Re-Enchantment of Workplaces Through APOGEE Framework
Evolution through Inclusive Leadership

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Abstract: The year 2020 brought with it an unexpected pandemic and disrupted countries, economies and organizations, of all scales and sizes. There is VUCA to a new order. As humans world over go through tribulations – physical, mental, and financial, the path to recovery and growth seems arduous. While organizations are prioritising business operational challenges, progressive organizations are also focussing on employee experiences and engagement. Leaders who recognize people's potential and look at harnessing this as a medium for future recovery are also keen on bringing back the magic, of re-enchanting their workplaces. And the role that inclusion has in this process of re-enchantment is potentially huge. As a leadership aid to enable re-enchantment, this paper proposes a behavioral framework called the APOGEE Framework. Cutting across the behavioral dimensions of being Agile, Passionate, Open, Genuine, Empowering, and Empathetic, this framework establishes a behavioral guideline for organizational leaders towards practicing inclusion. This is based on observatory research of leadership behavioral models at organizations that have been able to sustain an atmosphere of inclusion.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Embarking on the DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) journey, many organizations across the world have had fruitful outcomes. But some, hit roadblocks, unable to navigate further. People management, specifically that of a diverse workforce continues to be a challenge, even though the contribution to implement DEI strategies are active and live. Creating a sense of belongingness and driving in the force of inclusion does seem like a simple task that requires less or no basic investment. However, reality check confirms the requirement of both financial as well as behavioral investment from the side of leaders to help unleash the full potential of DEI. Implementing DEI principles through effective leadership strategies have resulted in positive outcomes in the past as well. Leveraging this ideology, the APOGEE Framework aims to direct organizations to foster a socially, culturally, and financially healthy workplace, by following the tenets of inclusive leadership.

In the times of industry 4.0, we can affirmatively state that we are currently surfing through the most advanced phase in history and enjoying the fruits of digital legacy. In these years of transformation, the organizational policies also took a new form by being aligned to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) concepts which have a proven track record of triumphs pertaining to the success of any organization that practices it.

To revive business from the impact of the pandemic, organizations require a strategic tool to re-enable workplaces that are both inclusive and strong. Towards bringing back and retaining a collaborative and sustainable work environment, we propose one of the established management strategies of Inclusive Leadership, a unique and recognized approach to fostering a DEI compliant work environment. We define the re-enchantment of workplaces as a revival mechanism through which organizations can bring back normalcy, activating the usual synergy and energy of the workforce ensuring greater employee effectiveness and productivity towards sustainable business success. This revival agenda aligned with strategic leadership approaches which are inclusive, enable managing the heterogeneous group of diverse employees effectively, with fair and equal treatment, which would pave way for a bias-free, empathetic environment, where employees find the space to perform and grow to the fullest of their potential.

Although, we are currently rowing through the trial phase of setting up sustainable solutions to DEI challenges, the

world is yet to ascertain the precise solutions to it. In this scenario, we aim to contribute to the purpose of actioning DEI through the APOGEE framework for inclusive leadership, designed by Avtar to help corporate leaders build conviction, adopt, and practice the tenets of DEI. APOGEE, meaning the highest point in the development of something is an abbreviation to six behavioral manifestations designed, based on observations on leadership behavior and exploratory research on inclusive leadership by Avtar.

EVIDENCES OF POLICIES THAT ASCERTAINED ORGANIZATIONS' EXISTENCE

Fostering an inclusive environment must be the result of implementing a learned skill. It is also important to know that it isn't just a theoretical model that can be implemented mechanically towards running a successful organization. It is rather a social approach we need to adapt, to accept everyone equally. To this end, the first and foremost measure is that '*the team of leaders who are on the front lines of communication during and after (this) crisis need to demonstrate cultural competence in order to deliver effective, informative, and genuine messages to different groups*' [1]. Though some of the components are already there within us, identifying the lacking agents and learning them to bring about a change is what everyone must ensure, especially leaders. A leader intentional of demonstrating people-friendly measures often add on to her/his skillsets, the qualifying factors, through self-education and sensitization. Since DEI as a critical component or policy started becoming streamlined in companies, many organizations in India Inc have seen and adapted inclusive leadership as a must-have to leverage comprehensive benefits. '*Research shows that teams with inclusive leaders are 17% more likely to report that they are high performing, 20% more likely to say they make high-quality decisions, and 29% more likely to report behaving collaboratively*' [2].

