

## What is Unconscious Bias?

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What is unconscious bias? It is basically defined as Prejudice..... one has predetermined, unsupported judgements on a person....against or in favour of them.

In Rural Tamilnadu, people usually say that those who have “Fair skin” will not lie....

Such prejudice is basically unsupported and it is on any individual, group or a thing or on particular sect or society.

Is it good or bad in a workplace?

1. Unconscious bias in talent acquisition, promotion or performance appraisal is dangerous to an organisation
2. It defeats the purpose of Diverse workplace which enables an organisation to sustain and progress in any business environment
3. It leads to inequality
4. Stereotype feedback is another unconscious bias in workplace
5. It creates groups – societal, identity groups, gender group, etc
6. In India, this leads to discrimination, victimization and sexual harassment in workplace
7. It is an impediment to career advances of select few in organization..... it restricts right increase in salary or appropriate promotion or transfer from the current position

In establishments, so far it is not considered as an action which leads to disciplinary action..... Employers may consider this as a misconduct, as it is a barrier to progression of any organization.

Few types of Bias, in Indian workplace atmosphere are:

1. **Confirmation bias**: Forming an initial opinion, when you see a resume or first time you speak to or meet and determine yourself that the person is like that...

This is dangerous to an Organization the Talent Acquisition team has this bias and always forms an opinion and favour of their assumption.

2. **Attribution bias**: During an interview or during performance appraisal program, the person interviewing or assessing will falsely assume, on the unusual information or unexpected behaviour.....

Sometime this happens during sexual harassment inquiry, too

3. **Gender bias**: It is evident in many industries that male candidate is preferred than female for various reasons..... a recent reason is 26 weeks of Maternity benefit..... though Governments are making all efforts to avoid such bias, it is still not completely gone. Besides, the Government in a recent legislation .... Transgender Person protection Act and Rules, ensures equality in education and employment for Transgender too.....

4. **Age bias**: No industries in India are ready, even to consider those who are aged more than 38~40 years of age, for even Senior positions. Those industries forget that the experience they bring to their Organization will only enhance the progress in the business.

5. **Affinity bias**: Though this is not much practiced in Indian Industry in a big way, this also needs to be avoided. Such grouping mentality of getting along with only to those someone likes, destroys the Company Culture.

The above are major unconscious bias, which are practiced in many industries, during Recruitment, Promotion, Training, etc. This has disrupted diversity in workplace. Employer should understand that 'Strength lies in Difference and not in similarities'. Such bias are stepping stones for quid pro quo and hostile environment in workplace.

**Anandan S**

**Feature Writer, Skill Enhancer & Webinar Specialist**