
UNIT 9 ETHICAL PRACTICES FOR EMPLOYEES

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9.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain operational levels of business ethics and employees;
- Discuss ethics and justice in HRM;

- Identify the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in an organization;
- Discuss business ethics and workplace safety;
- Discuss about honesty, integrity, and ownership of employees.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Every company follows certain ethics at workplace to make sure that things are going well and that the employees are content. To guarantee that the staff is satisfied with their jobs and that they are pursuing the organizational objectives, the company's ethics must coincide with those of the employees.

Ethics at work, also referred to as workplace ethics, are the moral standards that companies use to decide what behaviours are acceptable or unacceptable at work. Workplace ethics have an impact on every aspect of corporate operations, including how employees conduct themselves to maintain the company's reputation.

Each employee needs to adhere to workplace ethics for organizations to properly incorporate them into their corporate culture. This applies to managers and CEOs as well, as they serve as role models for their staff members. Workers at all levels are inspired to put in more effort and respect workplace morality because they regard each other as equals. They can follow their own personal ethics at work as an individual, but these personal ethics must be compatible with the organizational ethics. This guarantees that the employees can work towards shared objectives while still establishing realistic personal goals.

Ethics are important for all the employees at all the levels due to the following reasons:

1. **Better Employee Retention:** Ethics centered on boosting staff morale motivate managers to express gratitude to their staff. As a result, team members feel more devoted to the organization and their supervisors, which increases employee retention. Employee ethics are also more likely to be followed when there is a defined ethical framework in place at work.
2. **Enhanced Teamwork:** Employees are usually encouraged to respect and listen to one other when it comes to workplace ethics. Since this is the cornerstone of effective teamwork, workplace ethics can foster a greater sense of unity and cooperation. As a result, workers are more driven to perform well, hence are more productive.
3. **Improved Leadership:** Managers who uphold workplace ethics are more likely to show their team member's respect. This fosters a culture of mutual respect and trust by encouraging team members to follow their team leader or manager. It also facilitates better teamwork and makes team leadership simpler.

4. **Employee Satisfaction:** Businesses that are dedicated to maintaining the highest ethical standards frequently treat their staff better and inspire them to treat others with the same respect. These moral guidelines can be useful in setting expectations for how business activities affect interests of investors and clients. Companies and partners can contribute to the development of a work environment where employees feel appreciated, heard, and fulfilled in their roles by upholding ethical standards. Employers may find it simpler to retain current staff members and attract new talent because of this higher degree of satisfaction.
5. **Improved Workplace Culture:** Executives and staff members frequently act morally and responsibly when they see that their company is being managed in similar ways. By doing this, the company's overall culture can be greatly enhanced. If an organization exhibits a commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and fairness, investors might feel compelled to uphold the same ethical standard.
6. **Compliance of Legal Regulations:** Legal requirements are usually aligned with ethical business practices. To avoid pollution of the environment, for example, a production company dedicated to eco-friendly practices might make sure waste management laws are followed. In addition to fulfilling their legal obligations, companies that establish robust ethical guidelines are more likely to comply with the regulatory requirements set forth by the relevant official government agencies.
7. **Better Reputation:** Businesses frequently gain a better public image when they set clear ethical standards. Consumers and society at large are getting more and more concerned than ever with how businesses handle their employees and interact with the public.
8. **Improved Customer Loyalty and Retention:** Enhancing customer loyalty and engagement can be achieved through ethical business practices. Consumers who support ethical brands may interact with them more frequently. In terms of their public image, companies can gain a great deal of respect when they behave responsibly and accountable towards their partners and employees.
9. **Client Loyalty:** Customers may therefore feel more comfortable recommending a company or making financial investments with such enterprises. When a company upholds a long-term set of moral principles, its standing may gradually get better. Increased client retention may arise from circumstances such as these. Customers and clients are more likely to return to a business on a regular basis when they have faith on it.
10. **Effective Decision-Making Process:** Establishing ethical standards for workers can assist companies in developing a robust corporate

culture. Organizational leaders may find it easier to make effective decisions and address problems sooner when they emerge with the help of these ethical guidelines. Businesses that hold their leaders to a set of ethical standards can use these rules as a guide to make decisions and resolve disputes amicably. These expedited decision-making processes can eventually assist companies in achieving organizational sustainability and coherence.

Now that you have understood the meaning and importance of workplace ethics, let us now try to study and have a better insight into the meaning of personal ethics and differences between personal and business ethics.

9.2 OPERATIONAL LEVELS OF BUSINESS ETHICS AND EMPLOYEES

As you know, the term "ethics" refers to the "consideration and application of frameworks, values and principles for developing moral awareness and guiding behaviour and action", and it involves excellent character and morality and relates to universally acknowledged human character and behaviour that contemporary society considers desirable. Ethics is applicable both at personal as well as business or organizational levels. Let us now try to delve into the concept of personal ethics and its differences vis-à-vis business ethics.

9.2.1 Personal Ethics:

Personal ethics act as a starting point for comparison, they can be a strong foundation for understanding business ethics. Personal ethics are the guidelines that assist an employee in making moral decisions on a daily basis. Examples of personal ethics are typically one's work ethic, attitude towards challenging circumstances, and fundamental beliefs. Personal ethics can be practised in very individualistic ways, as well as in relation to the family or social circle. It is also typical to approach the system of personal ethics differently depending on which personal values are given more weightage. Common examples of personal ethics are honesty, integrity, loyalty, and respect. Personal ethics are important due to the following reasons:

- Effective team handling by its leader.
- Instils trust and confidence in the leader.
- Helps employees handle difficult situations.
- Improves confidence in making decisions.
- Ascertains standards of expected behaviours.
- Helps in employee self-motivation.

9.2.2 Similarities and Dissimilarities Between Personal and Business Ethics

Now that you have an understanding of the concept of personal ethics, let us try to see what the similarities and dissimilarities are between personal ethics and business ethics.

1. Similarities Between Personal Ethics and Business Ethics:

- a. Individuals can apply the similar ethics in both their personal and professional lives by consistently practising them, regardless of the situation they are in.
- b. Since it entails expressing one's values and priorities and provides time for introspection, developing one's personal and professional ethics is frequently comparable.
- c. Generally speaking, people follow certain ethics in both their personal and professional lives. For example, many value honesty, tenacity, and integrity highly in both their personal and professional lives.