Now, what do companies that have created gold standards on inclusion, done to procure the status? Be it a leader or an organization as a whole; one may have to keep in check the trajectory of its people and culture to unleash the power of DEI. Let us look at some of the best practices by market leaders. These are best practice references basis a virtual DEI Conclave hosted by Avtar in 2020 - the '*Power of I*' [3] to ensure a productive and culturally fit organization. IBM's commitment and actions by the senior leadership team recognizing inclusive behaviour in the workplace contributed to creating an inclusive ecosystem which fosters the growth of diverse talents. Similarly, drawing examples from the Working Mother & Avtar Top 10 Best Companies for Women in India (2019), '*Accenture's commitment to a

gender-balanced workforce (are), strong advocacy for gender diversity by its leadership (team) and ensuring men play a key role in embedding a culture of inclusion, contributing to the success of Accenture India's market leadership standing in Inclusion & Diversity (I&D)*' [4].' Best practices of KPMG, '*particularly on promoting inclusive leadership, (KPMG) continues to have - Unconscious bias awareness programs, Leadership led speaker forums by internal and external leaders, Women leader led speaker forums to inspire,*' [4] etc. Evidently, these practices ascertain the role of DEI and the key component of inclusive leadership in curating the success stories of multi-national organizations which are in the forefront.

FACTORING IN EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON RE-ENCHANTMENT

The exclusive fact about DEI practices is that every activity should be unique and customized for that organization. The approach of 'one size fits all' framework will never count in as a strategic approach. Similarly, leaders need to implement customised action plans to derive intended results. A company presently lacking proper infrastructural accessibilities for people to work in groups, keeping in check the pandemic protocols, might need to pause their operational processes until the problem is rectified. If not, the employee experience of this could go downhill, where they might be affected physically as well as mentally, amidst the extensive measures taken as a part of the DEI agenda. It could be disastrous for the company culture as well as the business revenues. '*The best go beyond stating company diversity goals to also detail why these goals matter to the company's mission, how they embody and strengthen the company's values, and with what methods they can be achieved*' [1]. People have and are identifying prospective strategies to implement DEI policies to root-in in their respective organizations, and the HR fraternity is trained in the necessary actions to deliver a successful work environment. Leaders need to keep in check whether appropriate actions are taken in support of the employees and their experience, otherwise, the re-enchantment efforts could go futile.

Deloitte's report says that this may not be a systematic approach. '*Traditionally, HR has addressed issues such as employee engagement, culture, rewards, and learning and career development as separate, independent programs in individual silos. The employee sees the picture differently. Starting as potential hires and recruits, employees look at everything that happens at work as an integrated experience that impacts daily life in and outside the workplace, including overall

Figure 1: Simply Irresistible Organization^{TM} Model [5]

physical, emotional, professional, and financial well-being' [5]. Quoted from Deloitte Insights, Josh Bersin's Simply Irresistible Organization ^{TM} Model [6] is one comprehensive list of best practices that need to be understood. As per the report, following are the crucial aspects that lead to positive employee experience:

1. Meaningful work
2. Supportive management
3. Positive work environment
4. Growth opportunity
5. Trust in leadership

The Simply Irresistible Organization ^{TM} Model covers comprehensively, the essence of all aspects important in a professional environment. Josh Bersin, the acclaimed research analyst and founder of the leading HR advisory company Bersin and Associates establishes the above-mentioned five pointers as the core to any organizational structure and culture. The model crafted extremely in simplicity is expected to be practiced in an integrated and holistic way, in making organizations irresistible with regular check-ins deployed to assess employee experience. Explained below are each aspect of the model in detail, to demystify each of the components.

Meaningful Work: Every individual selected in a company is working for a reason, irrespective of the fact that the employers accomplish positive aspects of the employee experience goal. Each employee thus has a goal in mind to accomplish each day, to feel motivated to work and continue with the same rigor every day. For this, they need *Autonomy* to work in freedom. As a manager or leader, the success one achieves in this step is having the ability to give the right guidelines, to empower employees with the right strategies that will help them accomplish the goals through the best methods they can thrive on. The next important aspect for a leader is to select the right fit or precisely, the *Selection to fit* aspect. If an employer finds the accurate

member for their team, enabling them through the leader's capacity the ideal workplace, will help achieve a transformative work environment. Further, the *Small team* aspect is as simple as it sounds. The best the proximity and relation with the team members, the better the bonding and collaboration. *Time for slack* is nothing but preventing overworking by giving space for thought works. The four aspects combined lead to an ideal work environment, the major part of which is determined by a qualified inclusive leader.

