INCLUSION MANAGEMENT CONCEPTUALIZATION: AN INSIGHT

FROM TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR of PAKISTAN

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Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Abstract

The study explored the definition of inclusion management at both the individual and organizational levels in Pakistani context. The objectives of the study were to explore the definition of inclusion, the elements essential for an inclusive setting and the experiences of employees around inclusion management practices. The sample size consisted of thirty-two respondents comprising of management and employees from two leading telecom organizations in Pakistan to gain detailed insight from the organizations who were among the pioneers to introduce this concept in the telecom industry. The findings of the study showed similarities between existing conceptualizations of inclusion as well as some unique attributes pertaining to Pakistani context. The definition of inclusion management was broader than existing conceptualizations as the dimensions of tolerance and empathy emerged during the research. Additionally elements such as respect, presence of adequate infrastructure and provision of necessary tools also embodied the conceptualization of inclusion that manifested definition of inclusion in Pakistani context. The study also uncovered the reasons behind introducing the strategy for inclusion along with the specific initiatives introduced by organizations to create an inclusive setting. The findings revealed that the concept of inclusion was much developed in A1 than A2. Overall, this study sheds light on the understanding and management of inclusion specific to Pakistani context and lays the foundation for future research.

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1. Chapter One: Introduction

The notions of diversity and inclusion have gained international currency because of economic, socio-demographic and legislative changes taking place globally (Oswick and Noon, 2013). Over the years organizations have experienced shifts in workforce composition, generational turnover, cultural evolution, advancements in technology and new emerging markets. All these factors have played a major role in creating a complex environment and corporate setting that breaks downs and creates new challenges for recruiting, developing and retaining talent. Therefore with an agenda to survive successfully in a globally competitive marketplace organizations have added diversity and inclusion in their business objectives. Similarly owing to the ubiquity of the war for talent, with its increasing emphasis on shifting demographics and generational differences in the workplace concepts such as global thinking, learning agility, and cultural dexterity, it is likely that diversity and inclusion initiatives have become the epicenter of the talent management agenda for many prominent and forward-thinking organizations today (Ozbilgin and Tatli, 2008). Despite the recognition of increased participation of diverse groups at work place there have been greater disparities in terms of the conditions under which such groups experience diversity and inclusion management (Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2008). Therefore it presents a case to research the extent to which this emerging lexicon actually empowers diverse groups and also to identify mechanisms that facilitate the expression of voice in today's multicultural organizations (Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard and Sürgevill, 2011).

Additionally existing research substantiates that diversity-which is representation of different identity groups and ethos in a specific organization-cannot yield positive

benefits by itself. As a result the concept of inclusion has emerged, which is now being considered as a key approach to reap the benefits of diversity. However the relationship between diversity and inclusion and how it operates is still not clear (Ferdman, 2014). Keeping in view the emerging trends it can be said that the notion of inclusion enables to advance the benefits of diversity in more expansive ways. Diversity is beneficial only when its efforts are translated into feelings of respect, appreciation, and empowerment. These preceding elements are ascribed to the construct of inclusion. Despite the notion of inclusion being in vogue, it is still regarded as a new concept with little agreement on the nature of this construct or its theoretical underpinnings. This paucity in consensus impedes the applicability of inclusion both theoretically and practically.

Furthermore the proponents of diversity and inclusion management present a business case argument in tandem to being a vehicle for social justice. As organizations in the 21st century strive to recruit the best talent in an increasingly diverse workforce, the notion of "inclusion" has now become a business imperative. According to SHRM report on Global Diversity and Inclusion (2009) in order to compete and remain viable in the prevalent business environment organizations ought to develop a global mindset. More than ever organizations have acknowledged the significance of developing greater cross-cultural competence, taking diversity and inclusion practitioners at the forefront of this work. However these professionals are trapped in a conundrum as diversity and inclusion are defined differently in different countries around the globe. The existing research permeates with the work on diversity that emphasizes on its problems, such as discrimination, bias, affirmative action, and tokenism (Shore et al., 2009), but as the diversity field evolved management scholars

have shifted their attention to inclusion. Scholars have focused on ways in which diversity can be leveraged to enhance work processes and organizational mechanisms. Roberson (2006) asserts that in the emerging literature the construct of inclusion is replacing diversity. According to his definition diversity entails group's demographic qualities whereas inclusion refers to the extent to which individuals feel a part of the organizational process and are encouraged to contribute in its development.

1.1. Rationale for the research

Commentators on diversity and inclusion call for broader context-specific definitions to enrich its conceptualization from a global perspective (Shen, Chanda, D'Netto, and Monga, 2009). Farndale et al. (2015) asserted the same notion that there is a need to adopt context-specific research designs in order to understand these constructs and elude universalistic assumptions (cf. Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012). The same caveat is also validated in Academy of Management Review Special Topic Forum (2015) that there is a need to beyond US centric perspective in theorization and a global perspective need to be explored. The existing literature validates that inclusion is an emerging topic that lacks empirical testament. Furthermore it is also contended that context-based research is needed as different countries have their own unique value systems therefore what has worked in western societies might not have the same implication in other societies (Tang et al., 2014). Although evangelist of business case argument have presented recommendation on how to improve diversity and inclusion management the impact of these initiatives seems far from conclusive (Lauring, 2013). A primary reason noted by researchers is that the existing studies have focused on US-based perspective (Groeneveld and Van de Walle, 2010; Metcalfe and Woodhams, 2012).

This research is introduced based on the overarching challenge to develop context-

specific definitions. The assertions made by authors above establish a rationale for the existing research to go beyond the US based perspective and explore additional outlooks for inclusion management. Additionally incorporating this emerging lexicon does seem to hold a business case advantage to attract the brightest and best from the market and see its ultimate impact on business's competitive advantage. This caveat is particularly useful for the research as Pakistani context varies greatly from American or European setting. This gap laid foundation of the study and further aimed to explore the reasons for incorporating this new lexicon in Pakistani. Additionally the study also investigated employee perspective to validate the assertions made by the management.

1.2. Significance of the study

This research contributes to existing body of knowledge regarding inclusion management in key ways. This research is conducted to minimize both the contextual and theoretical gaps which are found in few recent research studies. Firstly keeping in consideration the gap identified by multiple commentators this study aims to enrich the conceptualization of inclusion by investigating a Pakistani context. It responds to the call of commentators to explore beyond the US perspective to add a global perspective(Tang et al., 2014). The study of Ozbilgin et al. (2012) corroborated that the transfer of diversity management developed in another country may not be relevant to Turkey and Pakistan because of local cultural and historical conditions. research aims to explore inclusion management practices in a single country context i.e Pakistan.

Secondly researchers also assert that future research should encompass employee's perspective to expand the scope of diversity and inclusion to understand how they experience and perceive it (D'Netto, Shen, Chelliah, and Monga, 2013; Farndale et

al., 2015). This study aims to bridge this theoretical gap by taking into account individual and organizational perspective. The study explores not only the initiatives taken by the organization but also how they are experienced and understood by the employees.

In the midst of changing work place dynamics, organizations aim to develop more cohesive, collaborative and creative work environment in order to compete successfully. Inclusion management is being identified as one of the tools organizations can leverage to obtain competitive advantage. Keeping in view the gaps identified by the scholars, this research is conducted to minimize both contextual and theoretical gaps hence it has utmost significance in the literature. As inclusion management is one of the emerging research issues, so this research can be used as the foundation by future researchers.

1.3. Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the topic and its contribution and significance in the field of inclusion management.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the review of related literature (secondary research) previously carried out by the researchers similar to this study followed by research objectives and questions. It highlights various themes which are used to structure the study. The discussion in this chapter revolves around the conceptualization of inclusion, drivers for introducing the strategy in Pakistan, management initiatives taken by organizations and employee perspective to access the validity of claims made by the management.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology undertaken for the study. It basically highlights the philosophical reasoning in following qualitative research and the data

collection process for the research. For each selected method, a concise justification is also provided.

Chapter 4 presents an in-depth picture of the findings and analysis of data collected from A1 presented from both organizational and employee perspective.

Chapter 5 presents an in-depth picture of the findings and analysis of data collected from A2 presented from both organizational and employee perspective.

Chapter 6 outlines the analysis of the findings fromA1 and A2 by highlighting the differences in organizations conceptualization, management initiatives and employee perception.

Chapter 7 concludes this dissertation by summarising all the findings. It also discusses the limitations and future research directions.

2. Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1. Distinction between the definitions diversity management and inclusion

This section reviews the differences between the conceptualizations of diversity management and inclusion. According to Gilbert and Ivancevich (2000) diversity management entails organization's commitment to hire, retain, remunerate a diverse group comprising of people of different color, gender and disabilities. Whilst diversity is primarily understood as the management of visible differences in an organization, inclusion represents a deeper cultural commitment to valuing the unique contribution of every individual, irrespective of the differences in terms of background, color, gender or age (Performance Through Inclusion Consulting, 2009).

Inclusion is defined in terms of having a sense of belonging in a culture that values an individual for their efforts and contributions (Miller and Katz 2002). A similar assertion was made by (April, Katoma and Peters, 2009) inclusion exemplifies a shift in organizational culture that engages every employee and makes them valued and indispensible for organizational success. Resultantly it improves employee morale and motivation and creates high performing organizations.

A contrast comparison between the concepts of diversity and inclusion was highlighted in the study of Schultz, Slaski and Kulik (2009) that suggests diversity is driven externally by legal obligations to include a specific number people whereas inclusion explains strategic objectives and is driven internally. Diversity emphasizes on visible differences between individuals whereas inclusion entails both visible and invisible differences. The underlying difference is that diversity focuses on minorities or specific groups while inclusion is about everyone. Hence the ultimate outcome of diversity management programs involves change in demographic profile whereas inclusion comprises of a shift in organizational culture. The figure below is an

illustration of the differences between the two notions.

Table 2-1: Comparison of diversity and inclusion

Diversity	Point of comparison	Inclusion
Driven externally to avoid legal obligations/penalties	Driver	Driven internally by business need to boost performance
Emphasis on visible differences (surface-level)for e.g. age, gender, race	Emphasis	Emphasis on visible and invisible differences (Deeper-level commitment of valuing contributions of every employee)
The eventual outcome of diversity management is change in demographic profile	Impact	The eventual outcome ischange in organizational culture
Focuses on minorities/specific group	Target population	Focuses on all the employees

Source: Retrieved from Schultz, Slaski, Blass and April (2008)

The study of Roberson (2006) also suggests the difference between diversity and inclusion, 'the conceptualizations of diversity emphasize on heterogeneity and demographic arrangement of groups in contrast the conceptualizations of inclusion emphasize on employee involvement and the integration of diversity into organizational systems and processes'. He also proposed that inclusive environments

would not only reduce group conflicts in long terms but will also create more engaged workforce. Diversity refers to an employee base that signifies variation in the larger society. Inclusion means appreciation and utilization of unique capabilities of individuals in the organization, which subsequently results in improved performance of the employees (April et al., 2009; Giovannini, 2004). Diversity management and inclusion includes a commitment to attain employment equity. In the field of management research diversity places greater emphasis on marginalized cohorts while inclusion entails a broader perspective that incites contribution of entire workforce in the organization.

A range of differences presented in this section are critical in understanding the distinction between the two concepts. It can be said that inclusion is a step ahead of diversity as it aims to include input from all the employees and leverage it for business's competitive advantage. The section below highlights the periods of evolution for the concept of diversity and inclusion.

2.2. Transition from diversity to inclusion

Kelly and Doblin (1998) and Edelman, Fuller and Mara-Drita (2001) chartered the notion of diversity in the practitioner press. Both these studies contended that emphasis on the concept of diversity coincided with the issue of workforce 2000 report (Page et al., 2014) that anticipated considerable demographic shifts in the workforce. The report concluded that by 2000 only 15% of new entrants to the US workforce would be US-born white males; therefore it compelled the organizations to reconsider their hiring strategies.

The study of Edelman, Fuller and Mara-Drita (2001) identified that the Bureau of Labor Statistics nullified the predictions made in that report on the basis of conceptual

misunderstanding by the report's authors. However management literature took off from this flawed assumption and classified it into a full-blown crisis with rhetoric, which demanded serious change in the management style. The literature also elevated the role of consultants in articulating an appropriate response to meet the needs of the demographic and competitive challenge. For example Thomas (1990) asserted that affirmative action (AA) had run its course therefore diversity management is indispensible- a term he is attributed with coining in the early 1980s. This argument suggested that AA was effective in bringing diverse population such as women and ethnic minorities into workplace however they were not being developed which was evident through lack of career progression. As a result organizations did not have the required talent pool that was fundamental in order to remain competitive. Subsequent to the call made in Thomas's study the concept of diversity started to gain popularity (Kandola and Fullerton,1994). Moreover, there was evidence to suggest that a similar reflection was also transferred into management teaching. Litvin's (1997), analysis of organizational behavior literature reveals that management teachings problematized dissimilarity and presented diversity as a solution. It could be discerned that the solution of valuing difference that was being propagated was a reflection of changing socio-economic settings of that time.

The proponents of diversity were tapping to change both political and public opinion that increasingly sought noninterventionist approaches from the government in USA and UK (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000). In 1990s empirical findings highlighted that the public in USA confused AA initiatives with quotas or misconstrued it as preferential selection (Kravitz and Platania, 1993; Summers, 1995).The arguments promulgating diversity management laid their premise on its distinctiveness. The analysis of diversity management literature revealed that many commentators explicitly

differentiated diversity from AA programs and some scholars openly defamed AA. Proponents regard diversity management as a progressive starting point that entails everyone so that no one is excluded in contrast AA was regarded as backward, reliant on regulation imposed by the government that was not coherent with current organizational needs. In order to establish distinctiveness diversity management rested firstly on economic argument based on greater competitiveness, superior performance, more profitability, innovation, and improved corporate image. Moreover, by adding characteristics related to EO/AA initiatives for example sex, age, race/ethnicity, and disability advanced the distinctiveness of diversity management as it incorporated a broader range of attributes to differentiate individuals (Prasad, 2001).

From the review of literature it can be analyzed that diversity management transpired in response to an inaccurate demographic threat, which was taken up by commentators focused on practitioner audience and advancements were made to conceptually differentiate it from AA initiatives. It can be analyzed that both these notions stem out to meet legal obligations and avoid discrimination however the tilt of equality is more towards promoting homogenous treatment towards the employees whereas the inclination of diversity is towards including heterogeneous population in the workforce comprising of different gender, race, ethnicities and disabilities.

Recently there is a shift in debate as academicians (e.g. Roberson, 2006) and consultants (Burnett, 2005) are making clear demarcations between diversity and inclusion. These commentators assert that diversity entails recognizing the value of differences within the workforce and managing them for commercial advantage, inclusion is concerned with the processes that incorporate differences into business practices and thereby help to realize the value.

From the review of literature it was observed that the discursive transition from equality to diversity was a result of an assumed demographic crisis. However the discussion around inclusion entails a different backdrop. There is an underlying recognition that diversity management falls short off producing the promises of organizational survival. The practitioner literature suggests that inclusion is a superior approach that should supersede diversity. Evans (2006) contended that inclusion is much more dynamic as it not constrained by observable or non-observable characteristics like race, gender or disability, inclusion is about celebrating difference as a strength and understanding that everybody is capable of making a contribution.

Brook and Graham (2005) regarded diversity and inclusion as 'interdependent'. From this perspective diversity is deemed as an important precursor to inclusion whereas inclusion is deemed to be the requisite antecedent of diversity. For this organizations need to devise a diversity policy first to acknowledge the significance of valuing differences and then a commitment to inclusion to reap the benefits of diverse workforce. Chavez and Weisinger (2008) also confirmed that diversity and inclusion are overlapping ideas as inclusion changes the focus from managing diversity to 'managing for diversity'. It is also deemed to be a more proactive approach as it fosters a culture to capitalize on diverse workforce irrespective of varying legal, demographic, and economic environment. Furthermore, they identified connection with learning and effectiveness paradigm given by Thomas and Ely (1996) and suggested that its distinctive feature was the integration of the employees' perspective into the work of the organization. Although Thomas and Ely (1991) did not stipulate the term their analysis of diversity strategies might have been the first study to locate the strategic potential of 'inclusion'.

Conversely an alternative school of thought emerged that has made conceptual distinction between diversity and inclusion. According to Roberson (2006) practitioners define diversity in terms of differences in demographic composition of the organization, whereas inclusion entails monitoring organizational objectives to incite participation and contribution of all employees in order to leverage the advantages of diversity in the organization. Moreover Roberson (2006) also made distinction between the two concepts and regarded inclusion as a repercussion against diversity initiatives that focused primarily on social groups.

Although scholars uphold the constructs of diversity and inclusion are inter-related, as diversity is deemed to be an essential feature of inclusive culture, but organizations need to foster the culture of inclusion to leverage on diversity (Kirton and Greene, 2015). In inclusive cultures employees of all backgrounds are valued for their unique identity and their opinion matters in core decision-making. Similar to 'multicultural' organizations defined by Cox (1993), in inclusive settings there is a combined commitment to assimilate diverse individuals in order to leverage their insight and skill (Ely and Thomas, 2001). Inclusive environments are different from plural organization that emphasize on including people from diverse backgrounds but continue to assume that employees will integrate with dominant norms (Davidson and Ferdman, 2001). The idea of proceeding to inclusive organization is to modify socio-relational setting where heterogeneous individuals interact. The essentials to augment inclusion are coherent with the recommendations given by Allport (1954): employees are of equal status; they can interact in more personal ways to establish bonds and reduce stereotypes and they should share activities to resolve issues through participative decision-making (Pratt, and O'Connor, 2009).

The review of literature suggests that inclusion is the subsequent stage in the

evolutionary process after assimilation through legal compliance and diversity management. It is pertinent to note that inclusion does not disconnect itself from the predecessor concept of diversity management. Although commentators have made theoretical distinctions between the two concepts it can be analyzed that a diverse workforce needs to be present in order to foster an inclusive culture. It can be said that diversity and inclusion are not mutually exclusive concepts however inclusion is a progressive approach that calls for participation from all employees in the organization.

2.3.Growing importance of inclusion

Organizations in the West[1] have acknowledged that management initiatives were required to shift from adhering to simple notion of diversity to leveraging employees' talents to realize organizational goals. Keeping this in consideration studies on diversity proliferated and examined how it affects organizational processes and outcomes. As developments on this topic continue commentators have now brought into spotlight organizational inclusion, that entails the practices an organization embraces in order to increase participation of employees in the management of organization to achieve its goals (Tang, Ningyu, et al. 2015).

In the last few years, diversity rhetoric has transitioned from diversity management to inclusion management. The emphasis on inclusion reflects that organizations need to address problems related to diversity such as high levels of conflict and turnover and create inclusive environments in order to reap potential benefits of diversity (Holvino, Ferdman, and Merrill-Sands, 2004).Diversity management practices aimed to improve employment outcomes for underrepresented groups like women and ethnic minorities

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[1]The term West typifies European and American perspective.

were unsuccessful to foster inclusion due to two reasons. Firstly diversity management practices may help to reduce bias in key personnel decision-making moments, but they are unlikely to alter the day-to-day relational sources of discrimination that impact people's experiences of inclusion. Secondly diversity management practices that focus on improving the outcomes of historically disadvantaged groups can cause resentment or backlash on the part of individuals who do not directly benefit from these practices, as they can have the un- intended effect of intensifying negative stereotypes and perceived intergroup competition(Nishii,2013).Scholars have used psychological theories of social identity and social categorization to demonstrate the relationship between diversity and group conflict. These theories uphold that classifications based on demographic attributes inevitably result in preferential treatment towards in-group members over out-group members.

Hence commentators argue that organizations should simultaneously administer the complications and benefits related to diversity by creating environments that are inclusive for all employees (Shore et al., 2011).

Practitioners and academic discussions have intimated that diversity, which is the representation of various identity groups, is not sufficient to yield the positive results without the presence of additional conditions. Therefore inclusion has emerged as a core concept in tandem to diversity, which entails how organizations connect, engage and utilize individuals from diverse groups. Although there is a growing consensus that fostering inclusive environments has potential benefits, empirical studies on the power of inclusion are inadequate.

The changes in economic, socio-demographic, and legislative arena has also surged interest in the area of diversity and inclusion; primarily concerning age, gender,

ethnicity, nationality, and disability (Oswick and Noon, 2013). Accordingly there are calls for inclusiveness from market leaders, public sector representatives and lobbying groups. Apart from being an instrument for social justice diversity and inclusion rationalizes a business case for an organization. Although evangelists of diversity and inclusion management have highlighted its merits and commentators have given plethora of recommendations to undertake these initiatives yet the link between these initiatives on performance is far from conclusive (Foster Curtis and Dreachslin, 2008 and Lauring, 2013). A contributing factor of this caveat is that mostly studies focus on single nation cases and is taken from an Anglo-Saxon perspective. Consequently similar conceptualization and approaches cannot be applied to other national settings, as the environment is quite different (Groeneveldand Van de Walle, 2010; Metcalfe and Woodhams, 2012). Hence this topic requires more compelling evidence, gleaned from variety of contexts to explain better different approaches to inclusion management.

As there is enduring interest in equality, diversity and inclusion scholars have made attempts to classify it different from anti-discriminatory approaches. Firstly the concept of equal opportunity was differentiated from diversity management (Kandola, Fullerton and Ahmed, 1995; Liff, 1999)and currently attempts have been made to demarcate the concepts of inclusion and diversity (Bendick, Egan and Lanier, 2010; Roberson, 2006; Shore et al., 2011).

2.4. Theoretical perspective on inclusion management

According to the English dictionary inclusion is 'the act of including someone or something in a larger group or set, or the fact of being included in one' (Buchanan et al. 2017). The construct of inclusion emerged in late 1980s from USA in the education literature where it was regarded as an effort in which incapacitated students

were provided aids so that they can study at par with regular students (Gilhool, 1989). Currently management scholars use the term inclusion to determine whether there are equal opportunities available for all the employees regardless of the differences in gender, culture, capability or ethnicity (Frederickson and Cline, 2002). The concept of diversity management emerged from the US. The advancements pertaining to this field on issues and business interests of the organizations were also US centric. However with increasing emphasis on globalization scholars have highlighted the importance how national contexts shape and impact inclusion management beyond the US based context (Syed and Ozbilgin, 2015).Therefore this study aims to add Pakistani perspective to enrich the conceptualization.