2. Dissimilarities Between Personal Ethics and Business Ethics:

- a. Business ethics can occasionally vary based on employee's position and sector. A programmer and a banker, for example, may have different priorities for their values. An individual's personal ethics, however, doesn't change based on where he/she is or what he/she is doing.
- b. A mission statement serves as a typical framework for organising and formalising business ethics. Most personal ethics are pliable or informal.
- c. There are moments when groups of people diverge in how much they share business and personal ethics. This is due to the fact that individuals can share personal ethics with their family, community, or social group, contingent upon how those groups establish common values. Business ethics are the standard operating procedures that all members of an organisation are expected to follow.
- d. Personal and business ethics are frequently influenced by the same values. The way they apply them and the circumstances in which they choose to do so are the fundamental differences.

9.2.3 Operational Levels of Business Ethics and Employees:

Understanding the various "levels" at which ethical issues originate and how they frequently move to other levels is helpful for leaders because it shows them that ethical issues are not just personal or individual matters.

The diverse range of stakeholders that today's leaders must engage with both inside and outside of their organisations makes it easier for them to comprehend the intricate relationships that exist between the various players involved in solving ethical problems. The different operational levels of business ethics and employees are as follows:

1. **Individual level:** Organisational leaders oversee their organisations and their various departments, so decisions made by individuals in the business on a daily basis and their adherence to ethical standards are crucial. Tensions may arise because people's ethical standards may differ significantly from those of their employer. Individual ethical standards can be influenced by a variety of factors, including socioeconomic status, peer pressure, and one's own financial situation. In order to handle possible conflicts, leaders need to be aware of this. Everybody encounters ethical dilemmas on a personal or individual basis. These comprise circumstances that leaders encounter in their private lives that are typically not related to their jobs.
2. **Organizational Level:** An organization's policies and procedures are ingrained with ethical standards, which serve as a crucial basis for the development of organisational strategy. These regulations are a direct result of the forces operating at the macro level and aid an organisation in adapting to shifting circumstances in the most efficient manner possible. Some employees may face an ethical dilemma due to a discrepancy between the organization's ethical policy and the actions of those in management, particularly if they are not the direct owners. In their capacities as leaders or employees, people also deal with ethical dilemmas in the workplace. These problems could, however, have an impact on the company's standing and level of success in the community as well as the ethical culture or climate that will permeate the workplace on a daily basis.
3. **Macro level:** The organization's larger operating environment defines and influences ethics at the macro level, also known as the systemic level. At this point, we could talk about the larger part that business should or does play in society. At this level, business ethics also address issues related to both domestic and global economic policy. It also straddles the line between political ideology. A company's operating norms and procedures can be influenced by a variety of factors, including economic conditions, political pressures, societal perceptions of particular businesses, and even industry or business regulations. Modern organisational leaders and other members need to understand how these challenges affect relationships and operations, as well as how they may affect markets on a local, national, and worldwide scale.

A macro-level investigation might also look at whether companies should prioritise maximising shareholder returns over taking into account how their actions affect society and the environment. Additionally, a macro-level investigation might look at how equally different communities share the advantages and disadvantages of economic activity. There have been arguments made for the significance of approaching business ethics more narrowly from societal, industry, or global viewpoints.

4. **Industry Level:** Another level at which organisational leaders and others may have an impact on business ethics is the industry level. The industry could be anything from textile industry to hospitality or banking to pharmaceutical to automobiles, among many other sectors.
5. **Societal and International Level:** The legal and moral acceptability of behaviours is governed by laws, norms, customs, and traditions at the national and international levels. Business practises that are not acceptable in one country may be acceptable in another. It gets exceedingly difficult for leaders to influence business ethics directly at these levels. Nonetheless, leaders can undoubtedly establish high standards and beneficial changes by working together through their organisations, trade associations, and professional associations. The work that leaders do on a personal level or as a part of the larger organisational leadership team has the biggest influence.

9.3 FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In human resource management (HRM), business ethics pertain to the employer's affirmative moral duties to uphold equity and justice for all workers. Human resource management ethics encompass a range of topics, such as workplace safety, basic human rights, privacy, fairness, and respect, as well as treating employees fairly and using truthful procedures. For instance, a lot of remote-working businesses consider employee monitoring to be essential. Through deliberate downsampling of captured images and videos, employee efficiency can be tracked in a more morally responsible manner with ethical time tracking. Human resources will be able to effectively recruit and keep a talented workforce once they have successfully navigated the ethical challenges of their work. The idea related to ethical decisions is conceived of as a personal responsibility.

Due to growing competition that drives businesses to seek out ways to gain a competitive edge and boost profitability, as well as globalization's impact on organizational policies for operating in the global economy, ethics have become increasingly important in human resources management. Companies are being forced to conduct business globally, which means that ethical

concerns pertaining to human resources must be addressed. In addition to being competitive advantage for moral decision-making, the organization now views human resources as strategically important. This is due to the necessity of making sure that only pertinent data is utilized when making decisions that have an impact on the working relationship.

Fundamental to ethics in human resource management (HRM) are concerns of how workforce should be treated, compensated, trained, expected to work under certain conditions, the extent to which they should work, disciplined, and let go. An organization is better able to uphold and grow trust when ethical practices and values are integrated into human resource management. On the other hand, unethical behavior can have a significant negative effect on an organization's HRM which might be detrimental to society, companies, investors, and people. It might negatively impact the profitability of the organization and the discipline of human resources.

9.3.1 Ethical Issues in Human Resource Management

Abiding by the ethical norms in HR is essential to running a profitable company. But ethical dilemmas can be difficult to resolve; the best way to handle them is to have adequate knowledge of what they are and how to avoid them. Some important ethical issues are listed below.

- Inequitable benefit and pay schemes for employees.
- Discriminatory actions taken based on age, gender, race, physical challenges/disabilities, etc.
- Unfair hiring procedures in which an HR manager gives preference to people who have been recommended or who have personal ties.
- Interfering in personal matters that workers do not want to reveal. This can include political inclinations, religious convictions, etc.