Supportive Management: Strong leaders are the foundation of an ideal workplace. Their quality skills and influential potent can achieve high employee satisfaction. Strong leaders set *Clear goals*, prioritizing works and giving individuals the freedom to work, and empowering them with the required set of guidelines. Strong leaders are also *Good coaches*, who can provide reinforcement tools and strategies to bring out the best in their employees. In order to being such effective leaders, appropriate *Development programs* need to be conducted on account of building a strong leadership pipeline. The management support will accentuate the entire system when a clear and continuous *Performance management process* set in place for the leaders as well as the employees to thrive in.

Fantastic Environment: A workplace is often made engaging through various strategic implementation measures employers implement toward employee experience and satisfaction. This includes organizational culture - inclusion, work-life balance – flexibility, and individual acceptance – respect. Being *Flexible* is one of the critical factors that enable an employee to bring their complete self to work. This also leads the organization to be considered respectful of each individual's personal life, showing *Humane* consideration. This brings in greater contribution from the employees' side, giving a chance for the organization or the leaders to recognize the employees' efforts. Leveraging this opportunity enables the provision of

a *fantastic work environment* that is *Fair* and *Inclusive*, irrespective of the *Diversity* category they belong to.

Growth Opportunity: Professional growth is one of the crucial factors that employees look for in a workplace. Enabling this will help achieve most of the employee experience target towards building and nurturing a productive workforce. In organizations where growth is stagnant, an increased rate of attrition is observed, for the lack of career development opportunities for the employees. To avoid this, the employers or leaders must take crucial steps in providing facilitated *Career growth* with *Talent mobility*. Being a part of cross-functional activities and attaining new learning and skills would impact the talent development criteria, enabling the employee to feel productive, attaining *Self-development* through a *High-impact learning culture* of the organization.

Trust in Leadership: A healthy and effective leadership is the most critical factor discussed in the Irresistible Organizational Model. The success of any initiative related to employee engagement is attributed to the leadership style and the leaders themselves, for their strong sense of a quality-driven approach to all management agendas. From defining the *Mission* and *Purpose* to deriving effective outcomes, leaders need to build a good rapport with the employees in gaining their trust and respect. For this, demonstration of *Investment in people*, adopting a *Transparent* model of governance and communication is vital. Overall, they must have the capacity to *Inspire* others through their actions and retrieve the best results from people - All leading to building a transparent and trustworthy relationship between a leader and their employees.

'These open, collaborative approaches engage employees directly in designing a "perfect" employee experience' [5]. As per the key findings by Catalyst, *'45% of employee experiences of inclusion are explained by their managers' inclusive leadership behaviours'* [7]. Some notable efforts by global giants are mentioned below, the measures which have made them icons of inclusive leadership: Google *'invests in training for all managers'*, [8] to sharing key DEI data with senior leaders for a greater impact on inclusion and belongingness. Salesforce practices inclusion *'as a part of everyday leader-team member interactions'* [9].

II. THE APOGEE FRAMEWORK

Based on critical observations on leadership behaviour and exploratory research on inclusive leadership, Avtar has designed the APOGEE framework for this critical leadership dimension. To elucidate the six behavioural manifestations encompassed by APOGEE:

AGILE – Inclusive leaders demonstrate agility as a signature trait. They are observant and responsive to employee asks and wants. They are effective communicators who are focused on developing people and make intentional

'McDonald's BETTER TOGETHER: Gender Balance & Diversity Strategy' [9], is the initiative launched to mitigate gender bias and build in an inclusive mindset among the employees. Leaders' transparency in advocating for the cause had captured major attention.

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY: THE DIRECT RELATION

Inclusive Leadership is a transformational leadership style in which leaders demonstrate a heightened awareness of their own biases and are genuinely open to include and learn from diverse perspectives. What is the promise of Inclusive Leadership in challenging times? What can it deliver? Research has time and again established that diverse teams are more capable than homogeneous groups, of delivering innovative solutions. They are more profitable, and when employees work in an inclusive environment, they feel more engaged. The business case has been established – As per McKinsey Research, *'companies in top-quartile for gender diversity on executive-level had a 21 per cent likelihood of outperforming on profitability'* [10]. They also had a 27 per cent likelihood of outperforming fourth-quartile peers on longer-term value creation, as measured using an economic-profit (EP) margin.