2.4.1. Defining inclusion

While a number of studies have explored the concept of diversity, the conceptualization of inclusion is still in the elementary phase in the organizational literature for the past decade (Roberson, 2006). The existing literature has typified inclusion from two perspectives; the general perception held by individual employees and the specific practices adopted by organizations to foster inclusion.

2.5. Employee perception of inclusion

The 'employee perception' of inclusion means the feelings of acceptance by individuals from diverse backgrounds. Mor Barak and Cherin (1998) defined inclusion as 'the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes for instance access to information and resources, participation in work groups, and power over decision making activities. Furthermore Avery, McKay, Wilson, and Volpone (2008) defined inclusion as the degree to individuals considers that their unique talents are utilized in the operation of the organization. In addition to this Kossek (2008) contended that in inclusive cultures individuals feel a sense of

belonging and organization elicits and values contributions from every individual. Similarly Pelled, Ledford and Morhman (1999) stated that inclusion is reflected when an employee feels accepted and is treated as an insider by others in the organization. An analogous assertion was reflected in the definition of Mor Barak (2007) that described inclusion as employees having collective judgment or perceptions of 'belonging' in terms of feeling valued, and esteemed representative in organizational units such as the work group, department and the entire organization. Mor Barak (2010), expanded the discussion around inclusion, by presenting the notion of inclusion-exclusion as a range to describe the extent to which employees are included in major organizational processes such as access to information, connectedness to co-workers, and the power of decision-making process. Additionally the discourse further classified an inclusive organization as one that values and utilizes individual and intergroup differences within its workforce, for organizational development.

In the theoretical development of the conceptualization Shore et al. (2011) defined inclusion as the 'extent to which employee believes that he is an important member of the organization through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness'. Their study was focused on employee perceptions of inclusion. They proposed a 2 ¥ 2 matrix based on the assumption that uniqueness and belongingness work together to create feelings of inclusion.

2.5.1. Framework for inclusion

Shore et al. (2011) 2 ¥ 2 matrix was the first attempt to construct a theory of inclusion that differentiates it diversity management. This framework was built on optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991), which upholds that everybody needs to feel sufficiently connected to others in order to have sense of belonging and acceptance

and there is also a need to be sufficiently individuated and distinctive so as not to be absorbed. The right balanced is achieved when individual feels included; that is when he is treated as an insider (fulfilling the need for belongingness) but he is encouraged to maintain his uniqueness (satisfying the need that his opinion is valued.

Shore et al. (2011) presented a framework based on dimensions of belongingness and uniqueness that typified inclusion into four categories: assimilation, differentiation, optimal inclusion and exclusion. This framework explains how needs of belongingness and uniqueness work hand in hand and attain balance through the ways of self-stereotyping intergroup differentiation and social group identification. The category of 'assimilation' signifies high value of belongingness and low uniqueness and employees are regarded as insiders when they adapt to organizations' dominant cultural norms and modulate their uniqueness. The assimilation cell, with high belongingness and low value in uniqueness, reflects situations in which an individual who is unique is treated as an insider when he or she conforms to the dominant norms of the culture. Goffman's (1963) classic work on stigma suggests that people may choose not to disclose information that highlights a stigmatized characteristic they possess in efforts to be accepted by others. When individuals have an "undesirable" characteristic that is not readily apparent (an invisible stigma such as religion, disability, or sexual orientation; Bell, Ozbilgin, Beauregard, & Surgevil, Ragins, 2008), they have the choice as to whether or not to reveal their uniqueness and associated knowledge, experience, or perceptions. Even when a unique characteristic is readily apparent (more likely the case for race, gender, or age), some individuals opt to downplay the ways that they may differ from the group. Phillips, Rothbard, and Dumas (2009) argued that this happens most commonly in diverse environments involving individuals who differ with respect to status. For instance, Ely (1995) found

that women attorneys adopt more masculine behaviors in order to fit the mold of a successful attorney. An executive in Anderson's (1999) work on African American executives remarked that to get promoted it was essential for African Americans on a management track to start dressing in the expected way so that their values and attitudes would be assumed to be similar. Such behavior may increase the satisfaction of belongingness needs but concurrently decrease the satisfaction of uniqueness needs.

The category of 'differentiation' typifies when there is low value of belongingness and employees are not treated as insiders however individual's distinctive characteristics are deemed to be important for organizational success (high value for uniqueness). Snyder and Fromkin (1980) observed that most people have a need to be moderately unique but that people differ in this motive. For example, Dollinger (2003) showed that people with high needs for uniqueness tend to be more creative. Likewise, people who put higher value on their uniqueness are more likely to publicly display those unique elements (Imhoff & Erb, 2008). Furthermore, organizations have increasingly emphasized the unique capabilities of their employees as a form of human capital (Lepak & Snell, 1999) and a source of competitive advantage. In some organizational settings, there may be employees who offer unique and rare capabilities who are not considered or treated as organizational insiders. This scenario is reflected in the access-and-legitimacy perspective found in Ely and Thomas's (2001) qualitative study of racially diverse work groups. Work groups adopting this perspective acknowledged the value of diversity as a way of reaching particular markets, but minority members were not considered to be part of the larger culture of the organization and were subject to isolation and race-based stereotypes (Ely & Thomas, 2001). One way that organizations have put differentiation into practice is

through free agency, whereby organizations purchase the services of highly talented and unique people to solve organizational problems, but without making permanent employment offers (Riley & Buckley, 2008).s

The category of 'optimal inclusion' refers that all the employees are regarded, as insider hence there is high value of belongingness and individuals are encouraged to keep their unique identity (high value for uniqueness). There is support in the diversity literature for the advantages of experiencing belongingness and uniqueness simultaneously. For example, minority members (who are unique) with developed networks (and thus a sense of belongingness) report a high level of career optimism (Friedman, Kane, & Cornfield, 1998). At the group level, diverse work groups that adopt an integration-and-learning perspective incorporate both uniqueness (through viewing diversity as a resource) and belongingness (through members feeling valued and respected; Ely & Thomas, 2001). Work groups that adopt an integration-and-learning perspective demonstrate high-quality analyses, are able to facilitate effective cross-organizational collaboration, and allow individuals within the group to enhance their skills (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

Finally the category of exclusion refers that both the dimensions of belongingness and uniqueness are at low level and individuals feel as outsiders or excluded by the organization. This is where the individual is not treated as an organizational insider with unique value in the work group, but there are other employees or groups who are considered insiders. When the need for belongingness is thwarted, there can be harmful cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and health outcomes (Blackhart, Nelson, Knowles, & Baumeister, 2009)

Figure 2-1: Framework for inclusion
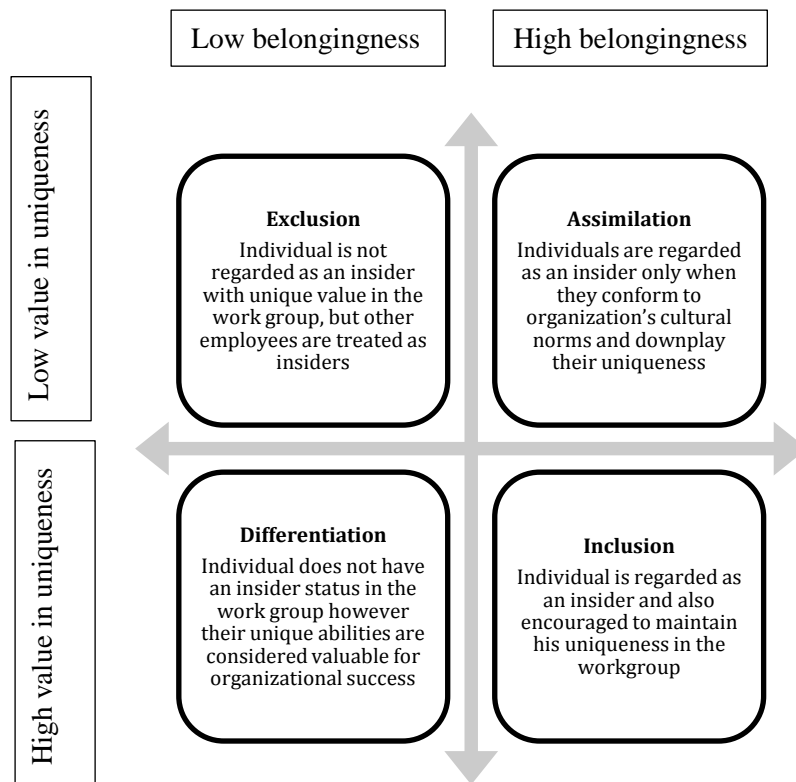
Although commentators have given multiple definitions in terms of employee perception of inclusion researchers have identified that future research should encompass employee's perspective to expand the scope of diversity and inclusion to understand how they experience and perceive it (D'Netto, Shen, Chelliah, and Monga, 2013; Farndale et al., 2015). Hence this research explores both management's and employee's perspective on inclusion management and its practices.

2.6. Organizational perspective

In addition to individual's perception on inclusion researchers also defined inclusion from organizational perspective. According to this viewpoint emphases is laid either on functional roles of inclusion or on identifying various types of inclusive practices that the organization promotes. In respect to its functioning certain commentators

considered inclusion as a means to reach normative legitimacy of democracy in organizations (Roberson, 2006; Young, 2002). Conversely other commentators viewed inclusion as feature of multicultural organization where employees shape up the strategy, mission, policy, core values and norms for success of an organization (Holvino, Ferdman, and Merrill-Sands, 2004). Similarly Hanappi-Egger (2012) conceptualized inclusion in terms of providing an enabling environment where input from all the employees is welcomed and valued. Likewise Pelled, Ledford and Morhman (1999) stated inclusion is the extent to which an individual feels accepted and is considered as a part of the organization by others in the work system. Additionally a similar assertion was reflected in the definition of Pless and Maak (2004) thatan inclusive organization is the one the permits individuals from diverse backgrounds, sensibilities and mindsets to collaborate and work effectively together to achieve organizational objectives.Roberson (2006) presented a similar point of view that the construct of inclusion emphasizes on eliminating obstacles that hinder participation and contribution of employees in the organization.

Reviewing the literature it can be inferred the multiple dimensions can exhibit inclusion within an organization. For example the study of Pelled (1999) studied the association between demographic differences and performance. The dimensions that provided support for inclusion in the study were, the power employees had over decision-making related to their work, and the extent to which employees were aware about the strategic direction of the company. It can be analyzed that inclusion embodies not only the extent of influence individuals have over decision-making but also the connectedness individuals feel towards their workgroup and the wider organization. Additionally Mor Barak (2007) typified inclusion and exclusion in terms of a continuum of organizational processes where employees had influence over

decision making, access to information networks and essential resources and association with supervisors and team members.

Existing studies have exhibited that employee with different ethnicities and gender have varying outlook on inclusion and value it in variable degrees (Mor Barak, 2007). Likewise people in an organizational hierarchy have differing interests and roles therefore they may perceive organizational practices accordingly (Sa´nchez-Vidal, Cegarra-Leiva, andCegarra-Navarro, 2012). Reviewing multiple definitions on inclusion it is evident that there are two recurring elements. Firstly it involves sense of *belonging* to the organization and secondly employees' sense of *recognition* and *appreciation* for their unique capabilities. From an organizational perspective the emphasis is on '*practices*' that lead to creation of an inclusive culture.

2.1. Elements to create an inclusive culture

Shore et al. (2011) identified contextual factors that may add to perceptions of inclusion. It is believed that contextual factors contribute in making up the environment that gives stimuli to employees and is used to understand information at work. Bilimoria et al., (2008) argued that organizational climate, and leadership can influence group dynamics that forms individual's perception regarding inclusion.

2.1.1. Inclusive climate

Scholars have argued that diversity climate creates perceptions that contributions from employees are valued at work place (McKay, Avery, and Morris, 2009). Moreover studies have suggested that employee perceptions regarding justice at a team level can envisage consequences regarding employee turnover, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Ehrhart, 2004; Simons and Roberson, 2003). An important element of inclusive environment is fair treatment of diverse

employees. Procedural and system justice in terms of the way information is generated, administered and received also adds to perceptions regarding inclusion. Hayes, Bartle, and Major (2002) proposed, 'climate for opportunity' model to manage diversity. They described climate for opportunity in terms of employees' perception of equality regarding allocation of opportunities, interpersonal treatment and apportionment of opportunities in organizational setting.

The research of Nishii (2010) substantiates that climate of inclusion entails impartial hiring practices, greater interaction of dissimilar employees and participation in decision-making process. According to Davidson and Proudford (2008) there might be resistance to diversity by majority and minority members and this would impede initiatives for inclusion. Davidson (2001) differentiated between first-order diversity conflict (unfair treatment and discrimination) and second-order diversity conflict (resentment on initiatives proposed to mitigate discrimination). It was found that minority members experience first order conflict while both minority and majority members faced second-order conflict. In an inclusive environment both minority and majority feel important and valued.

2.1.2. Inclusive leadership

The conventional strategy to incorporate diversity and inclusion initiatives in organizations has been to recruit diverse employees (Shore et al., 2009). Conversely inadequate evidence exists regarding internal organizational processes that foster inclusion. Scholars have recently underscored the importance of top executives philosophy concerning diversity and equal employment opportunity (Wasserman et al., 2008). The beliefs held by top management can influence the types of practices that are endorsed by teams to stimulate or undermine inclusion. In addition to this leaders can encourage and appreciate individual's input to create an inclusive

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environment.The group value model of procedural justice given by (Lind and Tyler, 1988) that impartial treatment exhibited by the leader communicates that every individual has an esteemed position in the group. When procedural justice is prevalent employees take pride in group membership. On the other hand discrimination and biasness conveys that group members are disrespected and it results in feelings of withdrawal and little identification with the team or organization (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004).

Direct supervisors play a critical role in building employee perceptions regarding inclusion. The study of Nishii (2010) exhibited that high level of leader-member exchange in a team with little distinction among members leads to low rate of turnover in a diverse settings. Such relationship implies that the manager values every individual. Additionally as manger controls the type remuneration and opportunities for subordinates it is pertinent that he acts fairly to create sense of inclusion. Likewise Wasserman et al. (2008) reported the importance of leaders in fostering an inclusive environment, implying that managers should create a meta-narrative or story that aids inclusion and dynamically engages resistance to diversity initiatives.

As scholarship in this area have regarded inclusion management as a business imperative to recruit and retain the best talent (Ozbilgin and Tatli, 2008), it is important to identify the elements which are deemed important to create an inclusive setting. Therefore one the objective of the research is to identify the elements to create an inclusive setting in the organization.

2.1.Empirical studies on inclusion

Research on diversity predominantly highlighted problems related to diversity such as discrimination, affirmative action and tokenism (Shore et al., 2009). However as this

body of research evolved researchers focused on ways to leverage diversity to improve work processes and organizational mechanisms (Gonzalez andDeNisi, 2009). One line of argument that is developing in this area emphasizes on fostering environments in which individuals feel included (Joy and Liang, 2008).It has been over a decade that the construct of inclusion is still in its nascent stages, with similar line of research appearing earlier in social work (Mor Barak, 2000) and social psychology (Brewer, 1991). While this construct has spurred enormous debate in recent years it is still regarded as a new concept with little agreement on the nature of this construct or its theoretical underpinnings. This paucity in consensus impedes the applicability of inclusion both theoretically and practically.

Shore et al. (2011) defined inclusion 'as the esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness'. Although the concept of inclusion is still in its early stages and lacks empirical testament there exists few studies where some theoretical groundings have been tested. A prominent exception is the study of Mor Barak (2000), where she asserted that the extent to which employee feels excluded or included is theorized in terms of the degree to which individuals perceive to be a part of critical organizational processes. These organizational processes entail permission to use information and resources, correspondence with manager and fellow colleagues, and the power to influence and contribute in the decision-making process. According to her model diversity and organizational culture will influence feelings of inclusion/exclusion, which would affect job satisfaction, organizational commitment, individual wellbeing, and task effectiveness.

The study of Findler, Wind, and Mor Barak (2005) concluded that the relationship between inclusion and diversity was rather ambivalent, with gender showing the only

consistent relationship to information networks and decision making (here females described lesser levels of inclusion than males). However the link between inclusion to organizational commitment and job satisfaction was not established. Barak, Levin, Nissly, and Lane (2006) expanded the primary model to include turnover intentions and found that exclusion from critical organizational processes led to turnover in child welfare employees. Additionally inexperienced and younger employees faced exclusion in access to information and decision-making. Furthermore the study of Acquavita, Pittman, Gibbons, and Castellanos-Brown (2009) found a relationship between inclusion-exclusion and job satisfaction.

The study by Pelled (1999) investigated the relationship between three practices (access to information and resources, decision-making power and job security) on inclusion. These three practices were regarded as indicators of inclusion and the results suggested that difference in race and gender had a negative association and difference in experience and education had a positive association with these indicators.

Roberson (2006) attempted to differentiate between diversity and inclusion. Here inclusion typified greater involvement of diverse workforce in decision-making by creating collaborative tasks and conflict resolution procedures.

Janssens and Zanoni (2007) by using qualitative approach extrapolated that inclusive environments encompass equal treatment of every employee while concurrently appreciating individual differences. For instance hiring ethnic minorities based on their unique abilities rather than on ethnic membership, teams made up from various ethnicities executing tasks of the same importance, and greater task interdependence in order to promote communication among team members.

Three studies empirically investigated employee perception regarding inclusion.

Stamper and Masterson (2002) explored the construct of insider status and stated that organizational support acted as its antecedent. This construct had a positive relationship with altruism and negative association with production deviance. Although this research did not incorporate diversity variables, it underlines the significance of perceptions regarding organizational support to create insider status (feelings of belongingness). The study of Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) investigated employee discernments of leader inclusiveness, comprising of acknowledgement of others' contributions to the team. The emphasis was on difference in professional status rather than demographic diversity. The findings suggested that leader inclusiveness was linked to psychological safety, which subsequently added to team engagement.

The study of Avery et al. (2008) studied the role inclusion in moderating positive association with different positions in the hierarchy and intent to stay in the organization. The results indicated when employees perceived high inclusion there were lesser difference between employees in different grades and their intent to stay within the organization.

Wasserman et al. (2008) asserted that leaders were important in fostering inclusive culture. Similarly recent studies on diversity and leadership underscored the importance of different styles of leadership that can create feeling of inclusion among subordinates (Sanchez-Hucles and Davis, 2010).

From the analysis of the past researches two inferences can be drawn. Firstly practices that lead to sense of belongingness (insider status) entail access to information and resources, control over and voice in decision-making process. Secondly there is an observation by commentators that the construct of inclusion has positive outcomes for employees and organizations however it is unclear how or why it happens.

2.2. Advantages and challenges associated to inclusive workplace

Scholars have proposed a range of supporting arguments that diversity and inclusion are advantageous to the business operating environment. The section below highlights the moral, legal and commercial arguments for pursuing this initiative.

2.2.1. Commercial argument

The existing literature postulates various commercial advantages for driving an inclusive environment. According to April, (2009) these initiatives in the long run save enormous costs to the organizations as feelings of acceptance improves satisfaction levels and ultimately results in lower absenteeism and turnover rates. Moreover the attraction of local talent minimizes the need to relocate talent from other areas. A similar assertion was made by Cox and Blake (1991) that employees tend to stay longer with organizations where they feel appreciated.

The second commercial argument cited in studies is that talent acquisition is improved as organization targets the untapped pool in the market (April, 2009; Cox, 2003; Forsythe, 2003). Resultantly the ability to attract and retain diverse workforce fetches the best possible talent and the organization will have 'brightest and the best' talent pool in the market. The ultimate impact is that organizational productivity and competitiveness improves at all levels. In addition to this external customers also have more preference towards organizations with strong employee base (Roberson, 2006).

Thirdly commentators uphold that employers can expect greater job satisfaction, involvement and performance from the employees. However an opposite view was given by Gottfredson (1992) that implementing diversity related initiatives may affect employee satisfaction and productivity as perception of merit and fairness becomes questionable to the majority.

Fourthly studies also suggest that initiatives of diversity and inclusion improve

corporate image of the organization to become 'employer of choice'. In addition to this with increasing emphasis on globalization it has become a business imperative for organizations to be able to manage cross cultural difference inherent in conducting business with other countries (Orenstein, 2005).

Another significant commercial argument is that a diverse workforce can equip the organization to market to an increasingly diverse customer base. This enables the organization to become more adaptable and responsive to the market which in turn improves organization's credibility. The study of Thomas (2004)substantiates that IBM was able to tap minority markets by promoting diversity amongst its own employees, which ultimately resulted in virtuous circle of growth and progress. The existing literature suggests that diverse teams tend to be more innovative and creative and result in better decision making as they have larger pool of information and valuable experiences. It further builds that cultural sensitivity and the perspective brought by the addition of diverse employees opens up the avenue for deeper and more varied market penetration that allows access to untapped markets (April, 2014).

A contrary view is also present in literature with regards to the above view. The presence of multiple solutions to problems may impede organizations to make timely decisions (Milliken and Martins, 1996). Additionally employees from different backgrounds might have negative interpersonal dynamics which could be counter-productive for innovation, ingenuity and productivity. Moreover heterogeneous teams experienced greater communication difficulties compared to homogenous teams. The study of (Pelled, Eisenhardt and Xin, 1999) concluded that diverse teams are beneficial for tasks that require creative problem solving however they can obstruct performance of routine tasks.

2.2.2. Moral Argument

Studies suggest that diversity and inclusion initiatives improve interaction amongst various ethnic groups that builds community cohesiveness (April, 2009). This results in attitudinal change and also provides an enabling environment for cultural change. Diversity and inclusion also counters prejudices and promote organizational harmony. Finally the scholarship holds 'it is the right thing to do' as it calls for equality, dignity and respect for all the employees (Orenstein, 2005). Earlier research indicated that these initiatives could align organizational and individual values as they appear to be socially and morally fair (Carnevale and Stone, 1994).