9.3.2 Role of Ethics in Human Resource Management

To effectively manage a business, it is critical that the role that ethics play in human resources are understood. In addition to promoting accountability and teamwork among employees, the following are the key roles that ethics plays in human resource management:

- **Follow the Employment Law:** Because HR ethics promote fair employment practices, they assist an organization in conducting business in compliance with employment laws. Policies pertaining to minimum wage and overtime compensation show that the business pays its workers legally. Furthermore, anti-discrimination policies draw candidates from a variety of backgrounds, demonstrating the company's commitment to fair hiring practices.
- **Protection of Organizational Image and Reputation:** If an organization conducts business unethically, word of wrongdoings

spread and damage the reputation. These may consist of discriminatory practices, sexual harassment, unjust hiring practices, etc. This means that not only will the organization lose valuable clients, but it will also be difficult to find qualified candidates for a range of roles. The company's competitive edge is maintained in the industry by cultivating a sound reputation through ethical HR initiatives.

- **Helps to Retain Employees and Reduces Employee Attrition:** Employee trust is fostered within the organization by HR ethics and compliance. The employees will be devoted and work hard as a result. The tenure in the company will be longer, enhancing their experience and promoting output. Money spent on repeated recruitment and selection processes would be saved.
- **Improved Decision Making:** In human resource management, business ethics promote accountability and teamwork, leading to better employee accountability and organizational decisions. Furthermore, reducing the employee conflict and disputes in the organization.

Check Your Progress A

1. What is meant by ethics at workplace?
2. Define personal ethics.
3. Explain any two similarities between personal and business ethics?
4. List four ethical issues in human resource management.
5. Which of the following statements are **True** or **False**?
 - (i) Ethics are important for better employee retention.
 - (ii) Personal ethics help employees handle situations easily.
 - (iii) There is no difference between personal and business ethics.
 - (iv) Ethics help in protection of organizational image and reputation.
 - (v) Business ethics do not have any impact on industrial level.

9.4 DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

After having delved in detail the importance of ethics in HRM, let us now try to understand the meaning of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Also, we will see how these concepts are important in an organization and what is their role in improving the organizational culture.

9.4.1 Diversity

Diversity in the workplace usually arises from hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds. People of various genders, backgrounds, faiths, sexual

orientations, and educational levels are often found in a company with a diverse workforce. Everyone in a diverse workplace typically has equal access to opportunities and resources to succeed in their line of work. Additionally, diverse work environments can foster more innovative thinking and higher levels of output.

9.4.1.1 Importance of Workplace Diversity

Diversity in workplace is strategic due to the following reasons:

- a. **Better and Improved Productivity:** Businesses that value diversity can benefit from increased worker productivity since it fosters more productive interpersonal relationships. Teams comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, gender, and experience levels frequently depend on one another to come up with novel solutions to issues. Increased employee morale can boost productivity and the caliber of collaborative efforts, which is another benefit of greater diversity. The team can contribute to the development of a generally healthier workplace by concentrating on the caliber of their work rather than the outward appearances of their colleagues.
- b. **Heightened Innovation:** Innovation is often essential to a business's success because it keeps a company competitive in the face of industry advancements. Companies can boost creativity by promoting diversity because it teaches team members to be open to ideas from individuals with different backgrounds. People with diverse backgrounds and worldviews can provide ideas for solutions that other staff members might not have thought of. Additionally, innovation can boost a business's earnings and enable it to provide more benefits and opportunities to prospective employees.
- c. **Lesser Employee Turnover:** Decreased employee turnover rates can also be advantageous for a diverse workforce. Employee turnover affects employee morale, consistency and quality of the product. It occurs when employees leave a company or position on a regular basis. Companies can spend less time and money searching for qualified candidates when turnover rates are low. Additionally, it means that the business can hire more people internally for higher-level positions, saving money on training and building a more reliable workforce across the board. It can strengthen bonds and help teams become more cohesive, which may lower turnover rates.
- d. **Growth in Number of Customers:** A business that welcomes diversity may also find that its clientele grows because it's simpler for consumers to interact with organizations that employ a diverse workforce. Consumers may trust the company more since they can relate to the value of inclusivity. A company can gain from having more customers in a number of ways, such as having access to new markets, receiving more recommendations, and enjoying an overall rise in public confidence. Increased revenue and profits from a larger

customer base enable the company to focus on product enhancement, expansion, and investor attention.

- e. **Effective Communication:** Clear and more consistent communication is often beneficial for teams with diverse members. Teams that accept differences may communicate more successfully because differences in language, culture, and other aspects can make communication difficult. By consistently practicing overcoming these obstacles, the team can enhance both the quality of their work and overall communication. Benefits of more direct communication include improved relationships between managers and staff as well as fewer errors, which can reduce the operating costs.
- f. **Better Employee Involvement:** A diverse workplace may encourage greater involvement from staff members in their duties and a greater sense of ownership over the organization's objectives. Because they trust their coworkers and feel that their work has purpose, employees may be more engaged at work. Employees are more likely to trust the management team and that the business upholds its core values when they feel a part even though they might have perceived differences from their teammates. As a result, they may become more engaged in their work and proud to work for the company.
- g. **Enriched Corporate Culture and Values:** The values and culture of a company can also be impacted by inclusion. It can support the development of an inclusive, compassionate workplace culture within the organization, regardless of racial, religious, or other distinctions. Additionally, it promotes an environment that is accepting and flexible, two qualities that workers can use to their advantage at work. These elements might also aid in drawing in new talent, increasing the company's workforce and encouraging applications from people with diverse backgrounds.

9.4.1.2 Benefits of Workplace Diversity

Adopting workplace diversity in an organization has numerous advantages, such as:

- a. **Elevated Cultural Sensitivity:** Employers can demonstrate their cultural sensitivity by assigning employees from diverse backgrounds to work on company initiatives. It's also critical for a business to pay attention to and comprehend the ideas and viewpoints of the people it hopes to represent. This is because they can create offerings that are more genuine and empathetic. For instance, if the advertising department is targeting people of Indian descent, it might be essential to have an Indian team member provide feedback. Advertising teams can use this to make sure that these individuals are appropriately and realistically represented.

