


# Chapter 2


## A Review of Inclusive Workplace Challenges: Leadership Panache and DEI

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### ABSTRACT

*Diversity management, an important element of all institutions, is a process by which a welcoming environment is created that appreciates and respects individual differences. This involves reducing discrimination and marginalization, promoting inclusion and belonging, enhancing performance and results, and facilitating talent management. Formal and informal discrimination can result in marginalization, adversely affecting quality of life and career experience, and these challenges are serious. Inclusion helps create a warm and inclusive atmosphere that welcomes*

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*individuality and engages individuals in making decisions. Strong authenticity of voice within an organization indicates that effective diversity management is always required. This chapter discusses all the DEI challenges from a fresh perspective, maintaining that it is a new age leader's responsibility in the community, including social change and equity.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The call to action for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), particularly concerning disability within higher education and the broader issues of race, power, and privilege, is also related to the qualities and roles of leadership; see further (Bhuiya et al., 2024). DEI is a call to action for everyone within the workplace to take collective responsibility for advocating on behalf of minorities and people with disabilities, and creating real change through inclusiveness (Sidani et al., 2021).

Explaining DEI, Diversity refers to the differences among members of a social group or an organization, while the early focus was limited to demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, and sex (von Rosing & Czichos, 2024). However, this has been broadened to include other attributes such as education, background, work style, and deeper differences in attitudes, values, skills, or information tagged as talent (Sreedhar & Nayak, 2024). Integrating DEI in global contexts, such as the adaptation of diversity strategies by multinational organizations, reveals the persistence of subtle forms of inequality, including stereotyping and microaggressions, even in LGBTQ+-friendly environments (Aydin et al., 2025). Equity refers to fairness, impartiality, and justness. Equity in social justice acknowledges that societal groups have historically been dealt with unequally and subjected to oppression. Equity bases unequal treatment on compensatory programs or benefits in favor of people who have endured historical disadvantages and need advancement opportunities (Barnes et al., 2023). Allies promote equity, social change, and inclusion. Comprehension of power, privilege, and oppression is essential for addressing equity.

Diversity is a natural phenomenon, while equity is a leader's task to equate, prioritize, identify, and understand talent, treating everyone the same according to their potential, which may not lead to fair outcomes for all (Russen et al., 2023). Researchers advocate for potentially unequal treatment, such as compensatory programs or tailored support, to provide opportunities for those who have been disadvantaged. Addressing equity requires leaders to understand concepts of power, privilege, and oppression (Bhattacharya et al., 2024). It is also important to understand talent, differentiating equality from equity, where equality often means treating everyone equally or providing the same access. For example, some leadership approaches (like the Discrimination-and-Fairness paradigm) emphasize equality and fairness,

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