2.2.3. Legal Argument

The below section highlights potential advantages diverse and inclusive workplace could bring from a legal perspective. Over the years several companies had to pay huge cost of litigation. Van Voris, 2010 study highlighted that Novartis had to pay approximately $152 million dollars settlement fee for gender discrimination in compensation system. Against racism case Texaco had to pay $176 million African American employees. Coca Cola had to pay largest racial discrimination settlement in the West against the allegations for discriminating against African American in terms of pay, promotions and appraisals Maharaj, (2009). Additionally companies that do not introduce such initiatives are usually not viewed as companies a diverse workforce would like to work for. This eventually harms the public image of the organization. It could be deduced that organizations are likely to suffer discrimination suits and union clashes in absence of these initiatives. However the study of Harrison, Price and Bell (1998) proposed that the advantages and the challenges of diversity and inclusion are contingent on the way it is perceived and implemented by the organization. Recent studies also corroborated that overemphasizing on diversity or diversity training may result in 'conflict, hostility, backlash, and an increase in

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litigation' (Chavez andWeisinger, 2008) from those who fail to benefit from the practices. As the studies validate that implication of these initiatives depends upon how these initiatives are perceived and implemented, therefore this study would enrich the research by uncovering the benefits and challenges in Pakistani setting. Considering the array of benefits highlighted in the existing literature the research aims to explore the viability in a Pakistani context.This research first aims to explore the reasons for introducing the strategy for inclusion management and then determine the benefits perceived by organizations. Commentators identify thatit is pertinent to discover inclusion management from different contexts as presently the research work has only highlighted an Anglo-Saxon perspective (Ouma et al., 2017).

2.3.The role of human resource management in implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives

Human resource management deals with attracting, managing and developing organization's human resources (Shen et al., 2009). Human resource management entails wide range of activities, consisting of recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, performance evaluation(D'Netto, Shen, Chelliah, andMonga, 2013). The conventional business case argument is that HRM contributes to organizational success through effective management of people. However recently commentators have brought into discussion how human resource management can influence diversity management (D'Netto et al., 2013; Shen et al., 2009). The study of Nishii (2013) concluded that HRM and diversity management had several similarities. Firstly from compliance lens it is viewed that congruence with equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination is realized though effective management of HR tools. Secondly both diversity management and HRM

have the same underlying agenda that intends to enhance employee's involvement and commitment towards the organization. Thirdly human resource function manages activities pertaining to recruitment, training and performance management that are considered key areas to make interventions related to diversity management.

Keeping in view the above similarities it can be concluded that diversity management is HRM are closely linked.Kirtonand Greene (2005),asserted that the human resource function can aid in the operationalization of diversity initiatives through 'soft' and 'hard' approaches. The 'soft' HRM treat employees as a critical resource for competitive advantage, therefore its policies are related towards skill development of the employees. On the other hand 'hard' HRM views employees as a cost therefore the policies are focused on meeting organizational objectives instead of investing in employee development. Keeping in view the definition of 'soft' category of HRM it has greater potential for creating the climate for inclusion. In order to foster an inclusive climate human resource policies and practices should focus on employee development so that employees feel valuable resource in the organization which is the essence of inclusion management. Existing literature has highlighted that initiatives pertaining to diversity and inclusion encourage the development of innovative HR policies. The activities that can be altered to support these initiatives are human resource planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, promotion, and rewards (Martinez and Battiselle, 2011; Shen et al., 2009). From the literature it can be discerned that HRM function is critical to lead diversity and inclusion initiatives and also align them with the strategic direction of the firm.

Keeping in consideration the importance highlighted in literature on the development of innovative HR policies, this research aims to explore management initiatives taken by targeted organizations to introduce this initiative.

On the contrary, regardless of the importance that HRM activities should be parallel in managing diversity and inclusion initiatives many organizations still view this topic as a matter of compliance. According to a survey conducted by Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) in 2008, 500 companies in different regions of Asia, Europe and US exhibited collective interest in inclusion management for effectively managing diversity. The data from sixty percent of the organizations exhibited that diversity management has become one of the top management initiative. The survey presented that forty two percent of the organizations mentioned Head of HR as the main driving force behind the initiative. The survey also highlighted an important finding that diversity and inclusion initiatives in the organizations were targeted towards females and their concerns. Organizations in the survey revealed that depending upon the country different approaches to diversity management were used to implement the same initiative. Apart from different approaches used, an organization's culture was considered to be a major challenge for implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives especially when HR related policies and practices were altered to create an inclusive culture. Another observation from the survey was lack of commitment from the top management served as a barrier towards proper implementation of diversity and inclusion.

2.4. Inclusive practices

There has been considerable debate regarding the practices that lead to inequality and discrimination at work (Dipboye and Colella, 2005), however there is little emphasis on practices that promote inclusion in work groups. Existing studies have highlighted

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certain practices foraninclusive setting. Terrett (2014) contended that an inclusive environment should be representative of diverse groups that encourages participation in work groups, problem-solving, decision-making and gives a fair consideration to contributions made by employees. Moreover two-way communication is critical in addition to cooperative leadership style. Employees should have autonomy, access to information and resources for task completion, accompanied by the feeling their contributions are valued by the employer (Roberson, 2006). Davidson and Ferdman (2002) also affirmed that employees should be encouraged to use their unique talents to bring about successful initiative or perform a meaningful task to make a difference in the organization. Resultantly it would increase employee's sense of belonging and they would feel validated and accepted. Akalin et al., (2014) have also confirmed that practices like equal opportunity and valuing individual differences are essential for fostering an inclusive culture. Even though scholars have suggested broad guidelines for inclusion management in organizations, empirical testament in this area remains scarce.

Keeping in view the practices highlighted in the existing literature this research aims to explores the extent to which employees in targeted organizations are empowered, have access to information and have voice in decision-making.

Additionally an important point to consider in MNCs is the context in which initiatives pertaining to diversity and inclusion are implemented. The study of Hanappi-Egger (2012) underscored the significance of societal context when designing and implementing initiatives related to diversity and inclusion. Over the years studies related to diversity management in MNCs have challenged the use of consistent approaches across subsidiaries. The research work of Jones et al. (2000) was the first attempt to challenge US-based approach to diversity management in

New Zealand. Similarly the study of Egan and Bendick (2003) highlighted that as US and Europe differ in terms of cultural and legal frameworks so does their diversity management practices vary.Furthermore differing views on diversity related initiatives were found between western MNCs and their Indian subsidiariesbecause of varying contextual dynamics (Cooke and Saini, 2010).The examples above demonstrate that globally countries and societies differ in terms of value systems therefore it has an implication for inclusion practices as it deemed to be a step ahead of diversity. This study will investigate both employees' conceptualization of inclusion as well as inclusion management practices adopted by different MNCs in Pakistan to provide empirical evidence in this area.

Figure 2-2: Thematic Framework for analysis

Definition of inclusion management

Drivers for introducing the strategy for inclusion management

Elements for an inclusive setting

Managment initiatives taken by organizations to introduce the strategy for inclusion management

Advantages of an inclusive workplace

Challenges for introducing the strategy

Perceptions of employees around inclusion management practices

2.5. Research Gap

A thorough review of literature revealed that inclusion management is an emerging topic which lacks empirical testament. As Farndale et al. (2015) said despite the notion of inclusion being in vogue, it is still regarded as a new concept with little agreement on the nature of this construct or its theoretical underpinnings. This paucity in consensus impedes the applicability of inclusion both theoretically and practically. Commentators on diversity and inclusion have called for broader context-specific definitions to enrich its conceptualization from a global perspective. Tang et al., (2014) also asserted the same notion that there is a need to adopt context-specific research designs in order to understand these constructs and elude universalistic assumptions. Furthermore it is also contented that context-based research is needed as different countries have their own unique value systems therefore what has worked in western societies might not have the same implication in other societies. Existing studies have also highlighted that future studies should incorporate employee perspective in order to understand how do they experience and perceive these initiatives (D'Netto, Shen, Chelliah, and Monga, 2013; Nishii and Wright, 2008).Moreover Petersen et al. (2015)contended that a qualitative research may be particularly helpful in this regard, as it enables to uncover rich data. Keeping in view the literature and methodological gap the research explores inclusion management in a Pakistani context from the perspectives of both management and the employees. Building upon the caveats highlighted in the research the objectives and questions of the study are:

2.6. Research objectives

1. To investigate the meaning of inclusion management in Pakistani context
2. To explore the elements that are essential for an inclusive setting

3. To explore the perceptions and experiences of employees about inclusion management practices in Pakistan

2.7. Research Questions

1. How do Pakistani managers and employees understand and define inclusion in their organizations?

2. Why was the strategy of inclusion management introduced in the organizations?

3. What management initiatives/programs have been undertaken to introduce the strategy of inclusion management in the organizations?

4. What are the perceptions and experiences of employees about inclusion management practices in their organizations?

3. Chapter Three: Methodology

The adoption of research methodology is guided by ontological and epistemological stances that are aligned with the research issue at hand. The research about inclusion management in Pakistani MNCs is well suited with interpretivist paradigm and subjectivism, considering that this issue has multiple realities associated with it hence it needs to be interpreted in detail. In order to make detailed investigation about the perceptions of managers and employees around the construct of inclusion, a qualitative research design was well suited. It has also been highlighted by Pang (2014), that qualitative research design would be useful to assimilate and uncover richness of the data, thus justifying the adoption of qualitative research methodology adopted for the study. Additionally Punch (2013)also underscored the significance of adopting context-specific research designs to gauge deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.1. Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is basically assumptions and beliefs related to the development of knowledge in accordance with the nature of the study. This study follows an interpretivist paradigm where the researcher has a belief that this is a subjective world and it is socially constructed. This philosophy has enabled the researcher to examine how social reality is human interactions. Selecting interpretivist philosophy assisted the researcher to get closer to the subjects by being an integral part of the study. Additionally, the research issues which are relatively less explored like the conceptualization of inclusion are better explored with the help of interpretivism philosophy. Therefore this philosophy has been selected for this research study. This philosophy allows the researcher to increase understanding of a problem with detailed analysis and it is quite useful for development of new theories (Punch, 2013). As the

purpose of this research is to explore inclusion management in Pakistani organizations, hence the nature of the study calls for an interpretivist philosophy.

3.1.1. Ontological Stance

The ontology of research is associated with the study of being and it is linked with nature of reality. The interpretation of individual about what constitutes reality is defined by the system of belief associated with ontology of the research. Ontological perspective of research influences the enclosing of research questions and also designs methods for collection and analysis of data (Hoque et al., 2015). The researchers have the option to choose two ontological positions, including; subjectivism (interpretivism) and objectivism (positivism) (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Subjectivism focuses on the notion that social context is established by perceptions and actions of those social actors that are associated with specific social phenomena (Diamantopoulos, 2013). On the other hand, objectivism posits that position of social phenomenon is independent of social actors and realities are mainly external to social actors and context.

This study follows an interpretivist paradigm, where researcher has a belief that this is a subjective world and it is socially constructed, therefore, he/she remains subjective (Wong, 2013). This type of philosophy is preferred when the researcher aims to explore the meanings of some phenomenon. This philosophy allows the researcher to increase understanding of a problem with detailed analysis and it is substantially useful for development of new theories (Dooley, 2001). It has been highlighted by Diamantopoulos (2013) that interpretivist believe that there is no single reality and reality needs to be interpreted, thus most suitable method for backing up interprestivist paradigm is qualitative research methodology. The qualitaive method

allows to consider multiple realities and it offer indepth insight of research issue undertaken. Given this perspective, the adoption of qualitative methodology is complying with subjectivisim and thus this is the ontological position taken in current research study (Samarji and Hooley, 2015).

There is a need to discover underlying meanings of the inclusion within organizations and thus it can be best investigated by taking subjective position through which researcher can look at multiple perspectives. The purpose of the study was to explore perceptions of management and employees regarding this new construct for which positivist approach is not suitable as it is a rigid approach that downplays human interactions, perceptions and their experiences. Additionally the objective was uncover how different the conceptualization is different from existing notions therefore the knowledge was not objective rather it was determined subjectively through social interaction (Samarji and Hooley, 2015). This ontological position allowed flexible research methods and the respondents could be probed further to get detailed insights and make sense of their perceptions (Diamantopoulos, 2013). Moreover unlike positivist where researcher stays detached from the subjects with no account of personal experience and value judgment, subjectivism allowed the researcher to stay involved and mutually construct reality based on the interactions between the interviewer and the subjects. Determining suitable ontological stance was important as the following sections, which are the epistemology, methodology and research methods of the research are based on its ontology.

3.1.2. Epistemological Stance

Epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge and it is based on the notion that what constitutes valid knowledge and how that specific knowledge can be obtained by the

researchers. In the epistemology position of research, the two distinctions can be made related to different types of philosophies (Luce et al., 2013). Firstly, the concept of epistemology posits that objectivism is possible and knowledge can be obtained without any interference. This is based on the fact that reality is exposed equally for each individual and it can be observed equally by each individual. Secondly, the opposite view offers that reality is never objective and there is always an effect of social construction of reality (Wallerstein et al., 2016). Based on these distinctions, there are two epistemological positions which can be adopted by researcher which are; positivism and interpretivists (which is also known as realism). The positivist epistemological position is derived from foundationalism ontology which is based on the notion that it is possible for each individual to exactly interpret and observe reality as they exist within social context of an individual (Dousa et al., 2014). It considers researcher as a separate entity which should not any interference in the research process, such that results can be controlled for the biases. On the other hand, the interpretivists believe that world is discursively constructed and it is based on anti-foundationalism aspect of ontology (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Thus, the meanings for phenomenon are mainly based on association of interactions among humans and research processes.

This research study is based on interpretivist philosophy. The research is aimed at investigating inclusion management in Pakistani organizations, which is not an objective phenomenon and there are multiple interpretations associated with the research issue. The reliance on interpretivist paradigm can assist the researcher to extract multiple meanings from the given research phenomenon and thus in-depth insight of inclusion practices of Pakistani organizations can be generated by relying on interpretivist research philosophy which allows to seek multiple explanations for

any underlying research phenomenon. Thus, to seek answer of underlying research questions, the most suitable philosophical position is of interpretivist. This philosophy is also in line with the qualitative design of research which has been implied in the following research study and thus it was considered most suitable.

3.2. Research Design

Interviews were the preferred research design for the study. The interviews were conducted with managers and employees of targeted organisations. Interviews were selected over other methods because they are more feasible for collecting in-depth data for the research issue (Brennen, 2017). Interviews also have the potential to add the human dimension to data (Walliman, 2017) and as the research issue of inclusion management needed the human dimension, so interview was the most suitable strategy. Veal (2017) commented that the rationale for selecting interview strategy is that it enables the researcher to capture non-verbal cues along with the verbal cues and this helps in being more certain about the responses provided by interviewees. For example employees vouched their respective organizations to be the best employer however there were instances where employees got emotional with regards to sympathetic towards disable people. Creswell and Creswell (2017), interview research design is preferred over other methods because it has enabled the researcher to keep the desired level of control over the data collection process. Therefore it facilitated the research process to maintain focus on the main themes.

In this research, case study research design is not selected owing to the issue of methodological rigor. Yin (2017) contended that case studies are encountered to the limitation of absence of rigorous methical considerations and researchers are free to

go in any direction as per the context of the organization. Considering this, this research has not relied on the case study research method.

The objective of the study was not to conduct a comparison of the selected organizations. Soy (2015) contended that comparative studies include too much of a time lag between comparison of cases and this can result in less reliability of the research findings. The comparison can raise issue of complexity due to social, programmatic and historical factors of selected cases as well. Therefore, this research has not considered the comparative case study method.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

Stipulating methods for the research is significantly important as determines the techniques to be used during the research process. As the conceptualization of inclusion management is still in its nascent stages there is a need to utilize more qualitative approaches in order to fill theoretical gaps, therefore exploratory research based on qualitative research methodology was considered appropriate for the research. The identification of subjectivism ontological stance leads to the selection of interpretivist epistemology, therefore deductive approach to reasoning and qualitative methods of data collection are used for the study. Qualitative data is collected when a researcher aims to study the behavior, belief, norms, values or some other qualitative aspects. In this method, researchers shed light on viewpoints of different experts, researchers or sample from population. According to Guerra-Santin and Tweed (2015), questions like 'what', 'where', 'how' and 'why' can be effectively answered with the qualitative research methods. It is also preferred for understanding different perspectives related to certain research issue. Majority of the commentators contended that qualitative research should be undertaken given the richness of the data to be

uncovered (Meeker and Escobar, 2014). As inclusion management is an unexplored area hence an exploratory research was more appropriate. In comparison quantitative method are mostly applied by positivists where the emphasis is on quantifying and establishing casual explanations from the data. A qualitative research design helped in gaining detailed understanding of the prevalent trends from the sample population while recording, analyzing and understanding the experiences and perceptions on inclusion management.

The research study chose semi structured interviews as data collection techniques, as they are considered an appropriate way of exploring the particular themes for detailed responses. The semi structured interviews do not limit the participants to focus only on some predetermined set of questions, rather the respondents have discretion to provide answers based on their relevancy to the context of research and to the organization, they are associated with (Ott and Longnecker, 2015). Thus, based on context specific information, highly valuable information can be obtained through semi structures interviews. It is notable that underlying research issue is an unexplored area in the context of Pakistani organizations and thus semi structured interviews can serve as the way of gaining in-depth insight of the employees and managers' perceptions about inclusion practices in organizations.

The semi structured interviews were carried out from the employees and senior management of two telecommunication companies located in Islamabad. Different interview sessions were organized for managers (interview guide 1) and employees (interview guide 2) and different set of questions were asked. The questions in both interviews were related to inclusion management practices in organizations and focus has been maintained on gaining perceptions of both employees and managers

regarding their effectiveness. The comparison of data was made with an aim of drawing inferences about difference of perceptions of employees and managers regarding the initiative of inclusion management. The main themes the interview were definition of inclusion, reasons for the introduction of the strategy, elements of an inclusive culture, management initiatives taken by the organization, changes in HR practices, advantages and challenges for this initiatives, and perception and experiences of the employees around inclusion management practices.

In the proposal focus groups were also planned as one of the techniques for data collection. However, the management did not give their availability at a specific time owing to their busy schedule. Furthermore, the employees also expressed reluctance to share any information in front of other employees due to the confidentiality concern.

3.4. Population and Sampling

In order to answer the research questions and meet the objectives, purposive sampling technique was used. This technique helped in gathering the information directly from most suitable candidates. As the selection of cases in purposive sampling depends upon the research objectives, therefore senior managers as well as employees were targeted. The sample size for employees constituted of individuals that were categorized as diverse or were recruited permanently by the organization through diversity specific programs. The sample size for employees was not confined to diverse employees but also incorporated feedback from majority group members. The telecommunication industry was targeted for this study. The selected organizations were labeled as A1 and A2. These two organizations were targeted as they were the pioneers for the introduction of this strategy in the telecom sector. During the initial

phase of topic selection beverage industry was chosen however the respondents to the study were not able to respond as to the initiatives mentioned in their website the target industry was changed. Managers as well as employees from each organization were interviewed for this purpose so that insights at organizational and individual level both could be gathered. As for the sample size there is no specific number, the optimal size of interviews is contingent on the nature and scope of the qualitative study. Research recommends minimum 25-30 respondents as the minimum sample size which is deemed as the minimum threshold required to reach the saturation point for in-depth interviews (Stanford et al., 2016).

For the research study the optimal sample size was to focus on the indication where information started repeating and further no new data was being discovered. The sample size consisted of total thirty-two respondents. From A1 nine people from senior management and eight employees were interviewed whereas from A2 eight people from the management and seven employees were interviewed. The interview guides were prepared based on the themes highlighted in the literature. The details of respondents are summarized in the table below.

Table 3-1: Summary of Respondents at Telecom A1

Telecom A1	Designation
A1-M1	Manager Talent Acquisition and Employer Branding
A1-M2	Manager Rewards and Policies
A1-M3	Manager Talent and Culture
A1-M4	Manager Digital and Financial Services
A1-M5	Head of Product Development (Easy-Paisa)
A1-M6	Director Engineering
A1-M7	Director Head of Strategy
A1-M8	Director Corporate Communications and CSR
A1-M9	Director Head of Marketing
A1-E1	Manager Financial Services Planning
A1-E2	NOC Engineer
A1-E3	IT implementation Executive
A1-E4	HR officer
A1-E5	Recruitment Executive
A1-E6	Sales Executive
A1-E7	Technical Officer

Table 3-2: Summary of Respondents at A2

Telecom A2	Designation
A2-M1	Specialist Recruitment, Performance and Rewards
A2-M2	Head of Culture Transformation
A2-M3	Specialist Talent Learning and Transformation
A2-M4	Manager Talent Acquisition and Transformation
A2-M5	Head of Fraud Management
A2-M6	Segment Manager
A2-M7	HR Business Partner – (Commercial)
A2-M8	Manager Brands
A2-E1	Coordinator to CEO
A2-E2	Officer Admin and Finance
A2-E3	Associate Corporate Accounting
A2-E4	Sales Officer
A2-E5	Supply Chain Officer
A2-E6	PMO Transformation and Integration Team
A2-E7	Marketing Officer

The interviews were conducted across different departments from employees and the management. The interviews conducted from the management were approximately forty-five minutes long while the interviews from employees were on average twenty-five minutes long. Few employees were reluctant to share information or were not aware of the current initiative therefore the time of the interview did not exceed fifteen minutes. Each interview session was recorded after taking permission from the respective respondent. However some respondents preferred that notes should be taken instead of recording the interview and that was respected. In the study to keep anonymity, all respondents are given a specific code due to confidentiality issues.

Overall respondents in A1 were quite knowledgeable and had clear understanding of the initiatives pertaining to inclusion whereas some respondents in A2 lacked understanding of inclusion management and the organizational initiatives so it was difficult to probe their perceptions. Bayley et al. (2014) highlighted that the time horizon of any study is independent of the research methodology being used for that study. However due to time constraints the time horizon of the study was cross-sectional i.e. data was collected at a given point in time. This helped in gathering detailed insights from managers as well as employees quickly. The total duration of the study is spread over a year.

3.5. Data Analysis

In order to analyze data for present research study the reliance has been maintained on thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is most widely used method in carrying out analysis of qualitative data. Thematic data enables to identify themes and patterns within data and themes are defined as the outlines of overall data set which are significant for description of specific notion and are mainly helpful in answering the particular research question (Gelman et al., 2014). Thus, identified themes become the

categories for analysis and guide the researcher to accomplish objectives of the study. For this study a comprehensive literature review was done to identify the main themes of the study. For data collection the main themes served as parameter to prepare interview guides. On the basis of primary data and secondary data, framework for thematic analysis is developed and this has served has the foundation for analysis.

The interview sessions were recorded and transcribed in order to prepare a solid ground for analysis. During data collection the questions were rephrased and tweaked according to the responses given by interviewees. Probing questions and examples were asked in order to gather detailed insights. For the analysis patterns and concepts were identified from all the interviews which were structured on the themes derived during the literature review (Wickham, 2016). A comparison was made between the data collected and the existing literature in the findings.