- b. **Enhanced Creativity:** When people from diverse backgrounds work together on a project, they often come up with more creative ideas because they can share ideas that have been influenced by their individual perspectives and life experiences. On the other hand, when people from similar backgrounds work together, innovative thinking might decrease.
- c. **Draws Talented People:** Companies that are committed to diversity can draw in qualified applicants, particularly if they are looking to build strong teams. Companies that show they appreciate and value applicants from a variety of backgrounds may be able to draw in these applicants. Additionally, this usually opens more positions for people to work for the company, which can produce teams with greater talent and quality.
- d. **Diversified Workforce:** A more varied skill set is usually the outcome of a diverse workforce. This diverse skill set can aid a business in creating better quality goods and services. Likewise, when workers have a variety of critical skills, they can cooperate and share more effectively. Employers may also cultivate a workforce in which team members support one another in advancing their careers, thereby fostering a more talented workplace.
- e. **Greater Acceptability:** Spending more time with people from diverse backgrounds may lead to a greater degree of acceptance among them. When there are notable differences, these frequent interactions can help staff members gain a better understanding of and perspective on other people's backgrounds and cultures. When employees are given a safe space to embrace their potential differences, they can then grow more accepting one another and learn from one another.
- f. **Better Image:** A company's reputation can be enhanced by having a diverse workforce, particularly if it seeks to hire people from various backgrounds. Customers who embrace diversity might also be more inclined to support an organization that hires people with a diverse mindset. As a result, businesses can publicly express and illustrate this way of thinking by trying to hire a diverse workforce.
- g. **Effective Problem Solving and Better Decision Making:** Bringing together individuals from various backgrounds is beneficial for an organization's problem-solving procedures as well. This is due to the fact that every individual can contribute their unique set of abilities and life experiences to problem discussions, which could aid the team in finding better solutions they might not have thought of on their own. Every team member has a different perspective on a problem, which leads to creative solutions.

- h. **Diverse Representation:** Having a diverse team also gives companies the ability to execute work that represents a range of people. A diverse advertising team, for instance, can come up with ideas for blog posts or commercials that appeal to different demographics. The group can also learn about the viewpoints and beliefs of individuals from different backgrounds. When advertisements accurately portray people, people frequently show relatedness or interest.
- i. **Lesser Attrition Rate:** Companies that implement innovative policies in the workplace can lower their employee turnover rates. This is since exhibiting diverse qualities can assist an organization in creating a welcoming and forthcoming work environment for its employees.
- j. **Enhanced Productivity:** Giving individuals from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to make a difference can boost employee morale, which in turn leads to increased productivity. If their employers make them feel important, workers may become more devoted to the business and strive harder to fulfill their duties. If a company has a lot of original ideas to work with, it might also find a more efficient way to run its operations.

9.4.1.3 Classification of Workplace diversity:

Workplace diversity can be classified into the following groups:

- a. **Gender:** In the workplace, gender diversity refers to treating people of all gender identities with respect. Employers must take these differences into account and treat them with respect. Employees who experience discrimination outside of the workplace may also be able to support one another.
- b. **Physical:** By identifying the minimum physical requirements for a position and publishing them, employers can be more inclusive and consider candidates with varying physical abilities for different roles. Additionally, they can assist by offering various facilities to individuals with varying abilities. For instance, an employer could increase wheelchair accessibility at their place of business or offer different facilities to those who have trouble hearing or with vision challenges.
- c. **Cultural:** Differences in cultural backgrounds and beliefs are referred to as cultural diversity. Every culture has its own set of fundamental principles, worldviews, customs, and approaches to solving problems. Cultural enrichment programmes can help foster understanding of other cultures in a multicultural workplace. Diverse music, costumes, and practices from various cultures can introduce fresh viewpoints and ideas to the workplace.

- d. **Generational:** Hiring individuals from various generations, is known as "generational diversity." Different age groups can provide special guidance or problem-solving techniques because of their vastly different life experiences. By overcoming obstacles at work and concentrating on shared objectives, people from different generations can discover commonalities. Additionally, they can cooperate to improve interaction and cooperation amongst different age groups.
- e. **Religious:** Diversity in religion refers to the inclusion of individuals from all religious backgrounds and the freedom to practice or express their beliefs in the workplace. When employers respect their employees' differences in religion, they frequently permit polite conversations about religion at work. Employers who wish to demonstrate their acceptance of diverse belief systems may choose to accommodate the specific religious practices.

9.4.1.4 Steps for Ensuring Better Workplace Diversity:

The companies can improve and ensure better workplace diversity by adopting the steps as mentioned below:

- a. **Synchronize corporate goals with diversity methods:** It takes a lot of work to implement workplace diversity, so it's important to gather resources to help in this process. Every organization has different objectives, and to succeed, they can match their diversity policies with those objectives. This entails taking into consideration the unique culture that the business has adopted. The business can identify its specific gaps by conducting a survey with a diversity focus. This can assist the business in determining where to concentrate its efforts and guarantee compliance with its objectives and diversity policies.
- b. **Dedicated Team for Managing the Diversity Implementation Process:** To help companies take their diversity initiatives from a concept to full implementation, they need to have a team, resources, and support in place. To ensure their continued support, executives must gain the support of the leadership of the company. It's also critical to make sure their team is prepared and on board. To hold the business accountable for its actions, this calls for the creation of a specialized department, such as the department of inclusion and diversity.
- c. **Sensitization and Training:** For workplace diversity to be successful, all employees of the company must cooperate fully. Managers have a big say in how a company handles these projects. Specialized management training can help the senior team understand and value the organization's diversity objectives. Businesses occasionally enlist the assistance of other experts in the field to assist them in creating efficient diversity training. Offering training opportunities to the entire organization is also worthwhile. Since it's

possible that some employees have unconscious biases, addressing common biases through training for the entire organization can help in people's awareness-building.

- d. **Organizational Commitment:** A crucial component of implementing workplace diversity is execution. Businesses can create committees to oversee the implementation of the new diversity practices and update the diversity policy to incorporate advantageous practices. To make sure there are no gaps in the implementation of workplace diversity, the concerned people can also examine the enforcement plan.

