

Social Justice in Britain's Workforce

UNIVERSAL EQUALITY FOR ALL RACES: MYTH OR REALITY?

Although racism has been outlawed as a social vice, racial discrimination is still one of the major ethical dilemmas in the modern workplace. Workers from perceived minority and "inferior" races are repeatedly subjected to unfair treatment. Employers in Britain still discriminate employees on racial grounds. Britain is a multi-cultural state; because of that, its workforce constitutes people from different races, which include British whites nationalities, Asians, Africans and people from the Caribbean islands. The non-British white people are perceived to be the minority races and are, therefore, accorded inferior treatment by employers. Although most of them are sufficiently qualified, they get lesser wages. As such, British employers have absconded from their duty to enact the Equality Bill and Race Relations Act, which guarantees the protection of equal rights and justice to employees of all races (HRM guide para.3). Emmanuel Kant, a prominent moral ethicist, argues that morality is a universal concept and is only valid if it strictly follows the universal moral rules. It is thus the moral duty of people 'to do good' in respect to the law rather than for their own personal gain. Morality is established on formal principles, and everyone regardless of their status, race, religion or gender, has an obligation to follow the maxims (Gallagher para.13). Thus, an action is only morally right if its product is the desirable goal of universal fairness. It, therefore, becomes the employer's moral duty to ensure that all the ethical practices at the workplace are geared towards the universal principles of fairness. In addition, employers should also consider it their moral obligation to treat all employees equally, regardless of their religious, racial, or gender background. This will be a positive step towards the achievement of the universal equality for races.

RESPONDING TO THE ISSUE

One of the most appropriate retaliatory actions to take into account in this case is the formulation of a code of ethics for employers to be adhered to at all times. However, such code of conduct has already been established and implemented. The hindrance to the realization of universal fairness for all races at the workplace is due to the human resource practitioners' lack of knowledge on the benefits of equality. Thus, the company should develop and implement a training program for its senior management officials, especially those involved with recruitment on such benefits (Henderson, Washington and Watkins-Butler 4). The training program involves a real life scenario where people of diverse backgrounds and skills are harmonized to form a working relationship that responds to global ideals. The core content of the training program should be as follows.

To begin with, the management should be trained on the provisions of the Equal Opportunities and Equality Act, learning about how to incorporate the postulates of the Act with the company's business practices. The training will inform them on the basic legal requirements for every British employer. Secondly, the program should have sessions to enable the managers to highlight their opinions on different races. This will help them understand the gaps in their knowledge of the legal requirements. Thirdly, the trainers should introduce a deontological theory on business ethics. This is the most important issue of the program, as it will help the managers evaluate the business ethics theory in application and understand how it can be modified to incorporate Immanuel Kant's views on morality. Training should be conducted not only among the managerial, but also among the employees themselves. The purpose of training the employees is to enlighten them on the company's acquired taste in business ethics and thus equip them

with tools to understand people from different ethnic groups and work with them avoiding conflicts.

Training the managers will help them not only identify the gaps that exist between the current business practices, but also the desirable universal expectations in the business world. As such, the managers will be equipped with the necessary tools to change the business ethics, which includes the Cooperate Social Responsibility practices. The traditional approach is to appreciate ethnic diversity as an effective CSR initiative that will push the organization towards globalization. This will help the firm to recruit, train, maintain, and even promote employees from different countries. These employees will help the local ones in obtaining specific skills and talents, which will be useful in eliminating the risk associated with global business (Kytile and Ruggie 9). However, according to Kant (Callagher para.12), CSR can only be a moral business ethic, if its purpose is to achieve universal equality. In this regard, the company should view CSR as teh means to achieve universal morality and the means for the company to benefit. CSR in this case can be a very effective tool in enhancing racial equality as well as following the legal provisions regarding equality and employment in Britain. The company should thus give equal employment opportunities, wages and privileges not only to British whites but also to the people from the perceived minority groups.

LIMITATIONS TO ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AT THE WORKPLACE

Gallagher argues that this theory is limited in terms of implementation, as it may create too much freedom in the society, and further chaos is possible (14). Those who oppose the idea argue that this is only a far cry of a “political correctness” at work (Henderson et al. 1). There would be an influx of immigrants seeking jobs in Britain, and thus unnecessary population pressure will be fueled. Furthermore, not all jobs can be

suitable for non-Britons. Some business ethicists opposed to the idea have proposed that what matters in a job is the qualifications and skills and not racial equality. There is also a threat that the organization will hire a less qualified and skilled staff in effort not be seen as racists (Henderson et al. 2). This is, however, far from being the greatest concern.

Several steps can be taken to minimize the challenges of equality and social justice at the workplace. There will be several activities such as team building activities and training programs that will orient the employees with inter racial relationships. To avoid hiring less qualified employees, the organization will highlight minimum qualifications for the job and discourage applications from those who do not meet them.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the categorical imperative is an idea that is slowly coming into prominence in the business ethics field. It will not only help the company to adhere to the laid down rules but also to the achievement of social justice equality in the British employment sector. With concerted efforts, cases of ethnic based discrimination at the work place will be kept at the minimum. The private sector will need to be more proactive in ensuring that all employees are treated equally. The organization needs to realize that a multicultural workforce will be more beneficial as it will equip it with the relevant tools for globalization. Dealing with racial discrimination, therefore, needs to be seen as a business asset rather than a human rights issue.

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