As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), there are six steps of thematic analysis which were being followed while conducting the analysis

- Firstly, the researcher analysed the data to become familiar with it.

- Secondly, initial rough themes were generated from the data.

- Thirdly, themes were refined for making them specific.

- Fourthly, themes were reviewed to ensure that the research questions are answered with these themes.

- Fifthly, the interrelation between themes was examined which helped in merging few themes and being clearer.

- Finally, write up for data analysis was completed.

3.6.Limitations of the Research

During the course of research a number obstacles were faced. The data collection phase was the most challenging phase. In order to reach out to thirty-two employees multiple contacts were used. Approaching the senior management and scheduling meetings with them took significant time. Employees in A2 did not have knowledge so explaining the concept to them was time-consuming. During the interviews the management did not share any documentation or demographic composition of their workforce due to confidentiality concerns. As diversity and inclusion is a sensitive topic the employees got emotional and shared their life experiences therefore a lot of patience had to be observed during the interview sessions.

In addition to the above issues the study was exposed to fewer limitations that are required to be considered into account while generalization of study's results. The limitations mainly pertain to adoption of research methodology, as current research study has relied on qualitative design and it is considered as offering limited generalizability (Shipman, 2014). However, this research issue was not well addressed in context of Pakistani organizations and qualitative research has been considered appropriate for carrying out in-depth investigation of research issue. Yet, results of the study might be considered cautiously by the practitioners by considering the limitation of qualitative study into account. The research study has confined to only two telecommunication companies within the federal capital of Pakistan. This shows that data was not obtained from diverse companies and the results are based on only insight of two companies, which might lower the generalizability of the study. However these were the only two organizations in the same industry that had started this initiative. Other telecoms have not introduced this strategy.

Along with this, it has been highlighted by Tanner-Smith et al., (2017) that quality of results is qualitative research are highly based upon the personal skills of the researcher. Any shortcomings in the skills of the researcher or any biases and idiosyncrasies on behalf of researcher might substantially affect the quality of findings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). However, in order to lower the influence of these biases an opinion from the management and employees were given equal weightage.

It has also been highlighted byWang et al. (2015) that volume of data in qualitative research study is extended and it makes it difficult and time consuming for researcher to analyze qualitative data. The study of Scandura and Williams (2000) has demonstrated that sometimes acceptance for results of qualitative study is low in comparison to quantitative study. It is generally believed that findings of quantitative research are more valid and thus it might be considered as shortcoming of qualitative research (Kumar, 2016). However, adoption of qualitative can be justified by the fact that the underlying research issue is not well researched in context of Pakistani organizations and in order to extend understanding of such issue, qualitative research is appropriate as it will generate an ingrained insight of the research issue. Moreover, in order to enhance validity of the research, the study has obtained data from diverse individuals and maintained impartiality to the maximum possible extent.

4. Chapter Four: Analysis of Diversity and Inclusion at A1

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents analysis of data, which was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. Respondents of the study were divided into two main groups i.e. Senior Management/HR Managers, and employees. Interview guides were structured based on the main themes and patterns that were identified in the literature by using a deductive approach. Major areas that were covered in the interviews included conceptualization of inclusion management, reasons behind introduction of inclusion initiative, essential elements that make up an inclusive setting, management initiatives to support the strategy and perceptions and experience of diverse employees with respect to inclusion management practices. During the series of thirty-two semi-structured interviews, participants to the study shared initiatives taken by the organization and what benefits do they foresee by leveraging on this new bandwagon.

4.2. Overview for A1

A1is 100% owned by an international provider of high quality voice, data, content and communication services which serve in 13 markets across Europe and Asia. It is Pakistan's second largest mobile operator with over 36 million subscribers. It acquired the GSM license in 2004 and began commercial operations on March 15, 2005. By investing over USD 2.3 billion in the local economy and has created 2,400 direct and 25,000 plus indirect jobs. A1's corporate headquarters is in Islamabad, with regional offices in Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Hyderabad and Peshawar. A1 launched Pakistan's first Mobile Financial Services brand 'Easypaisa' and won two GSMA awards at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona Spain (2014) for 'Best

Mobile Money Service in the World' and 'Best Mobile Money Service for Women in Emerging Markets.' A1 also contributes to society through selected social investments that are focused on long-term partnerships that can contribute to lasting change. Focus areas for A1 Pakistan are; Disability, Education, Health, Emergency Response and Employee Volunteerism.

4.3. Background

The strategy for inclusion management was rolled out four years ago in the organization. The strategy primarily aims to include every employee in the organization. Targeted efforts have been made by the organization to bring in gender diversity, people with disabilities and thought diversity by hiring people from different industries and remote universities.

As commentators call for context-specific definitions for inclusion (Frandale, 2015) the analysis begins by understanding the conceptualization of inclusion with respect to A1.

4.4. Conceptualization of Inclusion

4.4.1. Differentiation between diversity and inclusion

In order to understand organizational viewpoint on inclusion management senior management and HR manager were interviewed. This section begins by understanding the difference between diversity and inclusion.

The respondents clearly differentiated between the concepts of diversity and inclusion. While classifying the difference between the two concepts Manager Talent Acquisition and Employer Branding asserted that:

"Diversity is about bringing together under representatives from the society; people from different regions, gender, educational backgrounds, ethnicities, social classes, and diverse ideas. Whereas inclusion is brining everybody on one platform so that everyone has equal voice within the organization and have a sense of belongingness towards the organization".(A1-M1)

The above statement is a reflection of the differentiation suggested by Roberson (2006), 'While definitions of diversity focused primarily on heterogeneity and the demographic composition of groups or organizations, definitions of inclusion focused on employee involvement, and the integration of diversity into organizational systems and processes'.

The descriptions given by the participants were analyzed and classified into four categories:

4.4.2. Inclusion in organizational environment

The management believed that the pre-requisite for inclusion was to be tolerant and empathetic towards the needs of diverse group. Director Network engineering asserted that *"A1revamped its entire building to facilitate people with disabilities". Additionally line managers were given training before taking people with disabilities onboard we need to be sensitive to their needs only then they can work to their full potential".* (A1-M6)

The management side emphasized that inclusion in real sense means facilitating and catering to the distinct needs of the diverse group. In order for employees to be included in the organizational processes acceptability and adherence to their unique capabilities is important. Diversity alone cannot work unless there is a corresponding strategy of inclusion around it. This observation was corroborated by the statement of Director Head of strategy that " *females have the avenue of flexible hours, enhanced*

daycare facility, and paid maternity leave up to six months, all these things encourage females to stay with the organization".(A1-M7)

The effort to build an inclusive culture was also validated by employee's statement Manager Financial services planning commented, *"I believe my career growth was because of the fact that the organization provided me facilities like daycare and flexi-hours so that my work wasn't hindered".* (A1-E1)

4.4.3. Inclusion in Team relations

The management contended that inclusion is practiced when diverse opinions are valued equally within a team. Manager digital and financial services corporations commented that, *"Diversity is grouping together people from different backgrounds, different cultures, with different expertise, whereas inclusion is about engaging them to create synergies, utilizing their unique expertise while making them a part of the team.*(A1-M4)

The senior management established a rationale behind inclusion through working with different employees. Director Head of Marketing asserted that *"when working in an organization you have employees from different gender, religion, language and working styles inclusion is about accepting differences and living with them without the differences being cited as differences, so that every employee can contribute effectively in a team-setting".*(A1-M9)

The perspective from senior management's statement above inclusion was understood as the ability to accept differences and create a setting where everybody can comfortably contribute their viewpoints for successful operation of the business. Generally there is not a nominated team leader: the executives, specialists, officer level, and assistant managers, work collaboratively on a project. From the responses it was evident that senior management's understanding of inclusion was not only to

identify the differences, but also to create a culture where everyone can work collaboratively.

The responses of the employees supported the assertions made by the management in terms of creating a collaborative work environment where they can voice out their opinions was reflected in the statement of an employee, *"the communication within the team is very interactive and there is a lot of respect and acceptability towards each other's ideas. I have never felt my opinions weren't asked or not taken seriously".*(A1-E2)

4.4.4. Inclusion in decision-making

From the interviews it could be deciphered that inclusion initiatives devolve to the employees the ability to participate and influence the decision-making process. Head of product development asserted that *"inclusion is when we get the job done where everyone feels a part of core decision-making".* (A1-M5)

The statement above was validated through understanding the decision-making process in the company. Mostly a bottom up approach is followed for giving input for a project. For example if there is a new product launch or change in existing offers to the customers, the employees will keep the track of prevalent trends and initiate the process if existing strategy needs to be revised. Once the team builds up the case they present the case in the management meeting where both the employees and the management work collaboratively to reach the best possible solution.

The senior management believed that employee input is critical for successful business operations. It was evident by the example given by Manager Talent and Culture that there was a mega project of biometric sim registration in which they had to verify the entire customer base as per government orders in ninety days. CEO was looking after that project. In a meeting CEO had made a specific decision pertaining

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to that project which was challenged by an employee. Employee defied the decision of the CEO and at the end employee's decision was considered correct. After that meeting the CEO wrote an email to all employees that this is what happened in the meeting and the employee won the argument and we had to change the business decision because I was so convinced and the employee was right. (A1-M3)

The examples provided by the directors proved that people are genuine part of decision-making process and their opinions are heard.

In order to ascertain whether inclusion was being practiced in real sense important elements such as levels of empowerment and **decision-making** capacity of employees was analyzed.

An employee remarked "*I think no other organization gives you so much authority as this organization does and definitely the level of trust impacts your perception of inclusion. Before being a permanent employee I was an intern here and I was asked to represent my manager at an exhibition in Lahore".*(A1-E5)

From the response given by the employees it was evident that individuals were appreciated and acknowledged by giving them responsibility, voice in decision-making. Employees at A1 did validate that they were empowered instead of being micromanaged. With respect to the theme of decision making the employees endorsed the statements given by management that employees were did have a voice in important decision.

4.4.5. Inclusion in Human Resource programs

Ensuring equal representation of females was an agreed upon agenda amongst the senior management. During recruitment conscious efforts are made to increase female candidates in the pool. Manager Talent Acquisition asserted that: *Our target is to find*

more female applicants. The aim is that against a position that ratio of female to male shouldn't be 10:90 it should be 50:50. (A1-M1)

As an employer A1 is going beyond traditional means to increase female representation. For that headhunter, recruitment agencies and candidates from remote areas of Pakistan are contacted. The commitment of organization to increase female representation was also reflected through greater number of women in top managerial positions. The management shared that there was high imbalance in gender representation few years ago, which they are trying to improve. The statement of Head of strategy corroborated the efforts that are being made "*Something we are very proud of is that we have enhanced gender participation in the organization over last few years significantly. Around 2-3 years ago out of 45 directors we just had one female director now we have 8 directors and at the manager level the number has also risen".*(A1-M7)

Apart from gender the senior management also incorporated people with disability in the workplace. With respect to this HR has cascaded a lot programs in regard to diversity and inclusion. The statement made by Manager Digital and Financial Services reflects how organization prepared itself to incorporate physically challenged candidates, "*when the Open Mind Trainee program was introduced the line manager received special training and employees were taught sign language".*(A1-M4)

Furthermore employees also commented on **career progression** and development opportunities that were given to them. IT implementation executive remarked "*I skipped the post of officer I directly jumped from a trainee to an executive so this was a big motivation for me, because you have to stay at officer level for 2-3 years and I skipped that post based on my performance".*(A1-E3)

The responses suggested that diversity and inclusion are interrelated concepts or subsets under the same umbrella term. It could be inferred that both concepts exist concurrently and diversity was regarded as an antecedent for inclusion.

In order to sum up, the statements given by management were analyzed and summarized into four categories; inclusion in organizational environment, team relations, decision-making and human resource programs. These conceptualizations show a contextualized perspective of how senior managers perceived inclusion with respect to their culture and organization. Supporting arguments from employees were also added in order to validate the assertions made by the management. The employees expressed that inclusion meant that everyone had equal opportunity to contribute towards organization's development and this was being catered for by providing an organizational environment that addressed the specific needs for every individual irrespective of their gender, race and disability.

4.5. Drivers for introducing the strategy for inclusion management

Having discussed the definition of inclusion management the research analyzed the reasons for introducing the strategy for inclusion management. The strategy for diversity and inclusion was present at the group level. However the initiatives pertaining to inclusion are driven locally. The strategy for inclusion was rolled out four years ago. The management presented variety of reasons behind its introduction. The Director Head of strategy asserted that as *"A1 has its HQ in Norway which is a state owned enterprise and a debate started that there wasn't sufficient representation of women at management level in its subsidiaries, which is against Norwegian ideals"*.(A1-M7). Most of the participants unanimously agreed that the push for diversity came from the group but the initiatives pertaining to inclusion were locally driven. Moreover Director Head of Marketing commented that "*the HQ introduced*

this strategy as it was backed by research and studies that validated that having diverse teams and promoting inclusion brings in additional perspective and growth to the organization". (A1-M9) As the HQ had already realized the benefits and success rate for this concept it was easy for the subsidiaries to adopt and implement the corresponding strategies around it. Moreover the strategy of inclusion management is also aligned with organization's vision statement of "empowering societies". Manager Talent and culture asserted that initiatives like *"Naya Aghaaz that is for females on career break and Khudar Pakistan which is for the disabled people, enable them to stand on their feet and to contribute to the society".*(A1-M3).In addition to the push from the parent company and alignment with the vision, another driver was the prevalent market conditions. The Director Corporate Communications and CSR asserted that *"there is a genuine need for inclusion management as 50 percent of our customer base are women so they need to be represented at all levels starting from people who conceptualize the product to people who make the final decision. It is very important that an organization like A1 have all sort of people ranging from women to people with disabilities people to people with different age backgrounds to compete globally".*(A1-M8)

From a business case perspective Head of Product Development remarked *"we believe that through D&I you are able to generate a better talent pool that brings in innovative ideas to stay competitive".*(A1-M6)

From the evidence given in the interviews it could be inferred that the drivers or reasons were not because of any legal requirement. As A1 is in the service industry, there is no legal binding on them to hire certain percentage of diverse workforce. The initiatives are being undertaken based on the commercial and moral viability that they bring to the organization. The strategy of inclusion management is driven mainly

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because A1's philosophy is trickled down from Norway, the parent company has realized the importance of this concept so it's a top down message that it will work. There is also strategic alignment with the vision of the organization and the business need argument that diverse workforce will generate novel ideas which enables the organization to stay competitive.

To sum up the management suggested that primary reasons to introduce this strategy were to comply with the practices of HQs, reap the potential benefits highlighted by the existing research, conform to the demands of prevailing market conditions and this strategy also supported the vision of the organization. One of the reasons highlighted by the management was also complimented by existing literature that a diversified workforce enables an organization to cater to an increasingly diverse consumer base (Allen and Montgomery, 2001). This enhanced flexibility makes organizations more responsive and creates avenues for greater market penetration which provides access to new customers (April, 2009).

Employees on the other hand had a different viewpoint from the management in terms of reasons or drivers for introducing this strategy. Employees viewed that such initiatives improves employee morale and leads to greater job satisfaction.

One of the employee remarked, "*such initiatives instill greater job satisfaction within us because as an employee I feel my contributions are valued as organization makes every possible attempt not to make me feel discriminated*".(A1-E8)

Another employee remarked, "*I believe such initiatives creates perceptions of fairness and improves commitment and identification towards the organization*". (A1-E2)

From employee's lens, the introduction of such initiatives results in creating favorable perceptions of the organization and enhances their commitment and morale.

4.6. Elements for an inclusive setting

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After exploring the reasons for incorporating the strategy for inclusion management, the **elements** to create an inclusive setting were examined. All the respondents from the management side unanimously stressed that the agenda to be successful should be driven from the top management. The senior management should be open to the philosophy of inclusion and then make corresponding efforts to embed that into the culture. Director Network Engineering asserted *"Our culture is very open; we are very approachable among our teams our management layers are very approachable any of our employees can get up and speak to the CEO without that bureaucratic process".*(A1-M6)

Majority of participants to study endorsed that the top management especially the CEO was supportive towards the strategy of inclusion management. A1 is the pioneer to introduce inclusion management in telecom sector, and initiatives like extending the paid maternity leave from three months to six months shows their commitment towards the philosophy.

Trainings were deemed to be another important constituent that was considered essential to create awareness and change the prevalent mind-set amongst the employees. A1 provides periodic trainings to the employees on diversity and inclusion. After creating awareness the emphasis is on creating an enabling environment in which diverse individuals can work without any hindrance. Manager Rewards asserted: *"that people with disabilities require special attention; people managers are given specific trainings on how to handle people with disability".* (A1-M2)

From the interviews it could be discerned that apart from trainings the overall culture needs to encourage, ensure and empower employees to be a part of the organization. If females are being encouraged to join the workforce they are provided facilities such

as work from home, pick and drop, and six months maternity so that they can work without any inhibitions. In addition to this similar career progression and development opportunities are provided to males and females.

Equal treatment towards all the employees was another factor that surfaced during the research. Manager Digital and Financial Services remarked that, "*when dealing within the team I try to be indifferent, so that nobody feels they are given more or less importance or she's not being assigned certain duties because she's physically challenged*".(A1-M4)

In addition to equal treatment, two-way communication was another element that was considered central to create an inclusive culture. Director Head of Marketing asserted that *"our key strength is we have a very open culture where employees can communicate easily among teams and with their higher-ups; hence our culture inherently facilitates the strategy of inclusion"*. (A1-M9)

From the responses it could be deduced that management believes in order to foster and inclusive culture, top management's support, trainings, impartial treatment and communication are crucial constituents.

In addition to management's perspective employees expressed the elements that they felt should be mitigated in order to foster an inclusive environment. Despite efforts claimed by the management the employees pointed out three basic elements that still exist as an obstacle.

One of the employees responding to the factors that make them feel excluded in the work place remarked, "*There is lack of awareness in society in general so same is reflected in the work place as well*". (A1-E1)

Although the management stressed on providing periodic trainings the statement from the employee reflected a contrary scenario, "*I can still sense that there is a*

sympathetic attitude when people see me on wheelchair". (A1-E4)

Although the management had acknowledged that trainings, impartial treatment and communication are critical constituents, the above statements are a contradictory reflection of their claims. There still exists discriminatory attitude towards employees with disabilities. It can be analyzed that managers have not been able to draw the line between showing sympathy and being sensitive to the unique needs of the diverse population.

4.7. Management initiatives introduced by A1

The research further explored the **management initiatives** that were undertaken locally to support the strategy for inclusion management. From an organizational perspective two flagship programs were introduced to support the strategy for inclusion management.

4.7.1. NayaAghaaz

NayaAghaaz is aligned with organization's vision to "empower women and empower societies". This program aims to provide opportunities for women to work in a corporate setting. This program targets women who have been on hiatus from their careers and want to re-join the corporate world, or mature women who had never had the opportunity to work before. The nine-month "NayaAghaaz" program allows A1 to create a future talent pool of potential female employees and future female leaders for the organization. Keeping the cultural context of Pakistan in mind females go on prolonged career break and are unable to join the corporate world.

Manager talent acquisition remarked that *"this unexploited pool is being identified by the organization so it is a WIN/WIN strategy for the females as they were unemployed and for the organization it is an excellent pool that is untapped"*.(A1-M1)

This program has been running for three years and NayaAghaaz trainees have been hired on permanent positions. Every year thirty positions open for women who want to join back after the career break.

4.7.2. Open Mind Trainee (OMT)

OMT is an initiative that reflects how A1 took up disability as a priority agenda by forging strategic partnerships, raising awareness through advocacy, trainings and volunteerism, to ensure their inclusion in the workplace. This program was launched in 2013 with the objective of enhancing the employability for individuals with disabilities through skill development, mentoring and on job training. Annually sixteen people are given an opportunity to be a part of this program. For three months these people are trained in one of the partner organization called step, and remaining nine months they work in A1 Pakistan on different projects so they can get practical experience of corporate world. After the completion of the training period they can apply for regular positions.

The research further probed the scope of work given to NayaAghaaz and Open Mind trainees. Director CSR commented, "*Nayaaghaaz and OMT are two programs but they don't work in isolation. So Nayaaghaaz trainee is working on a project but she was interacting with multiple people, when the program finishes she has multiple opportunities within these stream to explore further absorption within the organization*".(A1-M8)

Moreover the organization ensures active role for placement of these people. A chain of emails was shared as an evidence that A1 makes CVs for their trainees and they send it to all UN agencies, NGOs and their business partners, that these are the people they have trained in order to help them find permanent jobs if not at A1 then somewhere else so that they can have some sustainable source of income. In the

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absence of any precedence or governing framework in the country, these two programs reflect organization's commitment for inclusion management initiatives.

In addition to this employees also corroborated that these initiatives enabled them to secure promising career opportunities and create perceptions of fairness towards the organization.

One of the employees remarked *"earlier I was working for some other organization they treated us in a special way gave us less workload, easy tasks so through this the learning was affected. But here you are at the same stand as everyone else, there are more opportunities to learn as same work responsibility are given to everyone. The line doesn't think of us differently. I have experienced A1 is actually trying hard enough not to discriminate anyone. There is equal opportunity to learn and grow"*. (A1-E3)

Another employee remarked *"I never felt I wasn't assigned anything because I was physically challenged, as long as you are competent there is an open field of opportunities for everyone and this organization aids you once you grab the opportunity. My sense of belonging is pretty high towards the organization because it's the society that treats me differently not the organization"*. (A1-E1)

Despite the positive reviews from the management and employees side it could be analyzed that the absorption rate of the participants after attending these programs is very low. Only three to four trainees are retained after the completion of these programs. Such programs are an indication that the organization is still struggling to increase the representation of diverse population. Moreover it will take significant time for employees hired through these initiatives to progress up in the hierarchy hence it is unclear whether these employees will ever get representation at the management or director level.

4.7.3. HR practices and policies

From the evidence gathered through interviews the management believed that success could only be achieved when each employee is treated with utmost respect. The prevalent culture appreciated the diversity of talents, abilities and experiences, valued input of others. Respect in workplace is also implemented in recruitment and promotion. Decisions regarding employees and prospective candidates are based on merit, qualifications and job-related performance without considering non-job characteristics such gender, age, ethnicity, physical attributes. This section presents changes in **HR practices and policies** to support the strategy of diversity and inclusion.