9.4.2 Equity

The idea of workplace equity is to give each employee equal opportunities according to their unique needs. Although they appear similar, equity and equality are not the same thing. It's critical to comprehend the differences between these two terms in order to plan for a more harmonious workplace. The goal of equality is to give every employee access to the same resources, irrespective of any prior obstacles they might have encountered. This may pertain to the equitable allocation of funds, assets, or prospects among employees at par. In contrast to equality, equity does not grant everyone access to the same opportunities and means. An organization that practices equity will acknowledge that every worker has different access to benefits. Furthermore, in order to fairly take advantage of opportunities within a particular company, those with less access might require more assistance.

Ways of Implementing Equity in Workplace:

Equity can be implemented in the organizational context by adopting the following methods:

1. **Ensure Wage Equity:** In the organization, discussion on wage was not commonly prevalent and due to this, wage disparities became a common feature. Ensuring equitable compensation necessitates open communication about wage correlations and transparency regarding employee performance, position, and wage rate.
2. **Allow Diversity:** Many companies make hiring decisions based on diversity, but they do not always give their diverse employees fair opportunities to progress. When this occurs, a high degree of diversity in low-wage, low-authority positions as well as an overrepresentation of a single background of people in positions of leadership and management is observed. It is imperative for the organization to empower its diverse workforce by providing fair promotions and maintaining a diverse executive ranks.
3. **Implement Adequate Employee Sensitization and Awareness Generation Training Program:** Systemic barriers impede the educational opportunities to a specific population segment based on their ethnic background. In many workplaces, this lack of access

results in reduced workplace diversity. These marginalized employees can be given a potentially life-changing resource that will help them grow in their careers and within the company by investing in training programmes. A fair and equitable education is essential for the future of the workforce.

9.4.3 Inclusion

The degree to which a workplace supports the success of its diverse workforce is referred to as inclusion. The policies and practices that guarantee the involvement of various groups and stakeholders in significant discussions, procedures, and decisions are known as inclusionary practices. An inclusive workplace allows for the generation of new ideas from a variety of perspectives and the sharing of those ideas, which can help promote creativity and innovation. Open-concept workspaces, merit-driven performance reviews, collaborating across levels of management on difficult issues, discouraging discriminatory corporate policies, and consistent workplace policy implementation are all ways to foster an inclusive workplace.

9.4.3.1 Advantages of An Inclusive Working Environment: There are numerous benefits of having an inclusive working environment in an organization. These are as follows:

1. Enhanced employee trust and loyalty;
2. Improved performance and productivity;
3. Increased employee engagement and satisfaction;
4. Augmented innovation and creativity; and
5. Improved talent attraction and retention.

9.4.3.2 Steps for Promotion of inclusive workplace environment: There are a number of ways by which an organization can incorporate inclusion in its functioning. Some of the principle steps are as enumerated below:

- **Diversity in Employing Workforce:** Examining HR policies before hiring new staff members can help guarantee that there are no biases in the hiring process. Diverse hiring decisions do not consider a candidate's demographics; instead, they only consider their set of expertise, experience, and qualifications. In order to ensure that the company attracts diverse candidates, human resource departments might want to keep an eye on the demographics of the current workforce.
- **Regular Revision of Organizational Policies:** Corporate policies must be updated to encourage and include workers from all backgrounds to create a diverse and inclusive workplace. It may be necessary to amend corporate policies in order to guarantee that every employee feels valued and heard. Policies that should be updated to

make the performance management system more equitable and fairer might include granting time off to employees of different religions. These are just a few policy examples; the precise modifications may vary based on the needs and demands of the workforce.

- **Promotion of Inclusive Organizational Climate and Culture:** An employer needs to encourage and promote a more inclusive work environment by implementing several changes. It is essential to evaluate the needs of your employees in order to design a collaborative, safe, and friendly environment. Modifications to policies that can have a positive impact on employee inclusivity include allowing for flexible working hours for employees specially for those who have commitments at home and accommodating diverse employees in the workplace.
- **Re-structure Organizational Policies and Plans:** Redesigning business procedures and practices may be necessary to create an inclusive and diverse workplace. Training on organizational diversity and inclusion can facilitate the implementation of these initiatives. This is essential to making the workplace more comfortable for workers in all positions. It might be necessary to update procedures pertaining to meeting attendance, benefits and rewards, employee appreciation, and employee wellness.
- **Facilitate Regular Communication with Employees:** It is essential to stay in touch with staff members and promptly handle any issues they may have. It might be beneficial to find out what problems the employees have and ask their opinions and input how these problems can be addressed. It can also be beneficial to follow up with staff members to find out how the company's policy changes have affected them and which ones still need to be addressed.

9.4.3.3 Difference Between Diversity and Inclusion: After having understood the concepts of diversity and inclusion, let us now try to understand the difference between these two important terms.

Diversity in the workplace is the distribution of workers according to their age, gender, race, religion, socio-economic background, etc. A diverse workforce is beneficial to the organization as it recognizes the value of individuality and allows each employee to contribute to the team. Hiring workers with a range of backgrounds and skill sets and making sure that there is a greater representation of workers with different identities, genders, ethnicities, age, and socio-economic backgrounds will help to increase workplace diversity.

However, inclusion is the degree to which a workplace supports the diverse workforce to succeed in the working environment. The policies and practices that guarantee the involvement of various groups and stakeholders in significant discussions, procedures, and decisions are known as inclusionary

practices. An inclusive workplace allows for the generation of new ideas from a variety of perspectives and the sharing of those ideas, which can help foster creativity and innovation. Open-concept workspaces, merit-driven performance reviews, collaborating across levels of management on complex problems, discouraging discriminatory corporate policies, and consistent workplace policy implementation are all ways to foster an inclusive workplace.

With globalization and increasing organizational diversification and expansion, it is imperative that the organization strives to encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in its climate and culture.

