

Report on Workshop on Diversity and Cross-Cultural Competence at Workplace

(29th September 2016)

The Department of Arts (Philosophy), School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Manipal University Jaipur, is launching a new initiative on developing diversity awareness and cross-cultural competencies. Toward this objective, the Department of Arts (Philosophy), SHSS, is planning a National Conference and a series of workshops. The first in this series is planned on Sep. 29 and is described below.

Understanding and appreciating how diversity and multi-cultural dynamics in the contemporary workplaces and societies has become an important skill area for professionals in all fields, such as management, psychology, journalism, law, and medicine to be successful in today's global world. The organizations and communities are becoming increasingly boundaryless, thus, a global mindset and cross-cultural competencies have become crucial for professional development in all areas.



Dr. Anthony addressing the members of the audience

The workshop was based on a lecture by Dr. Vidu Soni who is a professor of human resource management and leadership at TAPMI School of Business, Manipal University Jaipur. The event began with a talk by Dr. Anthony Savari Raj, Head of Department of Arts, who lucidly introduced the theme, direction and purpose of the workshop. Later, the chief resource person Dr. Vidu Soni spoke about her research, which has been conducted over a period of 25 years, on diversity in people living in different regions. She explained that people belonging to different countries, cultures and castes naturally have distinct beliefs and ideologies. Basically, the upbringing of humans varies from place to place which is pretty easily visible in their behavior and thought process.

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Dr. Vidu Soni interacting with students

Diversity awareness also has a normative aspect requiring institutions of various kinds to create inclusiveness of processes, accessibility of opportunities, and valuing of differences among people of all segments of society and cultures. Higher education institutions have an important role to play in facilitating diversity and cross-cultural awareness among both educators and students through exposure, training, and dialogue.

Developed countries such as United States, Canada, Germany, England, and Australia have been engaging in diversity and cross-cultural competency-building efforts for the last two decades. It is now considered to be part of required workplace skill and an important human resource management strategy in work organizations. Diversity competence is also considered to be an important tool for solving social problems, resolving inter-ethnic conflicts, facilitating a dialogue among people who see themselves a world apart.

1. Purpose and Expected Outcome of the Programme:

As a part of the new initiative indicated above, the Dept of Arts (Philosophy) is proposing to organize a two-hour workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to introduce the participants to the concept of diversity and cross-cultural competence and how it has become an important part of 21st century professional skills-set for career success and personal effectiveness. The goal is to introduce the concept of diversity and cross-cultural competence, and exploration of skills required to work effectively with people from different cultures and other types of socio-economic differences.

Developing sensitivity to the perspectives of people of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, understanding their issues and concerns, building skills among professionals to deal with diversity and multi-culturalism, and creating synergies based on differences are some of the objectives of the workshop.

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2. Learning Outcomes:

- * Participants will develop an awareness of the concept of diversity and multiculturalism and how it effects their work and personal lives
- * Participants will learn about important concepts of cultural competence such as, the role of culture in shaping behavior, stereotyping, ethnocentrism and how to overcome them
- * Participants will become familiar with approaches to inter-cultural communication and develop strategies to improve their own cross-cultural communication
- * Participants will be able to put the concept of diversity and cultural competence in the context of their own chosen profession and recognize its value
- * Participants will be able to diagnose a situation and respond appropriately in a situation where people with cultural difference are interacting, working, and living in same neighbourhoods

3. The Resource Person:

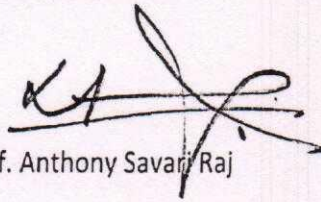
The resource person for the workshop is PROF. DR. VIDU SONI. Dr. Vidu Soni is a professor of human resource management and leadership at the TAPMI Business School, Manipal University Jaipur. She earned her MPA and PHD degrees from Northern Illinois University, USA. Dr. Soni has over 25 years of experience in teaching in the public and business administration programs United States and India. In addition, she has served as director of human resources and HRM consultant including conducting diversity training in the United States.

Dr. Soni's doctoral dissertation was on managing workplace diversity and multi-culturalism. She has also published articles on diversity management in top journals in the field. Dr. Soni has over 75 conference presentations, including keynote addresses, and has held many leadership roles in public administration associations, including President of Michigan Political Science Association. She is a Life-Member of IIPA and ISTD

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The List of Participants:

1. Dr. Anthony Savari Raj
2. Dr. Robin Luke Varghese
3. Dr. Radhika Mohan Gupta
4. Dr. Divya Agnihotri
5. Dr. Rina Poonia
6. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Chahar
7. Dr. K.P. Mishra
8. Dr. Kamal Kant Gaur
9. Dr. Holla
10. Mr. Tanveer Ahmed
11. Ms. Ambika Bhagat
12. Mr. Akash Dayal
13. Mr. Arnay Shukla
14. Ms. Aparna
15. Ms. Subhoshree
16. Ms. Divya
17. Ms. Bhagyashree
18. Ms. Dimple Mehta
19. Ms. Shubrata Dimri
20. Ms. Sadvansha Munshi
21. Ms. Sakshi Sapra
22. Ms. Deepanjali
23. Ms. Arzoo
24. Mr. Yashvendra Pratab Singh



Convener: Prof. Anthony Savari Raj

Professor of Philosophy and Head, Dept of Arts, SHSS

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