4.7.3.1. Recruitment

A1 is an equal opportunity employer that values merit and performance. Recently as a policy initiative they are trying to increase female ratio in the pool while shortlisting for a position. This was also reflected in the statement of Manager Talent acquisition *"earlier the guideline was to have shortlisted candidates for any role but now it says you have to have shortlisted candidates, which have a good representation of females as well. Our aim is that against a position that ratio of female to male shouldn't be 10:90 it should be 50:50".* (A1-M1)

Even for the internship program the organization ensures it should be gender balanced pool, not focusing only on the gender side of it but also having candidates from remote locations and remote universities who do not get exposure to work in big organizations in order to give them an opportunity to work in a multinational setting. In order to ensure sufficient representation in the pool active search is done by HR to look for females by adopting unconventional methods of recruitment. This finding was evident from the statement of Manager Rewards and Policy, *"So what we do is*

we come out of traditional methods and make effort to find females. We ask people to refer people to us we headhunt in order to have a wider pool of applicants to choose from and then we can hire whoever is competent".(A1-M2)

For Naya Aghaaz the recruitment process is slightly different as it includes an online test before shortlisting candidates. For Open mind trainee an accessible recruitment model was developed for which a renowned disability consultant was on boarded to bring in technical prowess and best practices.

The model constituted:

- Formulation of recruitment policies based on diversity and equal opportunity

- Advertisements through accessible Career Portal, digital and mass media

- Assessment of the applicants on basis of talent and eligibility while accommodating their special needs

- Creation of regular job slots across the organization suitable to the skills set, education and abilities

- Sensitization of the workforce through advocacy, communication campaigns and specialized trainings.

- Modification in physical infrastructure and ensuring building accessibility including emergency evacuation protocols, ramps, signage, designated parking, transportation facility, accessible washrooms and workstations

From the evidence gathered about the recruitment policy it is apparent that the organization is going an extra mile to include diverse population in the workforce. The company also seeks to promote from within, provided the internal applicant has the most appropriate skills, knowledge, and behavior to meet the job requirements. This observation was supported by Manager Talent and Culture, *"when we are hiring*

we look at our internal pool first for instance from the nayaaghaazz program or from the OMT if somebody has performed well we do not forgo that person".(A1-M2)

It thus increases the chances of trainee under NayaAghaaz and OMT to be hired to permanent positions.

A1inclusiveness strategy falls under gender diversity, people with disabilities, and different thought process (different industries, different backgrounds). For the third area the company is trying to reach out to candidates in rural areas and professionals from different industries. The third leg of thought diversity is very important because it's in A1's culture to challenge the existing way of doing things. Manager Digital and Financial services corporations remarked *"for thought diversity we welcome people from all sectors not just telecom, in addition to this we have collaborated with Lums in Far reach program, so how it works is that Lums would give scholarships to bright students who were from remote areas of Pakistan and we gave them opportunity by hiring them".*(A1-M4)

The insights from the interviews on recruitment it could be discerned that the organization is making deliberate efforts to open avenues for diverse population in the society. However the critical analysis of the efforts showed that management's claim to bring in thought diversity is still questionable. For the far reach program they have collaborated with one the leading institutes of Pakistan which is located in a metropolitan city. The graduates would be having a similar mind-set and in essence would not be bring thought diversity in true spirit.

4.7.3.2.Career progression

In order to analyze further the research examined **career progression** of the employees. To promote inclusive work culture, women are provided similar career progression and developmental opportunities like their male counterparts. Females are

encouraged to develop themselves to achieve their career aspirations. This is one of the key priorities of the female talent agenda. A separate talent review called Female talent review–is conducted at the top management level in order to ensure strong women talent pipeline in the organization.

The evidence of success rate for inclusion management agenda was reflected by increased representation of females at all levels especially drastic increase in the number of female directors over the past three years. It was also substantiated by the statement of Director Head of Strategy "*there is visible difference one can observe at all cadres especially at the higher management level, we now have eight female directors whereas previously there was just one female director*".(A1-M7)

In addition to female talent review Head of Corporate Communications and CSR remarked "*there is* Women's Inspirational Network (WIN)*where female employees from different management cadres come together to collaborate, inspire, share experiences and train each other*".(A1-M8)

4.7.3.3.Benefits for female employees

Female employees are facilitated by providing childcare facility and pick and drop facility. The extension in paid maternity leave from three months to six months shows company's commitment to retain female workforce. Manger Employer Branding remarked "*In Telcos we are the only organization who has 6 months of maternity leave for female employees and that was only possible because our CEO felt so strong about it*".(A1-M1)

Moreover in order to empower females there is a driving class program which is done in collaboration with National Highway Police. Director Head of Marketing remarked "*we let our females go for those classes during office hours so that we can help them learn driving and be empowered to come to work*".(A1-M9)

The efforts made by the organization is also supported by the statement of the employee, "*had I been judged not being able to hear or speak properly I would never been in this position. I believe A1is a flag bearer for inclusion in the telecoms"*.(A1-E1)

4.7.3.4.Diversity and Inclusion Training:

Mandatory trainings on diversity and inclusion are delivered so that employees learn the skills and tools they need to operate effectively and to create an inclusive environment. The training programs include topics on inclusion, appreciating differences, how to building inclusive behaviors among the managers.

To sum up it could be inferred from the interviews that the organization is making deliberate attempts to include gender diversity however the areas to bring in thought diversity and people with disabilities have not catered for equally. Moreover when questioned on the compensation levels of the workforce the management revealed everyone was paid equally. However from the critical analysis it could be concluded that the top paying technical positions were still with the male employees which is totally overlooked by the organization. Analyzing the changes organization has made with regards to HR practices is important because the in existing literature many commentators have drawn considerable attention to the wide range of human resource functions and activities that support diversity management, which include human resource planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, promotion, and compensation (DickieandSoldan, 2008; Jabbour, Gordono, De Oliviera, Martinez, andBattiselle, 2011; Shen et al., 2009).Therefore there should be alignment between diversity and inclusion initiatives with the HR practices within the organization.

4.8.Advantages of an inclusive workplace

After analyzing the policies and practices pertaining to HR the discussion follows towards the **advantages** of having an inclusive environment. The management views that diversity and inclusion initiatives do have the potential to contribute towards organization's success. From the interviews it could be deciphered that the initiative of inclusion management entails employing and engaging with employees as well as optimizing diverse perspectives and experiences to generate the best ideas, in order to reap competitive advantage. The statement given by CEO**,** A1 Pakistan (source: website) succinctly sums up the benefits organization foresees regarding diversity and inclusion.

"We believe in building a diverse and inclusive workforce where all employees can realize their potential and contribute towards organization's success. The organization that fails to see the importance of diversity and inclusion might find that it is unable to attract and retain the kind of customers, employees, and business partners that are an integral part of our changing environment and its demands".

Surprisingly similar philosophy has been supported by the existing literature,(Blass and April, 2008) stated that such initiatives enhances organization's ability to attract and retain diverse workforce and brings "brightest and the best' employees for the organization. Furthermore, clients are also drawn towards organizations that have a strong employee base (Cox and Blake, 1991).

The participants to the study claimed the diversity and inclusion had expansive advantages. Head of Product Development remarked *"competitiveness inside and outside the organization increases. Inside people strive for the better because your survival isn't dependent on belonging to a dominant group you have to compete with people with so much potential. Your employer brand improves because people know we have people from every category so they won't have apprehensions whether they*

will fit in or not. Your visibility in the market and brand value improves".(A1-M5)

From the findings it could be concluded that the overarching principle is greater number of ideas equates to greater profit and that's what A1is striving for to stay in the market. When there is diversity different ideas will flourish, acceptability and respect increases and all these things resultantly in the competitive advantage. Respondents claimed that likely outcome was high performance resulting in increased profitability, market share and sales volumes. It was suggested that these outcomes were the result of better decision-making through sharing of diverse views, and increased opportunity for problem solving and innovation.

The improvement in financial performance of the company was also evident through the statement of Manager Digital and Financial services *"A1 had always been number two. In 2015 we beat A2 in 2 quarters straight in 3rd we were close. So before A2's merger we were very close to the number one, we have never been this close to A2. In 2015 we were closest to A2. Our profitability increased, sales revenue and customers also increased".* (A1-M4)

The participants also supported the argument of improved profitability by referring existing researches. There are international researches available, which have proven if you have diverse workforce and inclusive culture it has direct correlation with profitability of the organization and A1 strongly believes in the same.

A1 caters to a diverse customer base and in order to serve efficiently it is important to have their representation in the workforce. Director Corporate Communications and CSR remarked *"If you have a customer base which is not represented inside the organization then you are making decisions for that customer segment which you have no real time association and emotional connect to. A male cannot have an emotional connect to which is female, similar is the case with disabled people of*

younger generation. So it has direct implications with profitability that's what we strongly believe in". (A1-M8)

Moreover after the introduction of inclusion related initiatives employee engagement survey results showed that people really appreciated the fact that we as an organization were doing something for under representatives of the society. It can be observed that these initiatives have direct implications on employee morale and engagement. Employee's belief on overall company values and the vision is much stronger when they see that these initiatives are actually linked with actual on ground practical steps towards implementation of that vision.

It was observed that these initiatives facilitated in talent attraction and talent retention, which extended to a more positive internal climate where individuals could feel respected, valued and recognized.

4.1. Challenges for introducing the strategy

The literature highlights that as MNCs operate in different countries with varying institutional environments therefore they encounter different obstacles (G. Jackson and Deeg, 2008; Kostova, Kendall, and Dacin, 2008).The **challenges** provided the study with insight into elements that managers found difficult to manage. The findings for this section are significant as A1 is the pioneer in Telecommunication sector to introduce the strategy for inclusion management.

Majority of the managers remarked that the biggest challenge is to change to existing mind-set of the employees. Employees perceived that these initiatives are women centric and they were given preference just because it's a different group not because they are competent. Head of Product Development remarked "*when we talk about diversity the perception is it's for women empowerment. People don't realize it is beneficial for everybody".* (A1-M5)

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Weaving these initiatives into the organization is a long-term process. In order to build in acceptability management needs to kill the existing perceptions. For this reason the concept needs to be reinforced repeatedly. This observation was validated by statement of Manager Talent and Culture *"there would come a tipping point where we will be not required to push these efforts in the organization but currently we are pushing these efforts for example equal representation in the pool, in two-three years frame it will become a norm and people within the organization would be more receptive how to handle more diverse teams".* (A1-M3)

Participants also believed since we live in male dominated society men see these initiatives as a threat to their jobs. Manager HR remarked that *we pushed for D&I aggressively for the past two three years and that resulted in visible increase in women at managerial and director level, men started to believe that it is something biased as it never happened earlier*. The challenge of open culture is that people are vocal about change; hence gossip was another obstacle that the management dealt through active communication with the employees. Employee apprehensions were addressed by building in a line of sight with the vision of the organization.

Despite the assertions made by the management to have encountered all the possible challenges the statements from the employees suggested that there were still limitations before organization could truly call itself a truly inclusive organization. One of the employee remarked, "*It has not been an easy journey; we often hear comments that a colleague was given preferential treatment because she was a female.* (A1-E5)

It could be analyzed that the management needs to revisit its strategy as the picture is not that flawless. As we live in a society where discrimination is deep-rooted there is a backlash from the majority of the male colleagues. Researchers have also identified

this severe challenge that overstressing on diversity initiatives and trainings may lead to conflict from those who fail to benefit from such practices (Nishii, 2013).

4.2. Perceptions around Inclusion management practices

4.2.1. Employee voice in decision-making

From the qualitative data collected it was evident that the top management was the driving force behind diversity and inclusion initiative. CEO was vocal about the initiative and actively propagated this initiative amongst employees. It was because of the conviction of the top management the A1 has been able to launch multiple programs in order to support this strategy.

While analyzing another theme *employee voice* in decision making the management gave examples of various forums from which employee opinion was taken into consideration. Manager Talent Acquisition remarked "*after the introduction of facebook at work employees have become really vocal and if the management wants a new idea they post it on Facebook and ask for employee suggestion. Formal processes are there too like engagement surveys, appraisal surveys*".(A1-M1)

From the examples given by the management it was evident that employee voice was actively sought in important business related matters. NFC payments , easy tag for motorway tolls, hum kadam activity were ideas given by employee. Moreover employees at various occasions challenged the decision made by the CEO. The top management was receptive towards the ideas given by the employees and appreciated if employees had suggestions the challenged the existing way of doing things.

The employees also supported the statements of the management in terms of welcoming employee input in critical organizational processes. One of the employees remarked "*Yes, the environment in which telecoms operate the competitive advantage comes through innovation. So management actively seeks employee opinion and that*

is actually implemented".(A1-E8)

To sum up the statements from the management and employees complimented in terms of acknowledging employee voice in decision-making. During the series of interviews the examples given by employees validated that employees could communicate easily and there was a climate for healthy debate. It could further be inferred that their line managers and organization as a whole gave equal opportunity to all the employees and there was a culture to of appreciation of different voices, which extends to employees contributions being heard. The prevalent culture did echo equal opportunity for everyone as long as they are competent. Analysis of this theme was essential as Mor Barak (2007) defined inclusion as the degree to which employees are included in critical organizational processes and have voice in decision-making.

4.2.2. Empowerment

The research further explored another critical theme of **empowerment.** Majority of the participants asserted that A1 is the most employee empowered organization. Manager Rewards and policy commented that "*one of our OMT who got a hired recently took a hum qadam initiative herself and we went to SOS village. She's a girl on wheelchair but she arranged the entire event herself".*(A1-M2)

The degree of empowerment that is given to employees was also reflected in the statement of Director Head of Strategy *"the reason for our success is that our employees are empowered there is a culture of empowerment the decisions are made by people who are doing the job so it doesn't change when we talk about diversity and inclusion in our company".* (A1-M7)

Moreover initiatives like ignite program is an example how A1 empowers budding intrapreneurs amongst its employees. This program allows employees to transition

"napkin ideas" to pilot products impacting millions. The purpose behind the launch of such a program is to ignite innovation and empower them to suggest their own solutions. Manager Financial Services remarked "*in project ignite 68 people travelled to Bangkok and the selected will travel to Norway for 3 months and will work in incubators to give it a real shape. So here if you have an idea you will be provided a platform to voice it out and you will be empowered to drive that initiative and you will also get rewarded for it*". (A1-M4)

The responses of the employees also advocated the degree of empowerment given to them. An employee remarked how he was empowered over the decision making process, "*we were launching a new product called companion watch and we had to decide on the branding. Branding for a product is a very crucial decision and I decided on a color and the management approved my say and they went ahead with what I had decided. You should have a strong logic and they will support your idea*".(A1-E3)

To sum up both management and employees were on the same page with regards to the degree of empowerment the employee had, however the employees had to go through a series of approvals in matters where cost was involved. Only if the management thought the idea was viable it was approved. Nonetheless there were various technological platforms that were provided to employees to come up with innovative solutions where employee did not have to seek approvals at all.

4.2.3. Access to information

In addition to employee input and empowerment, **access to information** is another extremely important practice in order to foster an inclusive culture (Ganesh et al., 2014). Management shared examples that have been prevalent in the organization.

The Director Head of Strategy described how everyone is taken on board when new strategy is introduced "*there's a strategy session in HQ then in every country which is attended by the top once that is over first thing CEO does is he invites the entire organization. The same slides are used and they walk us through the strategy, they give us stats with reasons why we are planning to do this and how we are going to do it*".(A1-M7)

Manager Talent and Culture shared an example *one of our trainee was working on 850 mega herds bit submission. Bit submission is a very confidential thing because it's a new license you are applying to the government of Pakistan and it is a big thing, the trainee was briefed everything she did all the photocopy, printing so she knew each and everything we are submitting in that bid.* (A1-M3)

From the statements given the management it was evident that information sharing was very fluid. Once employees are assigned certain projects no matter what type of data is required to that job that information or access rights are given to those people related to the project. Information is shared at every level no matter it is an intern, trainee or an employee once they are assigned a certain task all relevant information is given to them. Moreover owning to A1's open culture where employees are sitting next to the CEO the process of dissemination of information is done very actively. All the respondents believed that employees should be empowered and have access to critical information in order to have a clear line of sight regarding the direction into which the organization was heading.

While assessing inclusion in **intergroup relations**, which extends to perceptions of communication, information sharing within the company from employees, it was apparent from the qualitative feedback that A1 had an open culture where employees could openly communicate within the team and the senior management and had

access to all the information they need to do their jobs.

Another employee asserted *"that there sufficient communication regarding organizational changes, financial performance, goals and priorities. My manager ensures the entire team is on same page"*. (A1-E2)

The findings reflected that owing to the culture of the organization there was excellent communication amongst the team members and the senior management. Open- plan offices is another contributing factor that enables managers and employees to communicate freely and create and inclusive work environment

In summary employees acknowledged that everyone was treated impartially and had equal opportunities for growth and development. Every employee acknowledged that there was no discrimination based on race, color, age, disability, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, birth or other status. The employees attributed core values of the organization the reason to be associated with A1 for a long time. The governing values of the organization are to *be respectful, keep promises, make it easy* and *be inspiring*. The participants unanimously agreed that **promoting diversity and inclusion** awareness is the priority of the organization. The organization did conduct periodic trainings and counseling sessions for employees and their line managers. The emphasis on diversity and inclusion is reflected in the employee statement, *"It is definitely a priority because they setting a trend here so A1 is making a conscious effort to promote the notion of diversity and inclusion"*.(A1-E5)

The overall data collected exhibited that inclusion management is acknowledged and recognized by the senior management as an important element that was incorporated in the business strategy of the organization. Despite being a new concept inclusion management appears to be a popular lexicon in the company. The respondents had

clear understanding of the concept and how this strategy was implemented through different initiatives. The general perception of senior management about this initiative was favorable and it was observed that they were the ones pushing for these diversity and inclusion initiatives. The findings also showed that gender is an important aspect of diversity and inclusion as company is making conscious efforts to increase their representation in the workforce. Despite the efforts the company still has a long way to accomplish in terms of inclusion management. There is insignificant representation of females especially at the middle and top management. The ratio of male to female employees still exhibits a wide gap. In terms of people with disability, they are only two percent of the total workforce. Moreover the absorption rate of these employees within the company is low. The company also needs to broaden horizon and incorporate transgender in the workforce as well. The flagship programs introduced for diversity and inclusion appear as sporadic one-off events planned every year as opposed to efforts to integrate them in workforce. The general perception still prevails that special efforts are being made for diverse group that would inevitably lead to subtle biasness among majority group members.A1 has clearly not reached to a point where they can state that inclusion management is for every individual employee.

Figure 4-1: Graphical Representation for A1

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                                    │     Inclusion in     │
                                    │    organizational    │
                                    │     environment      │
                                    └─────────────────────┘

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                                    │   Inclusion in team- │
                                    │      relations       │
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│ Definition of Inclusion│
└──────────────────────┘           ┌─────────────────────┐
                                    │  Inclusion in decision-│
                                    │       making         │
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                                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                                    │    Inclusion in HR   │
                                    │       programs       │
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Elements for an inclusive setting

- **Management Perspective**
  - Buy-in from the senior management
  - Periodic trainings to create awareness
  - Impartial treatment
  - Open communication
- **Employee Perspective**
  - Improved awareness to curb sympathetic attitude

Management Initiatives introduced by A1

- NayaAghaaz
- Open Mind Trainee
- Changes in HR practices and policies
  - -revised recruitment strategy
  - -equal career development opportunities
  - -special facilities for female employees
  - -trainings on diversity and inclusion

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┌─────────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────────┐
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│  Challenges for introducing │────────│  Challenging existing mind-set │
│           the strategy      │        │                             │
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                                        │ -diverse opinions lead to│
                                        │ innovative ideas which,  │
                                        │ provides competitive     │
                                        │ advantage                │
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                                        ┌──────────────────────────┐
                                        │ -attract and retain talent│
                                        │ pool                     │
  ┌──────────────────────┐              └──────────────────────────┘
  │ Advantages of an     │
  │ inclusive workplace  │              ┌──────────────────────────┐
  └──────────────────────┘              │ -greater profitability   │
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                                        ┌──────────────────────────┐
                                        │ -improved employee       │
                                        │ engagement               │
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                                            │   Facebook at work    │
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                           │ making        │ ┌──────────────────────┐
                           └──────────────┘ │   -Examples of famous  │
                                            │   initiatives taken up │
                                            │   by employees (NFC    │
                                            │   payments, easy tag   │
                                            │   for motorway tolls,  │
                                            │   hum kadam)           │
                                            └──────────────────────┘
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- Introduction of Facebook at work

Employee voice in decision-making

- Examples of famous initiatives taken up by employees (NFC payments, easy tag for motorway tolls, hum kadam)

Inclusion management practices

Empowerment

- Program like ignite where employees develop prototype for their solutions

- Employee examples for developing the entire branding strategy for a new

Access to information

- the respondents unanimously agreed that employees had complete access to information and communication was very fluid

5. Chapter Five: Analysis of Diversity and Inclusion at A2

5.1. Introduction

This section presents analysis of data, which was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. Respondents of the study were divided into two main groups i.e. Senior Management/HR Managers, and employees that were categorized as diverse. Interview guides were structured based on the main themes and patterns that were identified in the literature by using a deductive approach. Major areas that were covered in the interviews included conceptualization of inclusion management, reasons behind introduction of inclusion initiative, essential elements that make up an inclusive setting, management initiatives to support the strategy and perceptions and experience of diverse employees with respect to inclusion management practices. During the series of semi-structured interviews, participants to the study shared initiatives taken by the organization and what benefits do they foresee for adopting this new lexicon.

5.2. Overview for A2

A2 is one of the leading telecom companies in Pakistan. The company ceremoniously began its operations in Pakistan in 1994 being the sole GSM mobile service. With over 50 million subscriber base, A2 has become the market leader in terms of volume and growth. This unparalleled success is owed to cutting-edge integrated technology.Through innovative services and products, it aims to bring about a digital revolution that will enable and transform societies towards a more progressive Pakistan.

5.3. Conceptualization of inclusion

While the construct of inclusion has spurred enormous debate in recent years it is still regarded as a new concept with little agreement on the nature of this construct or its theoretical underpinnings. Diversity management and inclusion is termed as a reaction to the different needs and requirements of the employees, and it also highlighted the importance of societal context when designing a strategy around it (Hanappi-Egger, 2012). In order to understand and analyze inclusion management in A2 it is important to understand how the organization **differentiates** between the concepts of diversity and inclusion. Majority of the respondents from the management's side had an understanding of these concepts and were able to theorize its definition. According to Specialist Talent learning and development, "*we take diversity and inclusion together. For diversity we have 3G matrix; that entails gender, generation Y and gen X and third is geographies. Whereas in inclusion we uphold woman and men are equal and make sure they get equal opportunities to contribute to the success of the organization*". (A2-M3)

As the portfolio for inclusion management was introduced a year ago the management has focused this strategy around four As, i.e. appearance, affiliation, advocacy and association. The purpose of this strategy is to foster participation in real sense without pressurizing employees to downplay their differences. In order to fit in prevalent social environment individual's use four A's listed below to minimize differences amongst the workforce.

