours towards women. [20]. This is the most direct form of sexism. Examples include unequal pay to women than men for the same level of work. Benevolent sexism - benevolent sexism includes subtle forms of sexism. Although positive remarks for women are used here, not nonetheless; these positive remarks are based on the fact that women are limited in several ways than men. For example, attributing a woman's successful position in a company based on her looks rather than her hard work. Ambivalent sexism – When people hold both hostile and benevolent sexism attitudes, they are said to hold ambivalent sexism [19]. Example- Women need to be protected by men which is a benevolent form of sexism however the logic that women need to be protected by men because they are incompetent to take self-care is an example of hostile sexism.

IV. ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Ethnicity is the state of belonging to a social group that has a common name and a shared cultural tradition (Schneider, 2005). Diversity is seen among various ethnic groups. Several privileges are provided to people based on their ethnicity. The problem of discrimination based on ethnicity is seen almost all over the globe. Ethnic division provides a simple but effective level of dividing the people. Once different groups are formed, conflicts can occur. The general form of ethnic inequalities can, however, remain subtle, in the long run. Such disparities can lead to the formation of conflicts which can even take violent forms. Apart from general inequalities, racism is a particular case of inequality. Racism is defined as biased against others based on race or ethnicity (Schneider, 2005). Three Types of racism are seen- Blatant racism- direct forms of racism; prevalent in earlier periods. Blacks and whites were treated equally with white on the favourable side [21]. Blatant racism is not present today in a transparent manner and is a punishable offence in many countries. Aversive racism - Aversive racists do not accept the fact that they are racist; even though they hold racist views [22]. Symbolic racism - theory season is defined or expressed in terms of some indirect symbolic variable rather than directly assaulting an individual [23]. Ambivalent racism - People in ambivalent type, hold two types of conflicting views at the same time (Schneider, 2005). People believe that racism is unfair but at the same time perceive that the present conditions of the minority group are due to lack of their efforts.

J.J. Ethnicity based on religion

The most dramatic form of ethnicity is based on the religion of a person. Even among a particular religion, various ethnic groups can coexist [24]. This coexistence is sometimes threatened by the dominance of one group over the minority group. Ethnic differences based on religion have served as a cause of violent riots all over the world [25]. Religious groups clash based on pity issues, and such clashes have been detrimental to the development of the entire nation.

V. CONCLUSION

The current paper was focussed on reviewing the various elements of diversity in the light of existing literature on this topic. The review points out that growth in technological development and the literacy level of masses all over the world has led to a reduction in various forms of diversities. For example, women have increasingly started to hold higher positions both in terms of power and social status all over the world (Schneider, 2005). Racism is also changing and is present in subtle forms. Many countries have strict legal rules against the practice of racism [21]. The cultural differences all over the globe have reduced due to the increase in the exchange of ideas and communications between people of different cultures. Because of the improvement in communication and transport technology, the contacts between the people of different cultures have increased dramatically. When it comes to diversity based on various demographic variables, much work needs to be done in this area to remove the unwanted forms of discriminatory practices. The results from the reviews assert the need for taking positive steps to reduce the cases of conflicts arising due to diversity. Understanding the group dynamics and how the in-group and out-group member perceives the environment can serve as a valuable insight to address the issues of diversities. Research studies should be focussed more on
resolving the conflicts arising due to cultural differences. Though a great deal of literature review is available in the areas of research related to cultural diversities; the need of the hour is to develop indigenous solutions that can be suitable to solve the problems present in different cultures.

VI. REFERENCES