In the context of organizational crises and VUCA, this can mean better risk management and pursuit of hitherto untapped, strategic opportunities. This can mean mining into wider revenue streams armed by a very engaged workforce. But to get to these positive end outcomes, to leverage the power of diversity, the path is one that is led by inclusive leaders. Inclusive leaders absorb diverse perspectives, are receptive of tangential, radical ideas and believe in the true power of diversity. They exhibit heightened awareness of their own biases, engage employee conflicts more constructively and drive home a sense of belongingness in their workforce. They promote agile ways of working, nurture ownership as valuable employee behaviour and are able to drive consensus in vertically/horizontally distributed teams. All of which can lead to very desirable organizational outcomes, given the times we are in! In 2020, researchers in an HBR article established that what leaders say and do makes up to a 70% difference as to whether an individual reports feeling included [11].

investment to learn about the complexity of their teams. As per McKinsey Research, for organizations to thrive in the 21st century, their *'senior leaders need to develop substantially new mind-sets and capabilities'* [12].

PASSIONATE – Leaders who are inclusive demonstrate a visible passion for the goal they are in pursuit of. They are purposeful in communication and show a deep sense of commitment to the cause of the organization. They are effective in creating a cascade effect of their commitment and passion across their employee canvas. Going by a report

in Forbes, passionate leaders take the biggest risks and '*help make the biggest leaps forward within teams, companies, and organizations'* [13].

OPEN – Inclusive leaders are open and transparent in their interactions. They are open to new ideas and diverse perspectives and are extremely self-aware of their own biases. They value honesty and integrity and drive these desirable employee behaviours across their teams. According to a 2016 Research on The Most Important Leadership Competencies, one of the top 10 traits, is being open to including new ideas and perspectives [14].

GENUINE – Leaders who are inclusive are genuine and demonstrate a high degree of trustworthiness. They are genuine in their values and vision and take a genuine interest in understanding their people and learning from them. Such leaders are looked upon by their teams for authenticity. Authentic leaders demonstrate greater purpose, practice their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads, according to the 2003 book Authentic Leadership: Re-Creating Lasting Value [15].

EMPOWERING – Inclusive leaders believe in their people and empower them to take on greater responsibilities. They are effective at delegation and drive their people to rise to the fullest of their potentials. They believe in synergy and intentionally invest in creating more leaders. Research has repeatedly shown that empowered teams are more productive and proactive, provide better customer service, and show higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to their team and organization [16]. This culture can only be created by an inclusive leader, whose authority, intent, potential and influence could give the employees the required freedom and space to perform to the fullest of their ability.

EMPATHETIC – Leaders who are inclusive are empathetic and also demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence. They are compassionate and put in their best efforts to understand their employees' journeys. By virtue of being empathetic, they have a better understanding of marginalized talent pools and under-represented groups and thus become effective allies and advocates. It may be noted that, in a 2019 global '*survey of 150 CEOs, over 80% recognized empathy as the key to success'* [17].

BRIDGING THE GAP: RELEVANCE OF APOGEE TO INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

APOGEE framework establishes the need for conscious effort, to inculcate comprehensively, the critical leadership dimensions that assure inclusion. Extracting the individual importance of each behavioural indicator mentioned earlier, the relevance of it in building the company culture and revenue through inclusive leadership is immense.

Any business model will require a closely-knit set of policies that assures success. The very first indicator of APOGEE, *Agility* is one of the prime aspects of leadership that ascertains a company's existence, especially in a digitally advanced era as this. '*Agile leaders pull multiple levers to build engagement in individual contributors—and they understand that engagement begets productivity'* [18]. '*A recent McKinsey survey found that nine out of ten executives ranked organizational agility both as critical to business success and as growing in importance over time'* [19].

Similarly, the psychology of motivation relates to passion one possesses. '*The critical role of passion, which we define as a strong feeling toward a personally important value/preference that motivates intentions and behaviours to express that value/preference'* [20] plays a vital role in defining the character of a promising leader. This, in turn, enables them to outperform their duties as a committed and *Passionate* individual towards the goal of inclusion and further company goals. '*By cultivating a strong sense of team and belonging, inclusive leaders open the door for employees to feel a greater sense of commitment and motivation to do great work and achieve success for the team'* [21].