Appearance: entails altering self-presentation in order to merge into the mainstream

Affiliation: entails negating behaviors that are generally associated with their identity, culture or group.

Advocacy: Individuals avoid supporting members associated with the group they belong to.

Association: Individuals refrain from interacting with their own group

The idea behind this strategy is that individuals should not downplay their differences and allows employees to be authentic and bring their real selves to work. In long-run A2 aims to diagnose four A's in order to allow employees to empathize with peer colleagues and be spokesperson for each other. The portfolio for inclusion management is introduced a year ago, however during the research practical implementation of this initiative was not apparent. The critical analysis revealed that A2 has simply adopted a popular model "Uncovering Talent: A New Model of Inclusion" given by Kenji Yoshino (2013). This research suggests presently inclusion emphases on formal inclusion that is participation without recognizing its effects on assimilation. In response to pressures to conform people downplay their differences.

The lack of awareness regarding this initiative was also observed in the management side as Segment manager *remarked "Diversity and inclusion is a new concept females have been working here for some time but diversity and inclusion wasn't among the priorities of the management they never spoke about it we didn't see them in senior management positions but it is happening now. So there are a lot of talks about it but I haven't seen any proper plan".*(A2-M6)

Additionally from the responses given by the management it was gathered that management treated them as overlapping ideas. HR Business Partner remarked, *"Diversity and inclusion is not a separate domain so in short term we are focusing on diversity whereas in long-term plans we want to reach the goal of inclusion. These two are overlapping concepts, in diversity company say we are doing things for women, single parents, you are including people from different ethnicities, backgrounds etc so there should be a comprehensive framework but in inclusion which is catering to all and no one feels discriminated".*(A2-M7)

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The statement above reflects that inclusion is understood in terms of eradicating discrimination rather than empowering to achieve their full potential.

In order to ascertain whether employees had an understanding of this prevalent concept employee perspective was also included. Surprisingly only few employees were able to theorize the definition and differentiate between the two concepts.

Diversity highlights the differences so it focuses on having a mix of people from different gender, race, ability, religion, etc. whereas inclusion focuses on making the mix work by respecting and appreciating their individual talents.(A2-E3)

Another employee stated, "*Diversity is about recognizing and embracing the differences in an institution whereas inclusion is putting diversity in action and harnessing the benefits of diverse workforce*". (A2-E7)

On the contrary there were statements from the employees that revealed lack of awareness and understanding about this portfolio.

In support of the above observation supply chain officer remarked, "*The organization never trained us on this so I am unable to comment and differentiate the two concepts.* Adding on to the previous statement an employee stated, *the management has started to talk a lot about it but I don't see any practical work being done for it so my understanding limited till the concept of diversity I am unaware of what inclusion exactly means*". (A2-E5)

From the overall responses it could be inferred that the management and the employees had superficial understanding of the concept. Despite the fact it was two years old concept it was referred to be on paper only. The theorization given by the management appeared to be based on a mere adaptation without understanding the implications or relevance of that model to Pakistani context. Additionally the management was not able to correlate the 3G matrix of diversity and the new

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inclusion model. Mixed responses were also seen from the employees as some the employees were not even aware of the portfolio of inclusion management. The critical analysis also revealed that the understanding of inclusion was linked to improving equal opportunity, acceptability and respect in the prevalent scenario. The conceptualization provided by the organization does corroborate with the definition of Giovannini (2004) that 'inclusion is a state of being valued, respected, and supported. However the element that seems to be missing is that A2 has failed to make relation how will it utilize and value the differences they are trying to mitigate.

In comparison to A1that specified that inclusion should relate to decision-making, human resource programs and organizational environment appears to be vague in this organization as it has not established the target areas how would the diverse population be able to contribute to critical organizational processes.

5.4. Drivers for introducing the strategy for inclusion management

Having discussed the conceptualization of inclusion the research further analyzed the **reasons for introducing the strategy for inclusion management**. The management accounted foreigner CEO's ideology to be the prime reason for rolling out this strategy. Head of cultural transformation stated**, "***I think with the change in management we saw more focus on diversity and inclusion as our CEO is a foreigner so he is very passionate about it"*.(A2-M2)

From the statements of the respondents it could be gathered that they attributed the introduction of this strategy with the mind-set that top management brought with them from the West. Inclusion management was perceived to be a new buzzword in the market that the organization had to adopt in order to build a positive brand image in the market.

The drive for building a favorable image as an employer was reflected in the

statement of Specialist Recruitment, Performance and Rewards*"A2 is the largest telecom company but being an employer they never had a good image in the market particularly the ratio of females is very low. Currently the organization is going towards digital transformation and they need creative people who can give innovative solutions"*. (A2-M1)

The business case argument was another reason that was ascertained during the interview sessions. Manager Talent and acquisition and cultural transformation stated, *"See there is no legal binding on us as, but for a corporate entity it is extremely important because at the end of the day it is not just about hiring people and getting your job done, it is about innovating bringing different ideas and different perspectives together. In that aspect it's extremely important to bring diverse mindsets together to spark innovation"*.(A2-M4)

To sum up three major reasons were identified for the introduction of the strategy. Firstly the CEO is a foreigner and he believes in the research and the success stories of companies that have adopted this agenda therefore he advocates the notions of diversity and inclusion. Secondly A2 is trying to improve their market image and brand itself as equal employment opportunity employer in order to attract diverse pool of applicants. The existing literature also validates that companies that are publicly seen not to practice diversity and inclusion are not viewed as desirable organizations diverse population would want to work for (Blass and April, 2008).

Thirdly the management believed that they needed to incorporate diversity in the society inside the organization. In order to outshine the market creativity is a critical constituent which can be achieved by having a diverse workforce that is why A2 is propagating this notion. The validation that diversity sparks innovation can be supplemented by the study of De Wit and Greer (1998), which suggests that

heterogeneous teams are most inventive and creative. From the responses it could be comprehended that management did feel a genuine need to incorporate the same variety as reflected in the society into the organization and eventually accept it and build that in the organizational culture.

In comparison the reasons identified by both the organizations reflected the need to conform to prevalent market dynamics, bring about innovative solutions and stay competitive.

Employees on the other hand had a different viewpoint from the management in terms of reasons or drivers for introducing this strategy. Employees viewed that such initiatives reduced perception of discrimination and inequality. With respect to this one the employees remarked, *"I believe with the emphasis on such initiatives I have started to feel that organization values my input and I do have promising career in future as my male colleagues".*(A2-E6)

Another employee commented that such initiatives improve overall health and well-being of the employee. A reflection for improvement of employee well-being is reflected in the statement of (associate talent learning and development), *"I have the choice of taking work from home once a week and pick timings of my choice this flexibility enables me to keep work life balance and makes me more productive".*(A2-E4)

The responses from the employees indicate that they viewed brining in such initiatives is fundamental as it creates perceptions of fairness towards the organization and improves overall well-being of the employee. In contrast to this employees from A1 maintained that such initiatives impact their morale commitment and job satisfaction.

5.5. Elements for an inclusive setting

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After exploring the drivers for inclusion management, the **elements** to foster an inclusive setting were examined. As inclusion management was a recent portfolio the management proposed few elements they deemed would be essential to foster an inclusive environment.

Manager Brands commented "*I believe the critical elements are respect and empathy to all the employees in the organization. For this we would require extensive trainings and awareness workshops to communicate the message of diversity and inclusion*".(A2-M8)

The statement above reflects that management recognizes that tapping on awareness is the main foundation for ensuring diversity and inclusion program becomes successful. Similarly majority of the respondents commented that in order to combat resistance and backlash from existing employees tapping on awareness was deemed to be the primary element. With respect to trainings Head of Cultural Transformation asserted, "*The emphasis on trainings is to create a culture where there is impartiality and employees feel their contributions matter in the growth of the organization*".(A2-M2)

Open communication was another constituent that management considered was important in order for the strategy of inclusion management to work. HR Business Partner stated "*inclusion in real sense means giving heed to disparate views through encouraging open, two-way communication. Previously there was a closed-door culture in the organization, however with changing trends we are trying to create a boundary less culture*". (A2-M7)In addition to open communication managers also recognized that they need to be accessible so that employees can communicate their viewpoints easily.

Another constituent that emerged during the series of interviews was alignment of this

strategy with all HR practices. Specialist Recruitment, Performance and Rewards remarked, "*After the introduction of this portfolio we are aiming to recruit diverse population, train everyone and create talent pipeline so that there is an equal opportunity for progression*".(A2-M1)

As inclusion management is a new initiative the management perspective predominantly reflected what they had planned to achieve in future years. Surprisingly all the elements highlighted by the management were also supported by existing literature; Pless and Maak (2004) stated that in order to create a culture of inclusion showing respect and empathy, equality, appreciation for voices, and streamlining HR programs was deemed important.

In addition to management's perspective employees expressed the elements that they felt should be mitigated in order to create an inclusive environment. The employees highlighted that important constituents to create inclusive environment, are fair treatment, equal opportunities for development and recognition and reward for their contributions.

Coordinator to CEO commented, "*There is a lot injustice prevalent, and you don't really feel part of the organization. I believe we can contribute towards to development and growth of this organization and our input should be considered. I feel I have ideas through which we can bring improvement in company's revenues are not considered valuable here*".(A2-E1)

Another employee Officer Admin and Finance *remarked, "it all depends on your boss and your team. If you are in the good books of your boss everything will be fine for you otherwise I do not think everyone is treated fairly as there are always some favorites. I do feel there isn't equal reward or recognition for a job that is done well*".(A2-E2)

Supporting the above statement Associate Talent Learning and Development stated, "*I actually felt excluded now that you ask me at the lack of developmental opportunities that were given to me. The mindset still prevails to provide more developmental opportunities to male colleagues*".(A2-E4)

These startling comments from the employees are a reflection of the present scenario of the organization. Despite being a year old initiative the organization is unable to address basic issues. Employees currently do not feel valued and appreciated in the present environment which is one of the fundamentals of an inclusive culture. Conversely employees in A1 had question marks on the transparency of hiring process and sympathetic attitude towards people with disabilities that need to be addressed as employees regarded them essential constituents.

5.6.Management Initiatives introduced by A2

The research further explored the **management initiatives** that were undertaken locally to support the strategy for inclusion management. Manager Talent Acquisition and Cultural Transformation asserted, "*So we started this portfolio with International Women's day celebration. We planned a huge event with external speakers. It was a kick start.*"(A2-M4)

Majority of the management regarded the celebration of International Women's Day a major event to recognize the contributions of female associates.

Another initiative pointed by management highlighted was sponsorship of YLC. Specialist Recruitment, Performance and Rewards remarked "*we are sponsoring YLC, we are sponsoring under-privileged woman who deserve to be part of YLC but can't afford it*". (A2-M1)

Although the management regarded sponsorship of YLC as an initiative supporting diversity and inclusion it doesn't have direct impact currently in the organization.

The company had an overarching objective to increase female representation by five percent at the end of this year. Manager Talent Acquisition and Transformation stated, *"The main problem of diversity and inclusion is in the top tier. As you go up the hierarchy male domination increases. In CXOS we just have one female at C level so we are planning to increase woman representation at the top"*. (A2-M4)

Moreover A2's current emphasis is to increase representation of women at the workplace. HR business partner asserted *"For gender diversity in recruitment we ensure that we have 30-50 percent of female applications. For their inclusion we have focused development programs, awareness sessions, coaching and mentoring, field shadowing where they spend certain amount of time and see what the job actually is"*.(A2-M7)

In order to facilitate female's daycare allowances, flexi-hours and pick and drop facility is also provided.

In addition to the above initiatives the management has also made structural changes in order to promote open-communication among team members and senior management. Manager Branding asserted *"We had closed door culture earlier, however we have open door policy now and for that we are breaking the boundaries and our layout and seating is flatter"*. (A2-M8)

Currently the emphasis of the organization is on gender diversity only. From the responses it was evident that it was only addressing one of the elements of 3G matrix the organization had introduced. However in order to foster inclusion the organization needs to cater to age, race, disability and generational diversity. As Pless and Maak (2004) in his conceptualization defines inclusive environment that allows people with multiple backgrounds, mindsets and ways of thinking to work effectively together and to perform to their highest potential in order to achieve organizational objectives

based on sound principles".

On the other hand employee perspective was also analyzed to confirm the assertions made by the employees. Associate Corporate Accounting remarked efforts are being made to change the culture. For example "we *had a bureaucratic culture earlier, the higher ups in the hierarchy had rooms and one had to knock go through the entire bureaucratic steps, people were hesitant to talk to their bosses but now we have a flatter office layout, lesser closed door policy now people are now more approachable"*. (A2-E3)

There are a few things done for gender diversity for example "*CEO would arrange a session with all the ladies in finance and listen to their concerns and how things can be improved for them. There is also a female club where you can raise your voice.* (A2-E6)

Contrary to the above view an employee remarked, *"I think the portfolio is still on the paper with the acquisition going on it is not amongst the priorities of the management and much has not been done"*. (A2-E5)

The critical analysis of the above theme reflects that management initiatives taken by the organization to incorporate the strategy for inclusion are still at a rudimentary level. The organization is only partially addressing one leg of the 3G matrix. It has set a target to increase women representation at the management level however there no corresponding strategy of how the organization aims to achieve this. Celebration of International Women's day and sponsorship of YLC are only one of events, it was analyzed that organization did not conduct any training or awareness session to inculcate this new portfolio. Although the management and the employees stated that closed door policy was replaced by an open door policy during the series of interviews it was observed that the top management still had separate rooms. It could

be questioned that organization had not done much to address the notion of diversity within the organization. Apart from the summer internship programs there was still a preference to hire experienced professionals so the gap between Gen Y and Gen X was still significant. A2 does not have any outreach program to include people from different geographies so that element of diversity also needs consideration.

Conversely A1 did have defined programs to address the notions of diversity and inclusion. The HR had streamlined specific programs to cater people of different gender, disability, and thought diversity however in A2 the 3G model that the organization had suggested in the portfolio was being supported by corresponding HR practices. Moreover the new inclusion model the organization had adopted was left in a silo as no management initiative reflected the idea that how could employees downplay their difference and bring their actual self to work.

5.6.1. Changes in HR practices and policies

This section analyzes changes in **HR practices and policies** to support the strategy of diversity and inclusion.

With the agenda for promoting equal opportunities for females Specialist Recruitment, Performance and Rewards asserted "*For gender diversity in recruitment we ensure that we have 30-50 percent of female applications*". (A2-M1)

Despite having a strategic target for increasing women representation by a certain percentage the respondents were not able to specify how exactly they would ensure these numbers are achieved. The organization was not using any conventional method to attract greater number of female candidates nor did it have specific programs to cater the diverse population. The strategic alignment between the targets to achieve a specific goal was deemed to be missing with recruitment, career progression, training and development, and compensation.

The benefits extending to female employees included flexi-hours, paid maternity for three months, pick and drop and day care facilities.

As the strategy was introduced recently the respondents were unable to comment how it was supported by specific HR policies and practices. A step forward in future towards implementation could be reflected in the statement of HR Business Partner, "*HR KPIs are linked to diversity and inclusion portfolio so if they don't meet those their performance KPIs will get hurt. For example in hiring they are making sure that in the shortlisted pool there is female representation*".(A2-M7) This statement reflects that there would be incremental changes in future to align this portfolio with HR practices. To sum up, analysis of changes in HR practices and policies is important because the empirical evidence suggests that organizations implement diversity management through employee-centric policies and practices which include recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, rewards, and compensation (DickieandSoldan, 2008; Jabbour, Gordono, De Oliviera, Martinez, andBattiselle, 2011; Shen et al., 2009). In comparison to A1, A2 does not clearly exhibit that the initiatives are streamlined with HR policies and practices.

5.7.Advantages of an inclusive setting

After exploring the HR practices the research further explored the advantages organization foresees for having an inclusive culture. The advantages highlighted by management can be grouped into *three* categories.

5.7.1. Brand value

The management believed that focusing on such initiatives in return improves the brand value of the organization. Specialist talent, learning and transformation asserted "*A company that incorporates different elements into the workforce appears to be socially responsible in the eyes of all stakeholders. Customers these days have also*

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become more inclined towards organizations that add more value to the society. So when we say A2 is giving women daycare facility, pick and drop, they can leave early, they can work from home, they can take a day off in a week, we are building up the image for our own brand".(A2-M3)

The assertions made by the respondent corroborates with the extant research that managing diversity and inclusion well enhances the corporate image of the organization April (2009). From the responses it could be deciphered that this was one of the initiatives that the company had introduced in order to create favorable impression in the eyes of the customers. Assisting women's career was reflected as the first step towards this initiative.

5.7.2. Attract and retain talent

Further the management believed such initiatives elicit commitment from the current employees and enables to attract top of the line talent from the market. Manager brands affirmed *employees "sense of belonging increases, loyalty improves since they know they will be heard and their efforts will be appreciated. A favorable word of mouth gets out in the market and people are eager to join the organization".*(A2-M8)
The above statement was also validated by the study of Orenstein (2005) which suggests that managing diversity and inclusion well exhibits corporate goodwill to become the 'employer of choice'

5.7.3. Improved creativity and competitive advantage

The respondents upheld the diversity and inclusion initiatives spark innovation which in turn impacts profitability of the company. The respondent from the management's side remarked "*I believe representation of the society in your workforce gives you a flavor of customer expectations and it brings innovative ideas to stay*

competitive".(A2-M6)

In addition to this Head of Fraud Management commented, *"Every individual is unique in his or her traits every individual has their own way of doing things. Best thing about inclusion is that you get diverse group of individuals who can do things uniquely and generate more innovative ideas. You can find smart solutions to implement things, you configure the best way to do something because if you have similar people they will never give innovative ideas that are unique. For creativity and innovation you need diversity and inclusion".*

From the above statements it could be gathered that the cornerstone to spark innovative solutions is to leverage on the diverse workforce. To sum up the benefits of a diverse workforce that is empowered to contribute has abundant benefits like innovative problem-solving, improved financial performance and better employee retention and greater appeal to customers. The preceding advantages are also highlighted in the study of Roberson (2006) which suggests that organization that manage these initiatives will eventually have an impact on their competitive advantage. On the other hand A1 gave same set of advantages during the research.

5.8. Challenges for introducing the strategy

The research further explored the *challenges* the management found difficult to manage. The difficulties highlighted by the management can be classified into three categories.

5.8.1. Challenging the current mindset

Every respondent unanimously agreed that challenging the prevalent mindset was the biggest barrier in implementing this initiative. Specialist Talent, Learning and Transformation mentioned, *"The society we live in its difficult to break stereotypes but with changing demographics in workforce we need to constantly train to reinforce*

this idea. Moreover the male population thinks diversity and inclusion only benefits females so there is huge resistance and question marks from them. Ingraining the idea is difficult".(A2-M3)

Head of Culture Transformation shared a recent example existing perception among the employees. "*When we did International women's day I remember it was just girls hardly any men. The remarks one would hear do you celebrate men's day? However the mancom was very supportive the CEO,CHRO, CXO participated in the activities, they made sandwiches that woman aren't for kitchen only its was breaking the stereotypes"*.(A2-M2)

From the above and statement and example it was evident that even preliminary steps are met with skepticism from the male colleagues. Since A2 was undergoing a period of transition where it was acquiring another giant telecom organization it had already invited rumors and fear into the workplace. The underlying reason for this skepticism was management's failure to communicate the initiative to the employees. It was evident that presently the meaning of inclusion management was not clear to the employees; hence breaking the existing mindset was viewed as an enormous challenge.

The above observation was also reflected in the statement of Manager Talent Acquisition, **"*Males are usually vocal that you are being biased by giving more importance to females. They do not realize this initiative is for everyone"*.(A2-M4)

5.8.2. Resistance to change and ambiguity about the concept

Opposition is generally observed when new initiatives are introduced. Presently the employees are going through a period of transition and they view diversity and inclusion as a threat to their job security. **Specialist Recruitment** mentioned "*the ultimate idea is to include everyone hence we have started with the first step that is to

have a diverse population but that does not mean we will compromise on merit. In terms of hiring, promotion etc. whoever qualifies can progress".(A2-M1)

From the response it could be inferred there was not any investment in training which should have been a priority of the organization. Evidence from literature underscores the importance of training in order to create and inclusive culture. Gilbert and Ivancevich, (2000) remarked the first step to build an inclusive culture is to raise the awareness and understanding among leaders of the external and internal realities and challenges of a diverse workforce. The evidence from the series of interviews reflects that apart from International Women's day there was not any awareness session for the employees. A2 seems to be imitating the best practices around inclusion management without integrating the concept in the organization.

From the qualitative data gathered it was evident that the driving force behind this initiative was top management. Segment manager remarked "*the CEO just issued a video expressing his commitment towards diversity and how he values the role of females at work". In addition to this the CXOs and CEO were amongst the first few participants to make sandwiches in International Women's Day competition in order to break stereotypes".*(A2-M6)

Although the top management is receptive to the idea of diversity and inclusion the trickledown effect has yet to be observed in the form of specific programs and policies associated to this portfolio. The significance of top management's support is also reflected in the existing literature as (Booysen, 2007 and Thomas, 2002) indicated top management's buy in and commitment to create a multicultural and inclusive organization is fundamental as they set vision of the organization and direct business, moral and legal imperatives.

5.9. Inclusion Management Practices

5.9.1. Employee voice in decision-making

While exploring another theme *employee voice* in decision making the management gave examples of various forums from which employee opinion was taken into consideration. This was reflected in the statement of Manager Brands**, "***After Facebook at work everybody has become extremely vocal and when our top management wants any opinion they post it on Facebook page for e.g. we are planning to launch this products what do you suggest. Employees are very happy with this".*(A2-M8)

The respondents also specified that A2's compliance team made sure employee input is taken into consideration seriously. However when probed further what specific examples they actually incorporated the respondents gave a generalized answer that all the input is taken from employees.

