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**Chapter Four: Diversity, Discrimination, and Harassment in the Workplace**

According to the text, diversity can only be achieved if it is made a deliberate goal by corporations and other institutions in society. Without clear goals and guidelines on how diversity can be achieved, programs that are put in place may not be as effective as they were intended to be. The text also identifies the need for more comprehensive affirmative action programs that can actually be effective in preventing discrimination. Affirmative action programs are, in some cases, simply statements that discourage discrimination but are not accompanied by real measures that can promote diversity. Firms that are looking to be more diverse are therefore required to have in place more in-depth diversity programs that require their employees to not just consider diversity when hiring but to take active measures to promote it. This view conforms to the views that most critics have on affirmative action programs (Portocarrero 1). Without effective guidance on how to implement them, they may not work as intended and will not deliver value in the long term.

The text also provides moral justifications for the use of preferential hiring programs that increase the chances of certain groups getting hired. Without effective affirmative action programs, discrimination against affected groups will continue, which worsens the injustices they have dealt with historically. Affirmative action programs therefore serve to address existing injustices by giving groups that have been historically left out the chances that they would have otherwise not gotten. Affirmative action programs, therefore, not only address past injustices but also prevent new cases of discrimination from taking place. This also conforms to findings made by other studies on the justification for affirmative action programs (Furtado 21). They are generally meant to address present injustices, not ones that took place in the past.

Courts have also found affirmative action programs to be legal based on the value they have in preventing discrimination and creating a more inclusive society. Affirmative action programs, if used to address racial and gender imbalances that have persisted for a long in certain professions, are legal and cannot be classified under employment discrimination. As pointed out in the text, the Supreme Court asserted that this is meant to create more balanced societies where everyone in a community has access to the same opportunities. College admissions programs that consider race have also been found to be legal, which means that affirmative action does not violate constitutional laws on discrimination. The text generally shows that affirmative action programs play a crucial role in creating more balanced societies that accord everyone the same opportunities.

According to Beauchamp, affirmative action and diversity are generally different concepts and should not be viewed as being similar in terms of the goals they can achieve. While affirmative action can lead to diversity, it does not in itself guarantee that there will be diversity. Despite this, most companies generally mix up diversity with affirmative action and believe that achieving one is achieving the other. Affirmative action can generally aid in achieving diversity if it is designed in the right way. Beauchamp also notes that corporations often rely on legality to determine what constitutes affirmative action. Their programs are, as a result, designed to ignore ethics and morality and instead consider what can be legally done to address the lack of diversity as an issue.

Sterba identifies the goals that diversity programs should aim to achieve if they are to have a community-wide impact. Key among these is the need for these programs to try to identify women and minorities who can take on roles that would otherwise be out of reach for them. This ensures that they know about the role and the fact that they will be considered if they apply. Sterba also believes that affirmative action can be used to address past injustices and not just stop ongoing discrimination. This involves trying to reverse the negative impacts that discrimination may have had on society. While those who benefit may not be the ones who were affected, the general public will end up viewing society as being more just.

Sher makes an argument for preferential treatment of minorities and women as a basis for addressing the long-standing discrimination they have faced when trying to access certain opportunities or positions in society. Preferential treatment entails reserving certain positions or opportunities for groups that have historically dealt with discrimination. According to Sher, this can have a more immediate impact on reversing the effects of discrimination. A preferential treaty would ensure that more minorities and women could access opportunities for empowerment in a wide variety of fields, which would go a long way toward addressing the challenges they have historically faced.

Based on the arguments presented in the text, without effective affirmative action programs and a focus on diversity, discrimination based on ethnicity, race, and gender will be more prevalent in society. The growing popularity of diversity programs is therefore justified and addresses a critical problem in society. Societies that are less inclusive are bound to have more social problems, with groups that are left out being more adversely affected than others. These problems can be significantly complicated and often require a great deal of resources if they are to be addressed effectively. Affirmative action programs can aid in preventing them by ensuring everyone in society has access to the same opportunities.