Figure 2: The APOGEE Framework
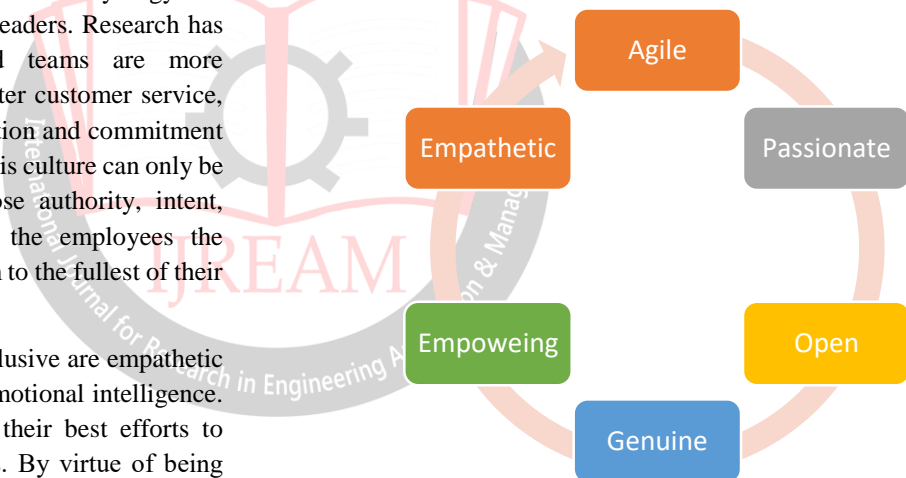
Openness and *Genuity*, are two closely aligned indicators with distinct characters that determine the quality of an efficient leader. Among the six signature traits of an inclusive leader by Deloitte, the significance of a transparent and open framework is well defined. '*Highly inclusive leaders have an open mindset, a desire to understand how others view and experience the world, and a tolerance for ambiguity'* [22].

Reaching out to trace the critical leadership behaviours by Catalyst, the study identified the key leadership behaviours that built in the aspects of uniqueness and belongingness. The report published in 2014 denotes the prime character of inclusive leadership behaviour as *Empowerment*. Among the six countries studied, '*empowerment was the behaviour*

that most reflected altruistic leadership—the leadership style linked to inclusion' [23].

Last but the most important, a direct enhancer of positive professional relationship is when a leader is *Empathetic*. Deloitte's research shows that *'the behaviours of leaders can drive up to 70 percentage points of difference between the proportion of employees who feel highly included and the proportion of those who do not'* [24]. Empathy, purely an innate trait, is the easiest of all characters any individual can portray. An inclination to approaching everything and everyone in a humane manner is the key to it.

IMPLEMENTATION OF 'I' OF DEI POLICIES: THE BIG PICTURE AND CASE STUDIES

Reiterating the benefits of DEI never gets old as innovative approaches are explored every day, and every day is a new learning. In her debut book, *The 99 Day Diversity Challenge*, Dr Saundarya Rajesh, Founder-President of Avtar mentions the same by laying out a blueprint for achieving this safety blanket for ambitious organizations seeking solutions to DEI challenges in 99 days' time. *'To maximize and leverage the benefits of the 21stcentury workplace diversity, companies will have to create a sustainable DEI model to not only ensure an inclusive environment within organizations, but also a powerful competitive edge in the marketplace'* [25]. Also, adding inclusion as a core leadership competency and behaviour, and the importance of a top-bottom approach for culture creation is well emphasised in this book. This culture creation and signature marks of one leader could influence many other leaders to follow the lead and achieve big wins.

Case Study 1: Apple Computer

'When Tim Cook took over as CEO of Apple in 2011 from Steve Jobs, the major question on the minds of investors was how Cook could match the performance of Steve Jobs—arguably one of the greatest innovators in business history. A passionate believer in diversity, Cook appointed three women to the executive team, recruited directors from underrepresented groups, transformed hiring practices and launched an annual inclusion and diversity report, which he shares with the public. In 2018, Apple earned $265.6 billion, the highest annual revenue in the company's history. The share price has gone from $53.39 when Cook took over to $249 in late 2019' [26].

Case Study 2: Johnson & Johnson

'Johnson & Johnson's commitment to diversity and inclusion has always been an integral theme of the company's Credo, which are the values that govern their decision making. The Credo was updated in 2018 for its 75th anniversary to explicitly make DEI a responsibility of all employees by providing an inclusive work environment where each person must be considered as an individual and respecting the diversity and dignity of each employee.