The transitionary phase of incorporating employee input was reflected in the forthcoming statement of Segment Manager, *the culture of taking into employee input can just be seen recently earlier there was no such practice.*(A2-M6)

Additionally employee perspective was also taken into account to assess the claims made by the management. Mixed responses were given by the employees in relation to this theme.

Some of respondents believed the employee input were actively sought; *"One the employee remarked over the years A2 has developed a culture to incorporate employee opinion through various formal and informal methods. There could be a survey, facebook post, town hall meeting to take input from employees".*(A2-E6)

An opposing view also came from some of the respondents, *"it varies from team to*

team. Presently the team I am working with does not incorporate by opinion". (A2-E2)

To sum up the management did advocate the A2 was building up a culture to incorporate employee voice in decision making however the nature of decisions that they are able to undertake remains questionable. Moreover employees also gave a mixed response towards this theme which shows that the assertions made by the management are not completely valid. The existing literature has also identified this caveat that there is a little emphasis in organizations regarding the practices that promote inclusion. According to Nishii (2010), employee voice in decision making is one of the practices to foster inclusion in an organization. On the other hand responses from management and employees complimented each other when this theme was analyzed in A1.

5.9.2. Empowerment

After analyzing employee voice in decision-making the theme of **empowerment** was equally important to understand inclusion management practices prevalent in the organization. Two varying opinions emerged when management was inquired whether employees were empowered to make work-decision on their own. According to Head of Fraud Management "employees are absolutely empowered if you have an idea you can directly go to the CEO and discuss the viability". (A2-M5)

HR Business Partner also corroborated the above statement by stating *"Now that we are moving towards digitalization we are actively ensuring that we don't have these long approval systems"*. (A2-M7)

The respondents gave a generalized answer and did not support it by any real examples how employees were able to do things independently when they probed during the interviews. A contrary view emerged from one of the respondents "I *do not*

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think A2 has reached that point so far of actually empowering the employees. We have just started our journey and we acknowledge the importance of employee empowerment but the fact remains that the real power is still at the top". (A2-M6)

Analyzing this theme from employee perspective also gave a similar reflection as given by the management. However majority of the employees believed that they did not have empowerment in real sense. One of the employee remarked, *"I can take initiatives but the hierarchy of approvals still remains with the top, and they will tell me whether it's viable or not".* (A2-E3)

During the analysis from the statements of both management and employee it could be concluded the levels of empowerment depend on the position in the hierarchy. The examination of this theme reveals that A2 is far behind in its journey of creating an inclusive organization as Pless and Maak (2004) in his study concluded in order to create an inclusive organizational culture diverse voices should merely not be tolerated but actively invited, supported and empowered to state their viewpoints, ideas and opinions. In comparison to A1 the degree of empowerment employees had appeared to be significantly low. Moreover unlike A1, A2 did not have platforms where employees could proceed with their innovative ideas without the management's approval.

5.9.3. Access to information

In addition to employee input and empowerment, **sharing information** is deemed to be another practice that is essential to foster inclusive environment (Den Hartog, De Hoogh, and Keegan, 2007; Pelled, Ledford, andMohrman, 1999; Roberson, 2006). Most of the respondents from the management stated that the employees had sufficient information to carry out their work. Manager Talent Acquisition and Transformation asserted *"Definitely we have systems and every person has access to*

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them depending on their level of work. For example I have access to employee salaries and personal information etc. but not every employee would have it.Whatever a person is doing he has access to that specific information". (A2-M4)

Employees on the other hand acknowledged that they had sufficient information to do the assigned tasks and were aware of the direction the company's direction. One of the employees remarked *"the company communicate through all forums if there is a significant change in the present strategy, my work had never suffered as all possible information necessary to carry out my job was given to me".* (A2-E6)

To sum up last three themes the degree to which employees were empowered and had control over decision-making received a varying response, however the management and employees believed they had complete access to information to carry out their work. It could be concluded that the practice of sharing information is alone not sufficient to create an inclusive culture, according to the extant literature inclusion is 'the degree to which individuals are involved in critical organizational developments for example availability of information and resources, participation in work groups, and control over decision making activities (Nishii, 2010).

The critical analysis revealed employees had somewhat little understanding regarding the current portfolio of diversity and inclusion. From the above responses it could be concluded that majority of the employees carried an unfavorable perception fairness, being heard, contribution being valued, dignity and being cared for as an individual. A2 has to start working on the basics to remove the prevalent negativity. Employee perception in terms fairness with regards to the organization is important because (Avigdor et al, 2007 and Roberson, 2006) referred this as a critical element that impacts individual's perception of inclusion. The participants were skeptical as to whether **promotion of diversity and inclusion** was the priority of the organization.

The employees were not fully aware regarding the current portfolio and majority of the employees could not differentiate properly between the two concepts. The organization did not conduct any training to create awareness amongst the employees. In order to ascertain whether inclusion was being practiced in real sense important element levels of empowerment and **decision-making** capacity of employees was evaluated. Majority of the respondents shared that they did not have any power to make decisions.While assessing inclusion in **Intergroup Relations**, which extends to perceptions of communication, information sharing within the company, it was apparent from the qualitative feedback that the organization had a closed door culture and communication amongst the team and the top management was not very fluid. One of the employee remarked, *"I am the coordinator handling everything but at the main event I who handled everything will not be invited to the main event, cannot socialize or create a bond and come out of the silo"*.(A2-E1)
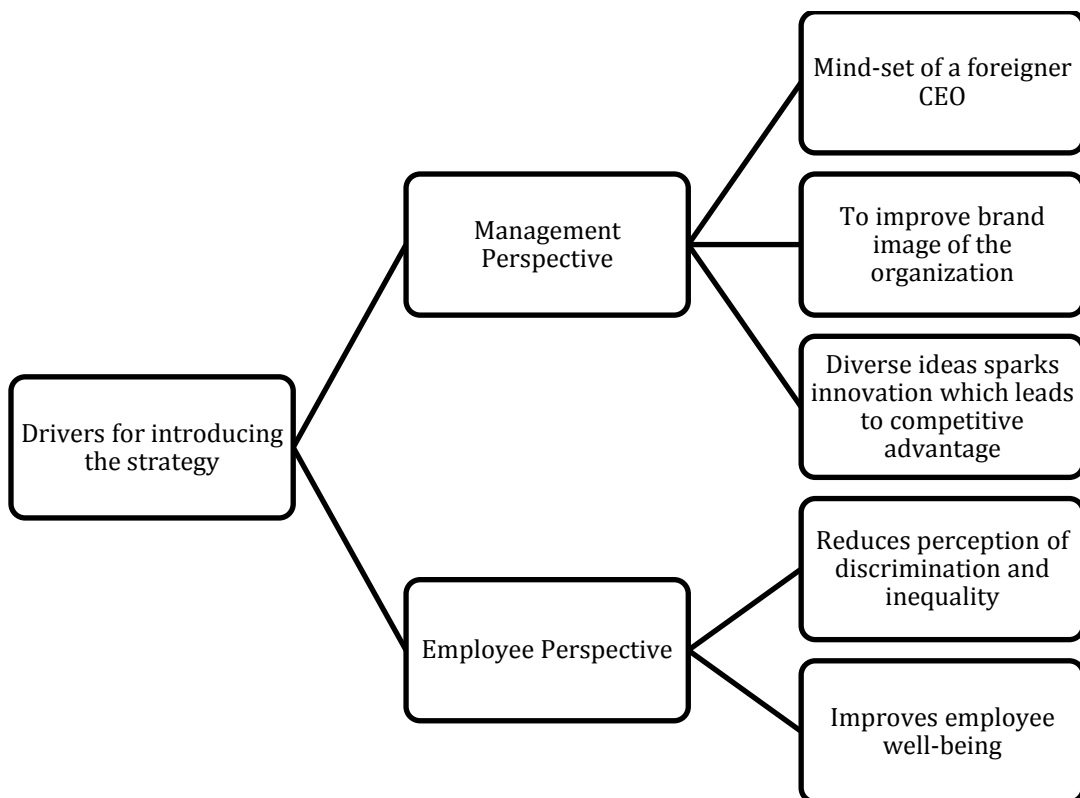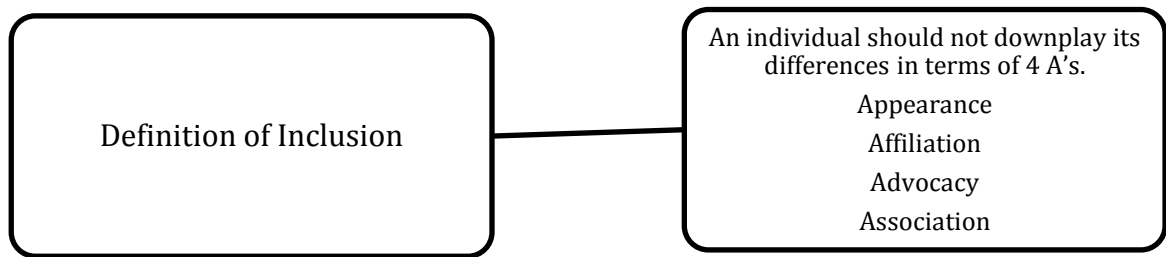
Another employee asserted**,** *You don't really have diverse people here in terms of disability and communication, here it all depends on your own confidence if you are confident enough people would hear you out otherwise they won't".* (A2-E5)s
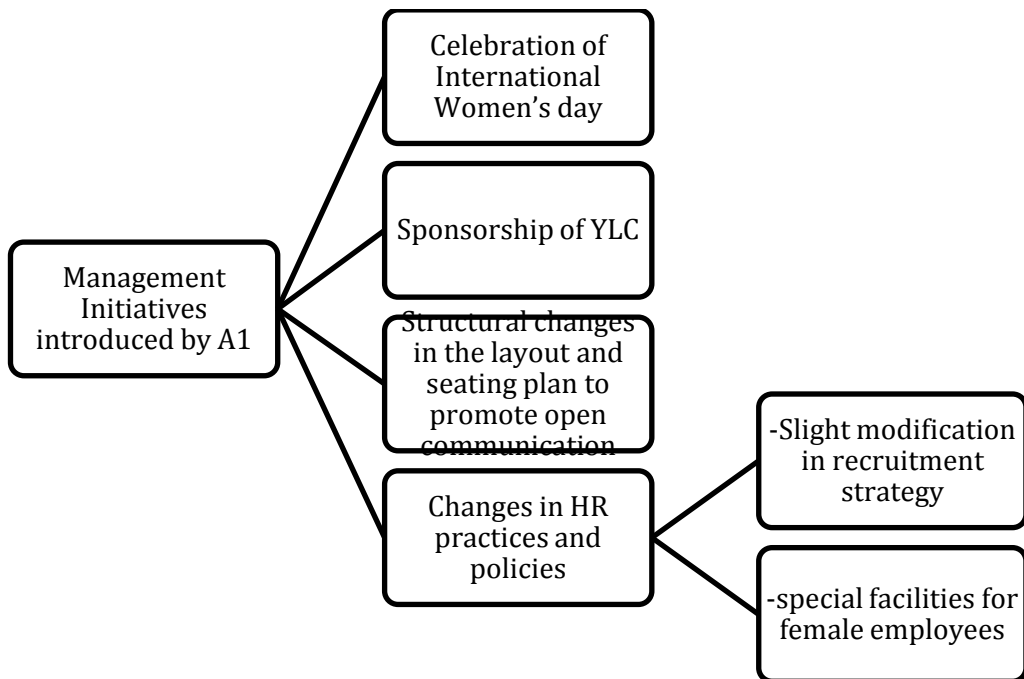
Contrary to this another employee remarked, *"the top reason for me staying with this organization is open communication among team member. My opinions are taken seriously and I do have a chance to voice my opinions"*.(A2-E4)

The respondents gave mix responses in terms of intergroup dynamics in the organization. In terms of **career progression** it was obvious that there was a vacuum as only one female was present at the director level. With the introduction of this portfolio it was necessary to plan the entire talent pipeline for this diverse pool as the respondents were not able to examples how have the progressed up in the hierarchy since they got hired. From the overall data collected it could be concluded that

perception about dialogue around diversity and inclusion and associated programs to foster the initiative seemed missing. The themes that came across most powerfully were frustrations around not being able to contribute to decision-making and not being treated as a valuable resource.

Figure 5-1: Graphical Representation for A2

Elements for an inclusive setting

- **Management Perspective**
  - Periodic trainings to create awareness
  - Impartial treatment
  - Open communication
  - Alignment of strategy with HR practices
- **Employee Perspective**
  - Fair treatment
  - Equal opportunity for development and recognition

Management Initiatives introduced by A1

- Celebration of International Women's day
- Sponsorship of YLC
- Structural changes in the layout and seating plan to promote open communication
- Changes in HR practices and policies
  - -Slight modification in recruitment strategy
  - -special facilities for female employees

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                                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                        │   -improved brand value  │
                                        └─────────────────────────┘
┌──────────────────────────┐           ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Advantages of an inclusive│──────────│ -attract and retain talent│
│        workplace          │           └─────────────────────────┘
└──────────────────────────┘           ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                        │   -greater competitive   │
                                        │        advantage         │
                                        └─────────────────────────┘
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Advantages of an inclusive workplace

- improved brand value
- attract and retain talent
- greater competitive advantage

Inclusion management practices

- Employee voice in decision-making
  - Management Perspective
    Trying to build-up a culture to incorporate input from employees. Examples, introduction of Facebook at work and surveys
  - Employee Perspective
    Mixed responses were received from employees in terms of voice in decision-making matters
- Empowerment
  - Management perspective
    Contended employees were fully empowered
  - Employee perspective
    Level of empowerment was contingent on the position in the hierarchy
- Access to information
  - All the respondents unanimously agreed that employees had complete access to information and communication was very fluid

6. Chapter Six: Discussion

The objective of the study was to investigate the meaning of inclusion management in Pakistani context. The main themes the interview were definition of inclusion, reasons for the introduction of the strategy, elements of an inclusive setting, management initiatives taken by the organization, changes in HR practices, advantages and challenges for this initiatives, and perceptions of the respondents around inclusion management practices. This chapter will specifically focus on how the concept of inclusion is different from existing literature.

In literature commentators on diversity and inclusion have called for broader context-specific definitions to enrich its conceptualization from a global perspective (Shen, Chanda, D'Netto, and Monga, 2009). Additionally existing studies have also highlighted that future studies should incorporate employee perspective in order to understand how do they experience and perceive these initiatives (D'Netto, Shen, Chelliah, and Monga, 2013; Nishii and Wright, 2008). Keeping in view the gap identified in existing literature this research aims to answer how inclusion management is defined and perceived by leading MNCs working in Pakistan. The summary of this discussion chapter presented in the below table.

Table 6-1: Summary of Findings

A1	A2
Definition of Inclusion	
• Inclusion in organizational environment • Inclusion in team-relations • Inclusion in decision-making • Inclusion in HR programs	An individual should not downplay its differences in terms of 4 A's. • Appearance • Affiliation • Advocacy • Association
Drivers for introducing the strategy	
Management Perspective • Comply with practices of the HQ • To have an understanding of diverse customer base • Diverse opinion = innovative ideas **Employee Perspective** • Improved employee morale and commitment • Greater job satisfaction • Improves perceptions of fairness	**Management Perspective** • Mind-set of a foreigner CEO • To improve brand image of the organization • Diverse ideas sparks innovation which leads to competitive advantage **Employee Perspective** • Improved employee morale and commitment • Greater job satisfaction • Improves perceptions of fairness

Elements for an inclusive setting	
Management Perspective	**Management Perspective**
• Buy-in from the senior management	• Periodic trainings to create awareness
• Periodic trainings to create awareness	• Impartial treatment
• Impartial treatment	• Open communication
• Open communication	• Alignment of strategy with HR practices
Employee Perspective	**Employee Perspective**
• Improved awareness to curb sympathetic attitude	• Fair treatment
	• Equal opportunity for development and recognition
Management Initiatives introduced by A1	
• Naya Aghaaz	• Celebration of International Women's day
• Open Mind Trainee	• Sponsorship of YLC
• Changes in HR practices and policies	• Structural changes in the layout and seating plan to promote open communication
	• Changes in HR practices and policies
Advantages of an inclusive workplace	
• Diverse opinions lead to innovative ideas which, provides competitive	• Improved brand value
	• Attract and retain talent

advantage • Attract and retain talent pool • Greater profitability • Improved employee engagement	• Greater competitive advantage
Inclusion management practices	
1. Employee voice in decision-making	
-Introduction of Facebook at work -Examples of famous initiatives taken up by employees (NFC payments , easy tag for motorway tolls, hum kadam)	Management Perspective • Trying to build-up a culture to incorporate input from employees. • Examples, introduction of Facebook at work and surveys Employee Perspective • Mixed responses were received from employees in terms of voice in decision-making matters
2. Empowerment	
-Program like ignite where employees develop prototype for their solutions -Employee examples for developing the entire branding strategy for a new product	Management perspective • Contended employees were fully empowered Employee perspective • Level of empowerment was

	contingent on the position in the hierarchy
3. Access to information	
-the respondents unanimously agreed that employees had complete access to information and communication was very fluid	-All the respondents unanimously agreed that employees had complete access to information and communication was very fluid

The section below highlights how inclusion management is conceptualized and perceived in two leading organizations from the telecom sector.

6.1. Conceptualization of Inclusion

6.1.1. Distinction between the definitions of diversity and inclusion

According to literature diversity management entails organization's commitment to hire, retain, remunerate a diverse group comprising of people of different color, gender and disabilities. Whilst diversity is primarily understood as the management of visible differences in an organization, inclusion represents a deeper cultural commitment to valuing the unique contribution of every individual, irrespective of the differences in terms of background, color, gender or age' (Performance Through Inclusion Consulting, 2009).The findings from both the organizations suggest the participants from organization A1 could aptly define the term theoretically. The employees and the management could clearly differentiate between the notions of diversity and inclusion and did recognize that inclusion was a broader concept that

involved on accepting and valuing the unique contributions made by individual employees. Conversely in A2 the participants lacked awareness of the new concept and did not have proper understanding of the concept of inclusion. Some of the participants confused the concept of inclusion with diversity and thought it was primarily aimed at mitigating discrimination. One possible justification for lack of awareness of this concept could be that HR is at its nascent stages in terms of its professionalism (Syed et al., 2014) and there are very few experts in majority of Pakistani organizations who have full fledge knowledge about management and HR concepts. It is asserted by many researchers that developing countries like Pakistan are not having HR practices like these are implemented in developed countries (Ahmad, 2012). There is still gap in HR knowledge and its implementation in organizations in developing countries (Khilji and Wang, 2006). Few large sized MNCs are even better in terms of their knowledge and implementation of HR practices, but others are still at the initial stage of realizing the importance of HRM practices (Budhwar and Debrah, 2013). Henceforth, A2 was not different from other Pakistani organizations that do not have full grasp and conceptual understanding on management and HR practices.

6.1.2. Definition of inclusion

The existing literature defines an inclusive organization where employees shape up the strategy, mission, policy, core values and norms for success of an organization (Holvino, Ferdman, and Merrill-Sands, 2004, p. 249).Similarly Hanappi-Egger (2012) conceptualized inclusion in terms of providing an enabling environment where input from all the employees is welcomed and valued. Likewise, Pelled, Ledford and Morhman (1999) stated inclusion is the extent to which an individual feels accepted

and is considered as a part of the organization by others in the work system. Critically analyzing the responses given by the management and employees it could be inferred that A1 does fit in to the definition given by existing scholars. The responses shared by management and employees were categorized into four main headings of inclusion in organizational environment, inclusion in team relation, inclusion in decision-making and inclusion in human resource programs. Moreover keeping the Pakistani perspective additional meaning to the concept also emerged. The response from A1 that was a pioneer in telecom to introduce the concept of inclusion stipulated that inclusion also embodied being **tolerant** and **empathetic** towards the needs of diverse groups. The provision of basic facilities such as infrastructure and right tools to work was also accounted under the efforts for inclusion. As the western concept of inclusion emerged from the developed nations of the world the literature does not stipulate the basic elements such as respect, presence of adequate infrastructure and provision of necessary tools to be constituents of inclusion as specified by the respondents in A1.On the other hand the insights from the interview revealed that the concept inclusion was not fully understood in A2. The ultimate purpose behind the strategy was to foster participation in real sense without pressuring employees to downplay their differences. The organization had simply adapted "uncovering talent a new model for inclusion by Kenji Yoshino 2013" in their conceptualization of inclusion. The responses also suggested that the respondents were unclear about the steps to integrate this initiative into the organization. The basic attributes of respect and empathy were also pointed out by participants in A2. It can be gathered although there are many similarities between western and Pakistani conceptualization of inclusion, the concept has not matured properly as it still postulates equal opportunity, respect and provision of basic office facilities under the definition of inclusion.

Additionally organizational efforts to cater for diversity were being accounted under the definition of inclusion. For example celebration of International Women's day, provision of special facilities for female employees, structural changes in office layout were classified under the initiatives to promote inclusion management. This gives an important insight managing diversity also falls under inclusion management as these concepts have not experienced periods of transition in Pakistan as opposed to developed nations of the world.

The responses from both the organizations can also analyzed on 2 ¥ 2 matrix framework of inclusion presented by Shore et al. (2011). A1 can be categorized into the cell of inclusion where employees are regarded, as insider hence there is high value of belongingness and individuals are encouraged to keep their unique identity (high value for uniqueness). The logic behind categorizing A1 into this cell is that employees were given access to information, power over decision making activities irrespective of their position in the hierarchy. A2 on the other hand can be classified in the cell of assimilation signifies high value of belongingness and low uniqueness and employees are regarded as insiders when they adapt to organizations' dominant cultural norms and modulate their uniqueness. This categorization is based on the responses given by participants where they confirmed that they had complete access to information however they had little empowerment when it can to decision-making activities.

6.2. Drives for the strategy for inclusion management

According to the literature studied the transition from diversity to inclusion reflects that there was an underlying recognition that diversity management falls short off producing the promises of organizational survival. The practitioner literature suggests

that inclusion is a superior approach that should supersede diversity (Evans, 2006).The findings from A1 and A2 suggested that the push for the strategy for inclusion management came from the foreign management at the top management. As the CEO was a foreigner and he had seen the strategy worked in developed parts of the world therefore it was easy to convince the local management to adopt the same. Additionally the strategy also compliments the current vision for both the organizations. Moreover in Pakistan, the organizations do not have legal implication to incorporate diverse population into the organizations. The responses from the management suggested that the reasons identified by both the organizations reflected that diverse teams bring about innovative solutions in order to stay competitive. It could be concluded that organizations in Pakistan have not experienced periods of evolution from equal opportunity to diversity and then to inclusion. The management sensed the indicators in the international market and adapted accordingly to stay relevant in the prevalent conditions.