9.5 WORKPLACE SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Workplace safety and health are important parameters for success no matter how big or small an organization is. Every company, irrespective of its size and operations, needs to have workplace security. Employees who do not take workplace health and safety seriously may experience severe emotional and physical problems. Well-executed safety protocols protect workers, but they are also critical to the long-term prosperity and advantages of the company. Workplace Health and Safety, which is also known as Occupational Health and Safety, is one such entity in charge of examining possible threats to the workforce's health and welfare. Every employee in a company has a primary duty to adhere to workplace health and safety standards and policies in order to guarantee that these policies are adequately implemented.

9.5.1 Benefits of Workplace Health and Safety

Adequate health and safety measures for employees are advantageous and crucial for any organization. The following are the general advantages of putting occupational health and safety strategies into practice:

- It goes without saying that a safe workplace promotes productivity. Employee productivity is an asset for any business. For example, efficient employees can produce better results which reduces operating costs for the business.
- Workplace safety promotes the wellbeing of both employers and employees. Better safety precautions make workers happier, overall, healthier, and more capable of finishing tasks.
- A safe workplace has fewer accidents, which means fewer downtime for safety investigations and lower expenditure towards compensation to workers.
- Damage to organizational property and equipment results in expenses for replacement and repair. Appropriate safety regulations reduce

workplace injuries and industrial equipment damage, which lowers costs and increases profits.

- When workers perceive that the company is concerned about their safety, they become more self-assured, at ease, and productive, thus reducing absenteeism.

After talking about the advantages of having a defined policy for workplace health and safety, we'll attempt to concentrate on the different kinds of workplace hazards.

9.5.2 Categories of Occupational Hazards

There are four main categories of occupational hazards, which are as follows:

1. **Physical Hazard:** This category of occupational hazard is the most common. Physical risks include things like falls, slips, and trips in addition to working at heights, loud noises, and insecure machinery.
2. **Ergonomic Hazard:** There are risks associated with working in an organization which are not always obvious, but employees are still vulnerable to them. For instance, injuries brought on by poor posture, dim lighting, repetitive motion, etc. These are referred to as ergonomic hazards.
3. **Chemical Hazard:** These are the workplace related hazards or dangers that are caused due to certain gas leaks, chemical spillage, exposure to some harmful liquids or solvents, cleansers, etc.
4. **Biological Hazard:** These hazards include exposure to specific plants, medicinal chemicals, animals, insects, laboratory testing, etc. Occupational hazards of this kind are most likely to affect healthcare workers.

9.5.3 Measures for Dealing with Occupational Hazards

It is essential for all the companies to devise measures to mitigate occupational hazards. These include:

1. Making a commitment to safety and health by making workplace safety a mandatory aspect of the organizational policy and practice. Also formulate policies for ensuring workplace health and safety and keep a regular check to ascertain these policies are implemented seriously in the organization.
2. The organization needs to involve the employees in implementing workplace health and safety. Make the employees aware of all the policies and procedures and ensure their commitment towards their adequate implementation.
3. Every organization should identify all the possible kinds of occupational hazards that could be there related to their respective

workplace. Accordingly adequate safety measures need to be taken so as to avoid occurrence of any such mishaps.

4. Once the policies, rules and regulations are in place for occupational health and safety, ensure their strict compliance and make the employees abide by these rules and regulations. Also, the infrastructure should be such that it minimizes such hazards.
5. It is also important to train the employees and sensitize them towards issues related to occupational hazards. Besides making them aware of these important factors, they should be trained in such a way that they can participate in mitigating these problems in the wake of occurrence of such accidents.
6. It is the responsibility of the top management to inculcate and support a culture of safety right from the beginning of its establishment and when an employee is inducted into the organization.
7. Lastly, the organization needs to continually make efforts towards improving the system by adopting the latest methods and techniques of occupational safety and health.

9.5.4 Case Study

Infosys, the global consulting and IT services company with more than 328000 employees, established in 1981, and with clients in more than 56 countries, has a well laid out policy and structure for managing workplace safety and occupational health in the organization, known as the Health, Safety and Environmental Management System (HSEMS) which is certified to ISO 45001:2018 standard 1. All the activities of the company come under the purview of HSEMS, which are a part of the operations and employees working for and on behalf of the company including those at client sites of the company. In Infosys, safety and well-being of the workforce is accorded the top-most priority.

There are four dimensions in HSEMS, namely, Risk Management, Incident Management, Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Committees, and Training and Awareness. The company strongly believes in safety first culture in the organization and therefore, ensures timely competency development programs for the employees. Under the training and awareness component, over 44500 employees have been provided training directly encompassing four components: physical wellness, emotional wellness, safety, and leisure. This is accomplished through awareness-building, mock drills, classroom sessions and periodic demonstrations. These awareness generation and competency enhancement trainings are also a part of the company employee induction programs. Besides the offline training programs, e-learning module is also available globally as a continuous learning platform for employees. Job-specific trainings are regularly conducted for contractual staff during induction and later through refresher courses.

9.6 HONESTY, INTEGRITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF EMPLOYEES TOWARDS ORGANIZATION

We have studied 12 main principles of business ethics in Unit 1 “Introduction to Business Ethics” and integrity and accountability of employees are some of the important principles of business ethics that we will try to understand in this section.

9.6.1 Honesty of Employees

Honesty supports and aids team members in developing good relations with one another as well as with clients and consumers. This trait can help boost overall productivity and team performance. Employees become more dependable and accountable when they understand how to incorporate this attribute into their job. Some of the important characteristics of honesty are:

- **Trust:** Honesty encourages an employee to form good relations with the seniors and peers. By showing these principles, the employee will gain the trust of others around him/her and boost the chances of getting employed or promoted. Employers value individuals that display honesty since it shows that they are trustworthy and can complete duties on time.
- **Responsibility:** Employees who take responsibility recognize their role in mistakes. For example, if team members fail to complete a particular task, an employee may accept responsibility for the delay. In this case, the employee manages the difficulties that arose during the work and allows the team to learn from its mistakes. This is especially crucial for managers who are supposed to report problems to the top management.
- **Accountability:** Employees with honesty may recognize their mistakes and hold themselves responsible. Someone who makes a mistake during a critical phase of a project, immediately informs their team. In this case, the employee may have tried to conceal the mistake, but by acknowledging it, he/she offers their colleagues with critical information to resolve the matter. This influences how the team comes up with a solution since the team knows where the fault started and when the employee detected it.
- **Reliability:** Employees who are dependable fulfil deadlines and finish assignments on time by discovering the most appropriate approaches and processes. This guarantees that staff work as efficiently and effectively as possible whilst upholding high standards of quality. Reliable co-workers may also instruct and encourage their teammates on how to do certain jobs. By demonstrating dependability, an employee may boost productivity and improve business culture.