Chairman and CEO Alex Gorsky and all of his direct reports participated in a global sponsorship initiative which has resulted in 100% retention of all participants with a significant percentage being promoted from Director to VP. Over 100,000 employees globally have completed unconscious bias training, and the company continues to mitigate bias in their performance standards as well as their interview, onboarding, and development processes' [27].

Case Study 3: Verizon Wireless (VZW)

'Verizon has stated that supporting women as leaders is a Verizon business imperative. To support Verizon's commitment, and to help close the representation gap of women in leadership positions, Verizon is taking proactive steps to provide high potential women the opportunity to participate in personal and professional developmental activities. Verizon's credibility has been the catalyst for numerous diversity and inclusion skill building and personal development opportunities for women and culturally diverse individuals and groups. Verizon partnered with PRISM International, Inc. s' Women's Leadership Forum: Women at Work: Being an Advocate for Your Own Success™. This partnership lasted several years and brought this program to hundreds of women across the enterprise. According to PRISM, Women at Work: Being an Advocate for Your Own Success™ is a fast-paced, highly interactive session that explores situations women face in today's workplace while inspiring them to reach higher levels of personal effectiveness, growth, and development. Due to the success of this partnership, Verizon has been recognized by numerous national organizations and spotlighted for its' practices and employment records that benefit women and encourage their advancement to top management positions (PRISM International, Inc., 2013).

The leadership at VSW use collaboration, one traits of an Inclusive Leaders to help empower others and create the conditions, such as team cohesion, for diversity of thinking to flourish. The leadership was also applying their committed to diversity and inclusion because it aligns with their personal values, and they believe in the business case for diversity and inclusion' [28].

'Inclusion is something that has to begin at the very top. It is not a culture change that you should attempt with a bottom-up strategy' [29]. And only leaders could implant a change in the system, inspiring the others to take a step forward in bringing in similar changes. And this needs to be actioned through various layers of the organization, adopting appropriate methodologies and measures, reaching out to each and every individual in the organization. A report by HBR states, centralize strategy, decentralize implementation. *'DE&I work done through a top-down, command-and-control style rarely works. Yet, leaving the implementation to individual managers or units often leads to inconsistent results, where some parts of the organization*

end up with robust DE&I programs and others have very little' [1].

III. RE-ENCHANTMENT: CHALLENGES

As far as inclusion is concerned, it is, after all, a change from the prevailing practices, behaviours and way of thinking, in a workplace that lacks it. It needs to go through a controlled path as boxing DEI strategies to a must-do-list would not suffice for effectively carrying it forward or practicing it. Leadership conviction and commitment need to trickle down till the lowest grade of employees for the agenda to work across all functions, teams, and individuals. For this, a strong influencer with potential to initiate and action change is the pre-requisite. Inclusive leaders are not born but made. They educate, debias, empower themselves with the required set of qualities and win over the employees' trust. However, despite intense efforts, there still will be challenges to tackle given a business environment. In a virtual conference held by Avtar titled *Power of I* [3], business leaders and HR fraternity from around the globe participated to share and learn the best DEI practices. A session hosted for promoting the concept of self-allyship, or to simplify, being there for oneself was shared by two dignitaries. Among them, Ms Amita Karadkhedkar, Vice President – Site head – QA for a captive of a major global bank, revisited her past, walking the participants through the challenges she faced being the victim of unconscious bias. She opined that the binary population are compartmentalized for their transformation, where individual identity is ignored due to unconscious bias that drives people even today. "*So, behind the garb of inclusion, we need to cross-check, are we compartmentalizing the people? In all the organizations especially, who are driving or striving hard to inclusion forward, are they really working towards inclusion and belongingness or they are compartmentalizing the workforce?*" [30] Ms Karadkhedkar stated.

The factors blocking any changes to be made possible are manifold. One of the critical challenges to re-enchantment is the inability of leaders or the management to cascade the DEI efforts from top to bottom. Unawareness or little knowledge could impact the entire system to fail, regardless of any financial or human effort put in by the leaders. Be it an unconscious or conscious effort, starting from stereotyping, to religious beliefs, to supremacy ideology, the list extends in situations where people are not sensitized rightly on the DEI goals.