**Sexual Harassment**

The text also addresses the challenges that are associated with defining sexual harassment and what it entails in the workplace. While sexual harassment is generally considered to be a major workplace issue, it is often not adequately defined in terms of what it entails. According to the text, there is no generally accepted definition of sexual harassment, and it’s often viewed as encompassing numerous behaviors that can create a hostile work environment. Generally, sexual harassment is defined to include any behavior that creates a hostile work environment where victimization can thrive. The text generally shows that sexual harassment can be misunderstood in terms of what it entails and the impact that it can have on an employee’s performance.

Sexual harassment also does not need to involve illegal behaviors; it can include ordinary acts that may not appear to be harassment for most people. Some acts can be considered harassment even where the goal of the perpetrator is not clear, but their actions create a hostile work environment for the victim. The text also identifies the challenge associated with defining what is hostile. At times, certain friendly and well-meaning conversations can be construed as sexual harassment based on work policies that fail to define the issue in depth. This conforms to findings made by other studies that have shown firms at times create sexual harassment policies that are not detailed enough and can create confusion among employees on which specific behaviors involve harassment. A more in-depth understanding of what sexual harassment entails is therefore necessary for firms if their employees are to identify specific behaviors that can create a hostile work environment.

According to the text, the nature of sexual harassment has changed over time, and it is no longer as direct as it used to be in the past. Behaviors that can be considered sexual harassment are now less direct and involve actions that can be viewed as unwanted, meaning that they can anger those to whom they are directed. Non-coercive statements that do not involve a threat can, for example, qualify as sexual harassment. Generally, behaviors that are based on gender and involve unwelcome actions that are persistent can be classified as sexual harassment.

According to May, sexual harassment is often not condemned as strongly as other gender-based crimes. Men are especially reluctant to condemn sexual harassment and, in some cases, will try to minimize the impact it can have on victims. This is often the result of the absence of a more comprehensive definition of sexual harassment and the impact it can have on victims. Each case of harassment can therefore be viewed differently depending on the circumstances and the impact the actions of the perpetrator had on the victim. This solidarity by men in failing to condemn sexual harassment creates an environment where it can thrive. This ignores the impact that harassment can have on victims and their overall productivity.

Lesser and O’Donahue analyze the feminist view of sexual harassment. Based on this view, women are usually the primary victims of acts of harassment. It is mostly women who are the recipients of comments, advances, leering, and other actions that are generally classified as sexual harassment. This view also states that it is difficult for women to be perpetrators themselves, although it is not entirely impossible. While social structures usually tend to favour men, it is also possible for women to be in positions of power that can make it easier for them to harass men. Since men are more often the ones in power, they are, in most cases, the perpetrators.

In their analysis, Lesser and O’Donahue also point out the fact that harassment can have a wide range of long-term impacts on a victim. The fact that they are not accorded the respect they deserve is bound to make them feel less about themselves and, as a result, change how they interact with other people. Sustained harassment will also negatively affect their concentration, leading to poor performance. Sexual harassment also leads the victim to consider themselves mere sexual objects based on how they are treated. This can minimize other aspects of their personality and reduce their creativity. Sexual harassment, due to the emphasis placed on sex and the imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, only focuses on the fact that the victim is capable of engaging in sex. This can unintentionally encourage them to minimize other aspects of their personality that could have been instrumental in their jobs.

The text generally provides a detailed analysis of the impact that effective diversity programs can have in both improving the welfare of groups that have historically dealt with discrimination as well as making up for past injustices that they have put up with. Effective diversity programs can prevent new cases of harassment and enable minorities and women to take advantage of their skills and capabilities. Affirmative action is generally identified as a tool that can aid in attaining diversity if it includes effective programs and policies. The text also provides a detailed analysis of sexual harassment in terms of what it entails and the impact it can have on the work environment. According to the text, sexual harassment often covers numerous actions, making it difficult to have a comprehensive definition. Generally, however, it involves repeated unwanted sexual advances and can take place even where there is no major difference in power between the perpetrator and the victim.

Works Cited

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