9.6.1.1 Advantages of Honesty:

The following are the main advantages of honesty:

1. **Improves Leadership:** Employees with honesty become competent leaders because they uphold the company's principles and ethics. These professionals realize the consequences of their actions on teammates and employees. They also guarantee that all initiatives and assignments are completed successfully. Employees that exhibit these characteristics value clients and lead their teams to adhere to business ethics.
2. **Encourages Favorable Organizational Culture:** Employees who exhibit honesty assist to foster a healthy organizational culture, which ensures that employees like working with their teammates. Workplace honesty strengthens corporate cultures because people are trustworthy and readily share their thoughts. If an employee has honesty, he/she may find it advantageous to demonstrate it by delivering constructive feedback to coworkers and attempting to connect with teammates.
3. **Enables Ethical Decision Making:** When one has strong values, one makes judgements based on one's ethics as well as the ethics of the organization. These principles also influence whether one protects all those involved, develop innovative products, and assist teammates in making sound judgements.
4. **Promotes Diversity:** Companies that value honesty in the workplace encourage diversity in workforce. This helps organizations by providing a variety of ideas for difficult problem solving, product creation, and project development. This also enhances collaboration and boosts staff morale.

9.6.1.2 Ways of Showing Honesty at Workplace:

1. Respect team members.
2. Manage conflict without compromising with your honesty.
3. Be prepared for work.
4. Report unethical behavior.
5. Encourage accomplishments.
6. Remain transparent.
7. Encourage teamwork.
8. Manage project deadlines.
9. Improve communication skills.
10. Have a proper understanding of company values.

After having a comprehensive understanding of honesty, we will now study the principle of integrity of employees in the organization.

9.6.2 Integrity of Employees

Integrity is the ability to conduct respectfully regardless of whether someone is being observed or not. Integrity implies that one appreciates excellent morals and ethics and adheres to them in all aspects of the life. When engaging with friends and coworkers, assisting customers, and creating a positive initial perception when meeting new people, integrity is essential.

Employees with integrity are valued by employers because they contribute to a pleasant, inviting environment. They take pleasure in their job and offer high-quality results, which inspires people around them to do the same. Employees with integrity are reliable and capable of working autonomously without supervision. Integrity can be demonstrated in the organization by the employees by being punctual to work, be constructive in one's approach, practice work ethics, be accountable for all that one does, follow company rules, regulations, policies and procedures, and respect the organization's property and infrastructure.

9.6.2.1 Traits of Employees with Integrity

- a. **Honesty:** Honesty is one of the most essential qualities of a person with integrity. Being truthful and open in all circumstances is what it means to be honest. It's especially beneficial at work because it demonstrates to employers that staff members are capable of owning up to their errors and growing from them.
- b. **Trustworthy:** Trustworthiness and honesty are two attributes that complement each other. An individual needs to be honest in order for others to trust him/her. An employee needs to be dependable and honour one's word to demonstrate one's dependability. Colleagues and employers value having someone they can rely on to complete tasks on schedule. Similarly, an employee must act with integrity and reliability by keeping confidential any sensitive information that they are trusted with by the company, such as customer information or financial portfolios.
- c. **Respect:** Having integrity requires being respectful. Respect for others is a must, but there are other ways to express respect. Kindness is one way to gain someone's respect. Engage in active listening to show others that you respect their viewpoints. Colleagues should be included, inspired, and motivated. Their successes should also be acknowledged. Respect for one another is essential to establishing business partnerships. For others to respect an employee, they must always be kind and courteous to them.
- d. **Pride:** Pride and self-esteem are related. It can only be improved by having confidence in one's own abilities and self. An employee can

enroll in a course to advance the professional skills and boost level of confidence. Developing integrity and fostering career success are encouraged by feeling proud of one's abilities and the work one does.

- e. **Responsible:** Another facet of integrity is responsibility. People are more likely to trust and look up to an employee if he/she behaves responsibly. Integrity demands that one accept accountability for one's deeds and keep one's word. Being accountable increases one's chances of getting promoted and is a great way to demonstrate one's leadership abilities to employers.
- f. **Patience:** Employers respect staff members who have the patience to overcome obstacles and adjust to changing circumstances. Allowing others to speak or complete a task is a sign of patience. It entails standing by the colleagues and lending a hand with their tasks when one can. Even in a fast-paced workplace, patience demands a person to slow down, but it also strengthens the person's work ethic and demonstrates one's integrity.
- g. **Gratitude:** Being able to thank people for their assistance is a crucial component of integrity. It demonstrates the gratitude for the time and effort people have taken to assist someone. Expressing gratitude can be as easy as recognizing someone's efforts or thanking them in person or via email. Communicating one's gratitude to the coworkers is a great way to be honest. Additionally, it fortifies the bonds with them and lets them know one can count on each other.

9.6.2.2 Importance of Integrity in the Organization

People who understand the value of integrity in the organization are more likely to be truthful and productive. For any business to succeed, expand, and uphold moral standards, integrity in the workplace is a fundamental value. Companies and their teams can operate more effectively when individuals possess integrity. Businesses that uphold integrity have the potential to attract and keep valuable customers, reduce staff attrition, increase output, and make wise choices. Therefore integrity is important in the organization due to following reasons:

1. Helps in developing effective leader in the organization.
2. Helps the workforce to be open and supportive.
3. Enhances ethical decision making process.
4. Helps in diversity, equity and inclusion in the organization.
5. Makes the team stable and productive.
6. Helps in fostering trust in the employees.

9.6.3 Accountability of Employees

Accepting accountability means taking ownership of one's actions. Being accountable also entails accepting responsibility for one's job responsibilities and exercising initiative to take on additional work as needed. It entails owning up to one's errors and acting to correct them. Every employee, regardless of rank, is accountable for achieving pre-determined objectives. This necessitates that the worker honour their commitments and take appropriate action. When you go above and beyond to fulfil your own and other people's expectations and deadlines, you are being accountable. Transparency between management and staff is also necessary for accountability in the workplace in order to foster an atmosphere of openness and trust.