Another major challenge is a situation where DEI goals are not integrated and aligned with the business goals. Improper implementation without appropriate follow-up can also lead to failure. It is also mandatory to check the progress of the measures implemented to gauge employee experience as a leadership commitment.

Over the past few years, experts have already found solutions to these, provided the organizations root this to the micro-levels. '*Often, a pattern in diversity and inclusion is focused solely on underrepresented groups, which alienates those who are just starting to become aware and curious. But it's those folks who are probably the majority of your company. When messages don't resonate, it may be that the initiatives are too ambitious or lacking in authenticity. Start small, cut the jargon, and get more concrete'* [31]. Effective sensitization unless extended till the grass-root level, any attempt would repeat futile.

IV. RE-ENCHANTMENT: PRESERVATION

Forbes states '*transparency is critical to company success'* [32]. An inclusive leader is identified as the proven formula helping organizations adapt to diverse customers, markets, ideas and talent. '*Fostering an inclusive environment that accepts and celebrates social and cultural differences among employees is a long-term commitment. This necessitates sustained behavioural changes at the leadership level, which would serve as a role model for the organizations at large'* [33].

HBR identifies the key factors in converting this formula to an action plan. As per their research, visible commitment, humility, bias awareness, curiosity about others, cultural awareness, and effective collaboration are the factors that define a promising leader. Their analyses also underline the prevalence of two other aspects to preserve the office orders through the path of DEI and ultimately an inclusive, and enchanting workplace. They identify humility and empathy and perspective-taking as the two important factors that are a pre-requisite to inclusive leadership. The report states, '*when cognizance of bias is combined with high levels of humility, it can increase (raters') feelings of inclusion by up to 25%. And When cognizance of bias is combined with high levels of empathy/perspective-taking, it can increase (raters') feelings of inclusion by up to 33%'* [34].

Reiterating the various facets of DEI strategies, the core foundation or the decision-makers are what defines the entire structure. In the perspective of organizations, leaders or managers play a vital role in decision making and implementing appropriate strategies. Broadening their perspectives and establishing novel methods of approach towards a better outcome will take their respective organizations a long way with respect to people, culture, and business.

V. CONCLUSION

The world is witnessing industrial revolution 4.0. And the ever-dynamic systems are changing their facets aggressively. In this fast-paced world, the vision of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion will require intense focus to enable a seamless work environment. '*Organizations have an opportunity to redesign their work environments to ignite, amplify, and draw out worker passion within all of*

their workers—from management to the front line' [35]. Ideated based on critical observations on leadership behavior and exploratory research on inclusive leadership, APOGEE Framework could be the leveraging factor that will enable re-enchantment in the workplaces lacking it. It could be one of the crucial re-arrangement practices organizations could adapt to realizing their DEI agendas through inclusive leadership. As proven through empirical processes, this framework will be the way forward for organizations aiming to be the frontrunners.

The APOGEE framework begins with *Agility*, intentional focus, and responsiveness on both people and business goals, which can directly impact the future of work on both the cultural and business front of the organization. A highly committed and purpose-driven approach is what is The final indicator *Empathy* is one of the most significant factors that provide for the emotional security of employees as demonstrated by inclusive leaders. This has a direct impact on the inclusion of under-represented groups and diversity strands existing in an organization, the synergy of which is important for maintaining a healthy and rational cultural decorum.

Through its beneficial six dimensions approach, APOGEE could help organizations realize the literal meaning of 'apogee' for leadership behavior, which simply means the highest point of development, a sustainable approach to re-enchantment of workplaces. Looking forward, this framework aims to be the destination to leaders invested in nurturing the inclusion spirit in their companies. They ultimately become the champions of DEI, making their workplaces the powerhouse of talents, frontrunners, and innovation through the tenets of inclusion. As Martin Luther King, Jr rightly puts it, "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity". APOGEE will serve as an important behavioral toolkit to guide leaders to contributing to the inclusive big picture.

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established in the next important indicator, *Passionate*. The motivation an inclusive leader possesses matters in their professional journey towards building an inclusive work culture, inspiring others through their actions.

The next two indicators *Openness* and *Genuineness* have a common factor 'trust' associated, that drives greater involvement of employees, a value created through honesty and integrity of the employers or leaders. Leaders exhibiting these traits often find their teams in great rapport, executing their tasks at hand with autonomy.

The next indicator, *Empowering* factors in the delegation and guidance skills of a leader. This is an important step for a leader, to drive future leaders to be ready, throughout the various stages of their career development.

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