On the other hand employees from organization A1 and A2 had a different viewpoint from the management in terms of reasons or drivers for introducing this strategy. Employees in A1 viewed that such initiatives improves employee morale and leads to greater job satisfaction as their input is valued. Surprisingly the findings from the employees corroborated with the assertion made in literature that employers can expect greater job satisfaction, involvement and performance from the employees (Mor Barak, 2007). On the other hand responses from employees in A2 showed a similar insight that introduction of such initiatives results in creating favorable perceptions of the organization and enhance their commitment and morale.

6.3.Elements for an inclusive setting

This section discusses the elements identified from the literature that are essential to foster an inclusive culture.

The current literature highlights that senior management's buy in is imperative as they set the direction of the company. Additionally clear communication about the strategy and changes in organization's structure to support the process was also deemed important. Changes in programs like training and education, career development, compensation and benefits appraisals in order to aid this journey were also underlined as essentialconstituents for an inclusive setting(Allen and Montgomery, 2001; Booysen, 2007; Thomas, 2002b).

The findings from A1 corroborated with the elements highlighted in the existing literature that top management's support, trainings, impartial treatment and communication are crucial constituents to foster an inclusive culture. However the response from the employees reflected an opposing view to the prevalent perceptions in Pakistan pertaining to diversity and inclusion initiatives. Despite the claims made by A1's management the employees felt the lack of awareness in the society is reflected inside the organization as there was sympathetic attitude towards employees with disabilities. This attitude of employees where they demonstrate sympathy for disable individuals is due to the national culture of Pakistan which is high on human orientation index. It is part of Pakistani culture to demonstrate sympathy and generosity in their social relationships, so this aspect is further increased for those who are disable. Despite the fact the organizations remain neutral and indifferent; individuals show the sympathy for disable ones which are ultimately reflected back in organizational culture.

Surprisingly all the elements highlighted by the management in A2 were also supported by existing literature; Pless and Maak (2004) stated that in order to create a

culture of inclusion showing respect and empathy, equality, appreciation for voices, and streamlining HR programs was deemed important. Additionally literature contends that employees should be encouraged to use their unique talents to bring about successful initiative or perform a meaningful task to make a difference in the organization (Davidson and Ferdman, 2002). Conversely the responses from employees in A2 revealed that they did not feel valued and appreciated in the present environment as there was discrimination and lack of developmental opportunities. This demonstrates the unfair and unequal distribution of resources within organizations which is due to higher power index of Pakistan's national culture.

The findings from both the organizations suggest that although the management has picked out right elements to foster an inclusive culture however they are not incorporated correctly into the broader organizational environment. Additionally organizations in the West have introduced dedicated positions like "diversity and inclusion officer" that take up these initiatives formally however in these organizations the onus of responsibility is seemed unclear.

6.4. Management Initiatives to foster an inclusive culture

This section specifically discusses local management initiatives taken by MNCs in Pakistan to support the strategy for inclusion management. A1 introduced two flagship programs to increase the representation of diverse population into the workforce. One of the programs aimed to provide opportunities for women in corporate settings and the other program aimed to develop people with disability for the corporate environment. Both the management and employees had favorable perceptions around these initiatives. In comparison to A1, A2 did not have streamlined programs; their efforts were targeted towards recognizing females at workplace. As Pakistani society has not experienced the evolution of equal

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opportunity to diversity and then to inclusion, these programs might appear addressing basic issues of diversity, that is to increase representation of diverse population. However without initiation of diversity related initiative organizations cannot progress to the step of inclusion that calls for real participation of the workforce. From the perspective of a developing country this theme adds to the existing literature as currently the scholars have highlighted only certain practices that may foster inclusion however it does not specify programs initiated by western organizations to foster an inclusive culture.Additionally A1 is pioneer in telecommunication to introduce the strategy for inclusion management; these programs can serve as a bench-mark for other organizations.

6.4.1. HR Practices and Policies

Existing literature has highlighted that initiatives pertaining to diversity and inclusion encourage the development of innovative HR policies. The activities that can be altered to support these initiatives are human resource planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, promotion, and rewards (DickieandSoldan, 2008; Jabbour, Gordono, De Oliviera, Martinez, and Battiselle, 2011; Shen et al., 2009).

The findings from A1 revealed that the organization did alter their HR practices pertaining to recruitment, promotion, training and development.A1 is making conscious efforts to recruit diverse population in the workforce.Female employees are facilitated by providing childcare facility and pick and drop facility. The extension in paid maternity leave from three months to six months shows company's commitment of not only hire females but also to retain them. This is also justified with the

increased inclination of national culture of Pakistan towards gender egalitarianism where there is higher propensity to consider both gender equal.

Moreover the trainees hired through targeted program related to diversity and inclusion, have greater chances to get hired on permanent positions. Additionally there has been a significant increase in female directors after the introduction of this strategy. A1 also conducts periodic trainings so that employees learn the skills and tools they need to operate effectively to create an inclusive environment. On the other hand relatively little modifications had been made by A2 to streamline the strategy for inclusion management into HR activities. Despite the recognition the female participation should increase in the workforce the targeted efforts that should be dedicated towards recruitment seemed missing. Although there were several benefits that were extended towards female employees including flexi-hours, paid maternity for three months, pick and drop and day care facilities but alignment of the strategy with other HR practices like training and development, compensation, and career progression was not observed.

6.4.2. Inclusion Management Practices

6.4.2.1. Employee voice in decision-making

As per the literature the central element in inclusion the degree of influence employees have over decision-making. Scholarship defined inclusion as the "degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes for instance access to information and resources, participation in work groups, and power over decision making activities (Mor Barak, 2005). Recently the research of Nishii (2010) substantiates that climate of inclusion entails impartial hiring practices, greater

interaction of dissimilar employees and participation in decision-making process. The findings from A1 suggested that 'inclusion in decision-making' was one of the central elements when respondents theorized the definition of inclusion. The senior management believed that employee input is critical for successful business operations. The employees in A1 also validated that their input was welcomed and appreciated as far as core business decisions were concerned. The prevalent culture at A1 did echo that employees could communicate easily and there was a climate for healthy debate.

On the contrary management in A2 did acknowledge that delegating power over decisions to employees was important however practical implementation of this important practice seemed to be missing. The responses from the management did advocate that A2 was building up a culture to incorporate employee voice in decision making however the nature of decisions that they are able to undertake remains questionable. Moreover employees also gave a mixed response towards this theme which shows that the assertions made by the management are not completely valid. Despite the recognition that it was important to incorporate employee voice into decision-making there was little emphasis in A2 around the practices that would promote an inclusive culture.

6.4.2.2.Degree of empowerment

After analyzing employee voice in decision-making the question that was probed further was the degree of empowerment employee had. Although the existing literature does not talk about this practice it emerged as one of the probing themes during the interview sessions. The respondents of gave several examples of how employees were empowered to pursue their own initiatives. Overall the management

and employees were on the same page with regards to the degree of empowerment the employee had. Employees had various technological platforms that were provided to employees to come up with innovative ideas. On the other hand responses in A2 suggested that levels of empowerment depend on the position in the hierarchy. Analyzing this theme was important as it reflects the validation of the preceding theme "employee voice in decision-making" as well as it depicts whether employees are empowered enough to take up the input they have suggested.

6.4.2.3.Access to critical information

In addition to employee input and empowerment, **access to information** is another extremely important practice in order to foster an inclusive culture (Roberson, 2006). From the responses given by A1's management it was evident that information sharing was very fluid. Employees had access to all relevant information pertaining to the task assigned.Additionally A1 had an open culture where employees are sitting next to the CEO the process of dissemination of information is done very actively. The responses also corroborated with existing literature that employees should be empowered and have access to critical information in order to have a clear line of sight regarding the direction into which the organization was heading. The responses from the employees at A1 also validated that had an open culture where employees could openly communicate within the team and the senior management and had access to all the information they need to do their jobs. On the other hand management and employees at A2 also suggested that had sufficient information to do the assigned tasks and were aware of the direction the company's direction, however an in depth analysis revealed that organization had a closed door culture and communication amongst the team and the top management was not very fluid.

6.5.Advantages of an inclusive workplace

The literature currently highlights certain moral, legal and commercial arguments for pursuing diversity and inclusion related initiatives. The findings from A1 and A2 highlighted similar set of benefits which also corroborated with existing literature. The management from both the organizations endorsed that optimizing on diverse perspectives sparks innovative solutions, which in turn provides competitive advantage to the organization. The preceding advantages are also highlighted in the study of Roberson (2006) which suggests that organizations that manage diversity and inclusion initiatives will eventually have an impact on their competitive advantage.

Another benefit highlighted by both the organization was that such initiatives facilitated in attraction and retention of top from the market. Similarly the literature validates that such initiatives enhances organization's ability to attract and retain diverse workforce and brings "brightest and the best' employees for the organization (Blass and April, 2008). Orenstein (2005) suggests that managing diversity and inclusion well exhibits corporate goodwill to become the 'employer of choice'.

Furthermore after the introduction of diversity and inclusion initiatives employee engagement survey results in A1 showed that people really appreciated the fact that the organization was doing something for under representatives of the society. It was observed that these initiatives facilitated in talent attraction and talent retention, which extended to a more positive internal climate where individuals could feel respected, valued and recognized. Management in A1 also viewed it from the lens of moral argument present in literature that diversity and inclusion also counters prejudices and promotes organizational harmony. There is a parallel moral argument in the literature also holds 'it is the right thing to do' as it calls for equality, dignity and respect for all the employees (Orenstein, 2005).

Organization in the West had to pay huge cost of litigation against the discrimination cases. On the contrary organization in Pakistan did not consider this initiative in terms of having a legal benefit as there is no legal binding on organization in service sector in Pakistan to employ a specific number of people categorized as diverse.

6.6. Challenges associated with introducing inclusion management strategy

The literature highlights that as MNCs operate in different countries with varying institutional environments therefore they encounter different obstacles (G. Jackson and Deeg, 2008; Kostova, Kendall, and Dacin, 2008). The findings from both the organizations revealed that that challenging the prevalent mindset was the biggest barrier in implementing this new initiative. Employees perceived that these initiatives are women centric and they were given preference just because it's a different group not because they are competent. From the overall responses it could be deciphered that discrimination is deep-rooted in Pakistan's society therefore there is a backlash from male colleagues. The observation has also been pointed out in literature that overstressing on diversity initiatives and trainings may cause conflict amongst those who fail to benefit from such practices (Nishii, 2013). Additionally Pakistan is a patriarchal society where men are primary authority figures and women are subordinates. Therefore the existing resistance is a reflection of Pakistani society in the organization.

Another challenge that emerged from the findings of A2 was employee resistance to change as there was ambiguity about the concept. This was because A2 was undergoing a period of transition where it was acquiring another giant telecom organization it had already invited rumors and fear into the workplace. The underlying reason for this skepticism was management's failure to communicate the

initiative to the employees. According to Davidson and Proudford (2008) there might be resistance to diversity by majority and minority members and this would impede initiatives for inclusion.

Overall A1 and A2 attributed market indicators and philosophy of senior management to be the drivers for introducing the strategy for inclusion management. However the underlying reason that emerged during the analysis were the Norwegian ideals adopted by A1 and A2 following the imitation strategy to stay relevant in the market. In A1 strategy of inclusion management was aligned with organizational vision therefore an observable difference existed in the way this strategy was accepted by the employees in both the organizations. Conversely the existing literature stipulates the process of evolution from equal opportunity to diversity management to inclusion management as the underlying factor reason for the introduction of the strategy. The emergence of this strategy can be attributed to organizational factors in these organizations as the direction for this strategy came from the HQs.

The theoretical generalizations that can be uncovered from the study are the mindset of the top management plays an integral part in successful adoption of the strategy. Both the organizations had foreign CEOs when this strategy was rolled out. Leaders' awareness and support were important to the implementation of inclusion management because of their central positions and power in Pakistani organizations.

Additionally these organizations are examples demonstrating successful uptake of inclusion management strategy without the presence any legal obligation. The research also validates that without any legal binding inclusion management is sustainable as it leads towards better organizational performance. The findings revealed that after the introduction of this strategy financial performance and

employee engagement results improved. This was in contradiction with the existing literature, where the movement started for reducing discrimination and then progressing towards better management of diversity. Organizations in the West are legally bound to incorporate these initiatives.

The evolution of A1 is especially noteworthy because it operated in an environment where the construct of inclusion was novel and environment was not conducive to foster the strategy. A1 exemplifies a strong alignment between organizational vision and inclusion management strategy. A1's strong organizational culture had already laid the foundation for diversity management therefore they could transition more progressively from diversity management to inclusion management which is a step ahead from its predecessor concept. On the other hand mimetic isomorphism was a plausible reason for A2 to be incorporating this strategy.

To conclude the finding of the study will serve as a benchmark for other MNCs operating in Pakistan. MNCs typically face human resource challenges because of cultural difference between HQs and subsidiaries. The localized findings can provide useful tools to other organizations. This research stipulates the essential changes in HR programs that need to be incorporated inside organizational strategy in order to foster this initiative.

7. Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1. Conclusion

The thesis sums up by providing detailed analysis around the concept of inclusion management prevalent in telecom sector in Pakistan. The study explored the concept of inclusion management in-depth and its applicability in Pakistani organizations. The findings revealed that definition of inclusion management was broader than existing conceptualizations as the dimensions of tolerance and empathy emerged during the research.   Additionally basic elements such as respect, presence of adequate infrastructure and provision of necessary tools also embodied the conceptualization of inclusion that manifested definition of inclusion in Pakistani context.

Another interesting observation during the research was the driving force behind the introduction of the strategy. Organizations in the west have recognized that in order to reap potential benefits of diversity, inclusion management is fundamental. Besides, developed nations of the world have experienced periods of evolution from equal opportunity to diversity management to inclusion management. On the contrary, in Pakistan there is no legal requirement in the service sector to incorporate specific number of diverse employees. The drive to introduce the strategy came by identifying indicators prevalent in the market and adapting accordingly in order to remain competitive. Additionally this research also brought in the perspective of the employees who viewed that such initiatives improve employee morale and leads to greater job satisfaction.

Keeping in view that inclusion management was a new phenomenon the elements to create were also explored. The responses from the management's side corroborated with the existing literature that top management's support, trainings, impartial

treatment and communication are crucial constituents to create an inclusive setting. Additionally showing respect and empathy, equality, appreciation for voices, and streamlining HR programs was deemed important. However the responses from the employees suggested that creating awareness about diversity and inclusion and elimination of sympathetic attitude towards individuals were important constituents to create an inclusive setting. This finding reflects an important cross-cultural comparison in developing countries. Despite the efforts made by A1's management the employees felt the lack of awareness in the society is reflected inside the organization as there was sympathetic attitude towards employees with disabilities. Conversely the responses from employees in A2 revealed that they did not feel valued and appreciated in the present environment as there was discrimination and lack of developmental opportunities.

An important contribution of the research is that it not only explored conceptualization of inclusion but also specified particular initiatives taken up by organizations in Pakistan to promote this new concept. A1 introduced two flagship programs to increase the representation of diverse population into the workforce. One of the programs aimed to provide opportunities for women in corporate settings and the other program aimed to develop people with disability for the corporate environment. Both the management and employees had favorable perceptions around these initiatives. The findings from A1 revealed that the organization did alter their HR practices pertaining to recruitment, promotion, training and development. On the other hand A2 specified that recognizing female population was one of the initiatives to promote the new strategy. These initiatives are a reflection that the strategy of inclusion management is still at its nascent stages in Pakistani society as the efforts for diversity management and inclusion are being done simultaneously.

Another contribution of this study was to examine parallel practices for inclusion along exploring definition of inclusion from Pakistani perspective. As for employee voice in decision-making, degree of empowerment employees had and access to critical organizational information management and employees from A1 was on the same page and gave examples on how employee opinion was asked and taken into consideration. On the contrary varied responses emerged from management and employees with respect to power employees had over decision making process. The degree of empowerment employees had depended on the position in the hierarchy. Additionally although the management and employees proclaimed that they had sufficient information to do the assigned tasks and were aware of the direction the company's direction, however an in depth analysis revealed that organization had a closed door culture and communication amongst the team and the top management was not very fluid. This showed the concept of inclusion management was much more developed in A1 than A2.

The findings from A1 and A2 highlighted similar set of benefits which also corroborated with existing literature. The management from both the organizations endorsed that optimizing on diverse perspectives sparks innovative solutions, which in turn provides competitive advantage to the organization. Another benefit highlighted by both the organization was that such initiatives facilitated in attraction and retention of top from the market. The responses from A1 also concluded how their employee engagement survey results and performance improved after the introduction of these initiatives.

Furthermore, the findings from both the organizations revealed that that challenging the prevalent mindset was the biggest barrier in implementing this new initiative.

Employees perceived that these initiatives are women centric and they were given preference just because it's a different group not because they are competent. From the overall responses it could be deciphered that discrimination is deep-rooted in Pakistan's society therefore there is a backlash from male colleagues.

To sum up, this study provides detailed analysis around the conceptualization of inclusion management and perceptions and experiences of the employees around its practices. This research is conducted to minimize both the contextual and theoretical gaps which are found in few recent research studies. Firstly keeping in consideration the gap identified by multiple commentators this study aims to enrich the conceptualization of inclusion by investigating a Pakistani context. It responds to the call of commentators to explore beyond the US perspective to add a global perspective. Developing a full-fledged construct lays a good foundation for further research as well as for the design of management practices.Secondly researchers also assert that future research should encompass employee's perspective to expand the scope of diversity and inclusion to understand how they experience and perceive it (D'Netto, Shen, Chelliah, and Monga, 2013; Farndale et al., 2015). This study aims to bridge this theoretical gap by taking into account individual and organizational perspective. The study explores not only the initiatives taken by the organization but also how they are experienced and understood by the employee.Keeping in view the gaps identified by the scholars, this research is conducted to minimize both contextual and theoretical gaps hence it has utmost significance in the literature. As inclusion management is one of the emerging research issues, so this research can be used as the foundation by future researchers. Additionally the literature highlighted how theoretical underpinnings need to go beyond US and European conceptualizations and explore additional perspectives on inclusion management. The research extends the

limited work on inclusion management and brings into light a new perspective to enrich its conceptualization.

7.2. Future research implications

In this research, only qualitative research methods are used where interview strategy is being employed by the researcher. Even though, it was the most feasible research strategy for this research; however, it could not be overlooked that there are few limitations when only qualitative methods are used. According to Creswell and Clark (2007), the findings become more trustworthy and valid when there are mixed research methods used in the research. Using the mixed methods allow to dig further into the research issue where both quantitative and qualitative type of data are used. Therefore, it is recommended to future researchers that they should complement the qualitative research methods with the quantitative research methods. It is recommended to future researchers that they should also use the questionnaire method in addition to interview method to obtain the data which is more reliable and accurate. Moreover there is another limitation of present research that the sample size was not big enough to generalise the findings to whole population. With the greater sample size, generalizability could be enhanced. Therefore, it is recommended to future researchers that they should increase the sample size.

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Appendices

Appendix B: Interview guide for Management

Name

Designation

Q. How would differentiate between the concepts of diversity and inclusion?

      -Please talk about your understanding of organizational inclusion. Do you think there is a genuine need for diversity and inclusion? Why?

Q Why was the strategy for inclusion management introduced in the organization?

      -Drivers for inclusion management in corporate workplace in Pakistan?

Q. Are the practices of HQs directly applied or they are customized according to the region.

Q. Would you tell me about the company and the composition of employees (for example,employees' age distribution, education backgrounds and hometown locations)?

Q. In your understanding what are the essential constituents/elements for inclusive culture?

Q. What management initiatives have been undertaken to foster inclusive culture?

  -Please elaborate with examples.

  -Are there any changes in HR practices?

Q. What are the advantages of having a diverseand inclusive environment?

- What are the challenges in driving a diverse andinclusive environment?

Q. Does the senior management value inclusion and behave in inclusive ways?

Q. This organization has a culture to appreciate the differences people bring to work place?

Q.Intergroup relations (i.e., between different races, workgroups, age groups, etc.) tend to be characterized by respect and trust within this organization?

Q. Is employee input actively sought and organization believes their opinion is crucial for success?

- Employees' insights are used to rethink or redefine work practices?

Q. Are employees empowered to make work-related decisions on their own?

Q. Do the employees have access to sensitive information in order influence critical organizational developments?

Q.Is the inclusion practices sufficiently applied from your perspective? Any improvement theorganization could do in the future?

Q. Keeping in mind our national culture how is the notion of inclusion different from western notion?

Q. Do you have anything to add?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix B: Interview guide for employees

Name

Designation

Q. How would differentiate between the concepts of diversity and inclusion?

     -Please talk about your understanding of organizational inclusion.

Q.In your understanding what are the essential constituents for inclusive culture?

Q. What management initiatives have been undertaken to promote inclusive

environment?

Q.What practices have been altered to promote an inclusive culture?

Q. Do you feel you are treated fairly in your environment?

     - How does this impact on your feeling of inclusion?

Q. Promoting diversity awareness is a priority of this organization?

- Employees of this organization are valued for who they are as people, not just for the jobs that they fill?

Q. This organization has a culture in which employees appreciate the differences that people bring to the workplace?

Q. Intergroup relations (i.e., between different races, workgroups, age groups, etc.) tend to be characterized by respect and trust within this organization?

Q.Is employee input actively sought and organization believes their opinion is crucial for success?

- Employees' insights are used to rethink or redefine work practices?

Q. Are you empowered to make work-related decisions on your own?

Q. This organization has a climate for healthy debate?

Q. Can you name the top 3 things that make you feel included?

- And the top 3 things that make you feel excluded in your workenvironment?

Q. How is your unique/individual difference recognized in your team?

Q. Do you feel that you are accepted for who you are as an individual in your

workenvironment?

- Can you give me an example and relate it to your experience of inclusion?

Q. Do you feel you are treated fairly in your environment?

Q. How would you comment on your decision-making powers and its impact on

creating perceptions of inclusion?

Q. Do you have access to all the information and networks that you need to do your

job that other people in your same position have access to? Examples

Q. How would you describe communication in your team?

- How does this affect your perception of inclusion?

-Do you have anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your time!