Inclusion begins at Home
It is important to unlearn as much as it is important to learn to be truly inclusive.

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Often during childhood, parents or adults at home with their well-meaning intentions set biases in childrens' minds. They could be as simple as adhering to be non-communicative with a particular community, religion or a sect. These conditioning statements or "biases" get set in our minds as if they were carved on stone and become guidelines by which we lead our lives.

As we grow older, these biases become rules. We judge others basis these rules and sometimes even believe that they are our value systems. Even when the so-called family-inflicted biases are no longer relevant, we unconsciously base our opinions on the pre-determined judgements that have permeated in our minds early.

Unintentionally and unknowingly, we human beings are wired with unconscious biases right from the day go! We tend to see what is different among each other and not seek commonalities. As humans we forget or rather nor make a conscious effort in accepting the fact that different people can have different perspectives. And, it is important to accept differences to be more inclusive. In fact, while in the corporate arena, leaders, managers and decision makers have begun to realize the importance of de-biasing and creating an inclusive workplace, it is at homes that most biases are prevalent.

It is no surprise that families disintegrate because there is no inclusion at home. There are different types of biases. Let us begin with understanding what a bias is and take a look at the different types of biases that have permeated in our society.

Bias is an inclination towards or against one thing, person, or a group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair. Unconscious bias happens when our brains make some incredibly quick judgments and assessments of people and situations without us realizing it. Sometimes people in their personal or professional lives, tend to lean towards a certain direction influenced by the unconscious biases, often leading to one-sided approach and impaired decisions. Our biases are influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. In fact, it is said that if you have a brain, you will have biases. So all of us have unconscious biases and it happens automatically.

Given below are some of the common types of biases that we unconsciously deal with in our day to day lives:

1. **Affinity Bias-** Affinity Bias refers to the predisposition to unconsciously prefer, advocate for, or help people who are like us, i.e. with whom we have commonalities or shared experiences. *For example, Tendency to take decisions to hire people from one's same college or same city.*

2. **Anchoring Bias-** Anchoring Bias refers to the common human tendency to rely too heavily on the first piece of information offered (the "anchor") while making decisions. *For example, the initial price offered for a used car sets the standard for the rest of the negotiations, so that prices lower than the initial price seem more reasonable for a buyer even if they are still higher than what the car is really worth.*

3. **Availability bias**- Availability bias refers to the tendency to unconsciously make decisions, judgements or assumptions based on the data/information that is most memorable or most easily accessible or available. *For example, after you see a movie about a nuclear disaster, you might become convinced that a nuclear war or accident is highly likely.*

4. **Confirmation bias**- Confirmation bias refers to the inclination to unconsciously filter evidence to support one's already held points of view and ignore or overlook new information or evidence that disproves them. *For example, when in a relationship, we usually tend to undermine things that we want to ignore, and overstate the things which we tend to see or form a conclusion.*

5. **Framing bias-** Framing bias refers to the tendency to behave differently depending on how a situation/choice is presented to us. *For example, during the elections, politicians may emphasize on the positive developments carried out by them to attract more votes. They may try to malign the opposing party, to put the opposition in a negative frame in the minds of the citizens.*

6. **Halo bias-** Halo bias refers to the tendency to unconsciously evaluate someone based on a single positive trait that we like in that person and overlook their shortcomings. *For example, sales people who are able to achieve the numbers/targets are often loved by managers for their ability to achieve tough targets. But behind the scenes, this employee might not be great team player or might not respect co-workers or might not be organized. But because they are good in one thing all other shortcomings are overlooked.*

7. **Horn Bias**- Horn Bias refers to the tendency to unconsciously evaluate someone based on a single negative trait that we dislike and disregard their strengths and potential. *For example, the administrative assistant who is great at everything but filing. It piles up because he puts it off – resulting in the company hiring a temp to get the filing caught up. In all other areas, he/she might be a great performer. But here this person might be evaluated on a single negative trait and his/her potential might be overlooked.*

8. **Negativity Bias-** Negativity Bias refers to the notion that, even when of equal intensity, things of a more negative nature, such as unpleasant thoughts, emotions, or social interactions have a greater effect on one's psychological state and processes than do neutral or positive things. *For example, when it comes to client feedback, we usually give a lot of importance to the negative feedback that we get. We tend to overanalyse and ruminate over it.*

9. **Projection bias-** Projection bias involves overestimating the degree to which other people agree with us. *For example, one thing that we have all encountered is when grocery hopping on an empty stomach we buy more food than we need, we incorrectly anticipate our future hunger preferences based on the preferences we held while making purchase decisions.*

10. **Recency bias**- Recency bias is the tendency to focus on "what has happened lately/recently" when evaluating or judging something. *For example, sometimes in performance reviews only the recent performance of an employee is considered during his/her appraisal.*

11. **Social comparison bias-** Social comparison bias is having feelings of dislike and competitiveness with someone that is seen physically, or mentally better than yourself. *For example, when siblings compare themselves to each other or when colleagues compare each other's performance.*

12. **Status quo-** Status quo bias is evident when people prefer things to stay the same by doing nothing or by sticking with a decision made previously. *For example, most of us prefer a particular brand for various daily essentials, like cosmetics, food and drinks, clothing, etc. Even though there is plenty of choice, people tend to demand a specific product, for years.*

To a large extent, all of us are all guilty of unconscious biases in our daily lives. The antidote to bias is awareness. A greater awareness coupled with practical approach can help individuals to overcome biases and create a more inclusive home and thereby society as a whole!

About the author

Dr Saundarya Rajesh is one of India's most respected thought leaders on Diversity & Inclusion. An award-winning social entrepreneur, she is best known as the pioneer of Second Career opportunities for women in Corporate India. She has been recognised as a "#100Women Achiever" by India's Ministry of Women and Child Development as also listed in the United Nation's "Women Transforming India". Recently Dr Saundarya Rajesh has been selected to receive the Prestigious "Winds of Change" Award by the Forum on Workplace Inclusion, University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. She is the first International as well as the first non-US-resident recipient of the Winds of Change award.

An entrepreneur who has created successful, growing enterprises such as AVTAR Career Creators, FLEXI Careers India and AVTAR Human Capital Trust, Saundarya has recently entered the Artificial Intelligence domain by setting up India's first 'AI in Talent Acquisition' company – Bruhat Insights Global. Bruhat provides cutting edge predictive and prescriptive analytics for selecting the right hire, through job selection patterns and career engagement insights via big data drawn from over a million successful job placements.

Widely quoted on women's careers, entrepreneurship and inclusive leadership, Saundarya is a highly sought-after speaker at conferences -- both national and international -- and a firm believer in integrating work and life. In her pursuit to develop and inspire people to grow to their full potential, she has made her debut in through the book – "The 99 Day Diversity Challenge™" published by SAGE that hit the stands on October 30, 2018.

US has said its first exascale supercomputer will be functional by 2021 that will be capable of carrying minimum one 'exaFLOPS' or a billion-billion calculations per second. 'Aurora' supercomputer, combined with artificial intelligence-based abilities, is aimed to be seven times faster than most powerful system built to date. China is expected to unveil its first exascale supercomputer in 2020.

A Karnataka boy failed his first-year pre-university exam after he wrote only about 'how to play PUBG game' in the Economics answer sheet. He had secured distinction in his SSLC exam last year but lost track of his studies this year after getting addicted to the game. He now has a chance to appear in the exam scheduled for June.