9.6.3.1 Advantages of Accountability in the Workplace

Accountability in an organisation recognises that each employee contributes to the larger wellbeing of the organisation. Each individual is directly accountable for their actions, behaviours, and performance. Creating a workplace culture of responsibility needs everyone to understand that their work has a direct impact on the work of others around them. It is critical to foster an open, positive interaction, and outlook in order to create this sort of work environment. As team members constantly demonstrate accountability and ownership in the workplace, confidence develops, resulting in a high-performing team.

Creating a culture of responsibility for the organisation and its people has several advantages. Many of these advantages jointly result into more significant benefits than would be possible singly. Among these advantages are:

1. Helps in improving the performance.
2. Promotes quantifying the work done by the employees.
3. Enhances confidence.
4. Promotes sense of belongingness.
5. Fosters interaction among the employees.

Check your Progress B

1. Define diversity.
2. What are the advantages of implementing occupational health and safety strategies in an organization?
3. Enlist important characteristics of honesty of an employee.
4. What are the important traits of integrity possessed by an employee?
5. Explain the difference between diversity and inclusion.

6. What is the fundamental difference between equity and equality?
7. Which of the following statements are **True** or **False**?
 - (i) Diversity in work-force improves the employee productivity.
 - (ii) There is no difference between diversity and inclusion.
 - (iii) Employee involvement ensures successful implementation of health and safety measure.
 - (iv) Accountability does not Help in improving the performance.
 - (v) Integrity helps in fostering trust in the employees.

9.7 LET US SUMUP

To sum up, ethics at workplace ensure that things progress well and the employees are satisfied. To guarantee that the staff is satisfied with their jobs and that they are pursuing the stated objectives, the company's ethics must coincide with those of the employees. The personal ethics of the employees need to be aligned with the organizational ethics for sustenance of employee satisfaction and motivation. Ethics is at several operational levels, namely, individual, organizational, macro, industry, and societal and international levels. These are unique and have their characteristic importance for the organization and the employees.

In the perspective of human resource management, business ethics pertain to the employer's duties to uphold equity and justice for all workers. Ethics in HRM encompass a range of dimensions, such as workplace safety, basic human rights, privacy, fairness, and respect, as well as treating employees fairly and using truthful procedures. HRM department will be able to effectively recruit and keep a talented workforce once they have successfully navigated the ethical challenges related to the work. Also due to growing competition that drives businesses to seek out ways to gain a competitive edge and boost profitability, as well as globalization's impact on organizational policies for operating in the global economy, ethics have become increasingly important in HRM.

Further, business ethics in the context of HRM have three important dimensions which play an important role in effective management and development of workforce. These are diversity, equity, and inclusion. An organization is considered to practice diversity when people of various backgrounds, gender, faith, educational levels, and community are recruited, selected, and given opportunity to work together. Having employees from diverse backgrounds helps the organization in several ways such as to improve productivity, better innovation, growing number of customers, wider employee representation, and higher motivation. Similarly, in an organization with equity, each employee in the workplace gets equal opportunities as per their unique needs, thus providing every employee facility and infrastructure as per their individual requirements. Also, such companies also advocate

inclusionary practices wherein people from different groups and stakeholders are involved in matters related to policy formulation and execution.

Yet another vital aspect of an organization is existence of suitable compliances regarding workplace safety and occupational health. These parameters also play a pivotal role in ensuring employee motivation and morale. These policies not only ensure workplace safety for people working in the organization but are also critical to the long-term prosperity and growth of the company. The companies must ensure adequate measures are taken to protect the workplace from physical, ergonomic, chemical, and biological hazards.

Amongst the 12 important principles of business ethics studied in Unit 1, employee integrity and honesty, and accountability towards the organization are again instrumental in the creation of a congenial and harmonious growth oriented organizational culture and climate. Since employees with integrity are valued by employer, it is one of the main principles responsible for forging healthy and constructive organizational environment towards enhanced productivity and sustainability. Thus, we have seen in this Unit that presence of ethical practices in an organization is essential for both the employees as well as the company to ensure long-term growth and profitability.

9.8 KEY WORDS

Diversity	: Diversity in the workplace usually arises from hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds including age, gender, faiths, and education level.
Equity	: The idea of workplace equity is to give each employee equal opportunities according to their unique needs.
Inclusion	: The degree to which a workplace supports the success of its diverse workforce.
Inclusionary Practices	: The policies and practices that guarantee the involvement of various groups and stakeholders in significant discussions, procedures, and decisions.
Occupational Health	: Occupational Health and Safety, is one such entity in charge of examining possible threats to the workforce's health and welfare.
Integrity	: Integrity is the ability to conduct respectfully regardless of whether someone is being observed or not.

Accountability	: Accountability includes accepting responsibility for one's job responsibilities and exercising initiative to take on additional work as needed.
Honesty	: A facet of moral character that connotes positive and virtuous attributes such as integrity, truthfulness, and straight forwardness, etc.
Stakeholder	: A stakeholder is a person, group or organization with a vested interest in the decision-making and activities of a business, organization or project.
Ethics	: Business ethics refer to the set of moral principles that guides a company's conduct.

9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A (i) True, (ii) False, (iii) False, (iv) True, (v) False

B (i) True, (ii) False, (iii) True, (iv) False, (v) True

9.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the various operational levels of business ethics and employees?
2. Explain different categories of occupational hazards?
3. What is integrity in terms of business ethics? Elucidate why is employee integrity essential in an organization?
4. What do you understand by “workplace ethics”? Why is it important for an organization?
5. Explain the dissimilarities between personal ethics and business ethics.
6. Discuss the role of ethics in Human Resource Management.
7. What is meant by diversity? Highlight its importance at the workplace.
8. What are the advantages of inclusion at the workplace? Discuss the steps to ensure inclusion at the workplace.
9. What are the occupational hazards? Discuss different steps to ensure occupational safety at the workplace.
10. What is meant by the integrity of the employees? Describe traits of the employees showing integrity.

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