CAUSES OF RESISTANCE AND OVERCOMING THESE RESISTANCES A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Dr. Jyoti Prakash Rath

Lecturer in Commerce, Government Jr. College, Phulbani, Kandhamal, Odisha, India,
E-mail: lifeiscommerce84@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Change management is regarded as a structured approach of moving an organisation from present to future for the purpose of attaining the business objective. It refers to a process of adopting numerous business strategies and policies to cope up with the changing business environment in the economy. It facilitates transition of the present way of business operation to the desired way. The primary objective of this study is to examine the driving forces advocated in favour of change management, to identify various causes responsible for resistance towards change management; and to explore several techniques used for overcoming resistance to change. This is a descriptive study based on data collected from secondary sources i.e. Books, Research Papers, Journal Articles, Working Papers, Conference Proceedings etc. An attempt has made to present the data in a lucid manner for the easy understanding of the learners. It is an ongoing approach where resistance of individuals and organizations at times are expected. Despite of all these, steps must be taken to bring changes in the existing system which is essential for growth, development and a better future. Overcoming resistance to change remains always a challenge but not an impossible task. One should not forget the point that "Change is the only constant".

Keywords: Change, Change Management and Resistance.

INTRODUCTION

Change is the only constant. It is witnessed by business organizations from time to time. It is essential for a business concern for making required changes to survive and grow. Changing business environment works as a driven force for brining change in a business firm. If an organization fails to cope up with the changing environmental factors prevailing in the economy, it will through out of the competition. It augments the necessity of change in the management of business concerns. Change management is regarded as a structured approach of moving an organisation from present to future for the purpose of attaining the business objective. It refers to a process of adopting numerous business strategies and policies to cope up with the changing business environment in the economy. It facilitates transition of the present way of business operation to the desired way.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is
1. To examine the driving forces advocated in favour of change management;
2. To identify various causes responsible for resistance towards change management; and
3. To explore several techniques used for overcoming resistance to change.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study based on data collected from secondary sources i.e. Books, Research Papers, Journal Articles, Working Papers, Conference Proceedings etc. An attempt has made to present the data in a lucid manner for the easy understanding of the learners.

CONCEPT OF CHANGE

Change refers to the alternation made in the present situation for meeting a specific purpose. It may be made for changing the current scenario in to a desired structure. Change can broadly be classified in to three parts namely Evolutionary, Revolutionary and Planned Change. Evolutionary changes may take place slowly without facing much resistance in the society. Revolutionary changes may be made instantly in the economy. Such quick formation may provide aggressive result. On the other hand, planned change refers to the changes made intentionally as a means of alteration to the existing system for attaining the desired objectives. It is generally used in case of business firms where changes are made from time to time for augmenting the profit volume, turnover, employee morale and building image of the enterprise etc.

NEED FOR CHANGE

Change is required in a business to cope up with the changing business environment. It is always a challenge for a business firm to meet the expectation level of its consumers in the market. It has to bring all necessary changes in its product and services from time to time. Changing preferences of consumers, economic conditions, political interferences, legal restrictions, use of advanced technologies and globalized market environment may bring significant changes in the business operations and structure. The need for making changes can broadly be classified in to two different groups i.e. (a) Internal Forces and (b) External Forces.

(a) Internal Forces

Following are some of the important internal forces advocated for making change in the business:
(1) Need for improving Productivity
Change is required in the existing business to meet the growing need for improved products in the market. It motivates business firms to change their existing product line to improve productivity. Production efficiency can be improved in a business organization with timely changes.

(2) Need to reduce Cost

Cost reduction and control are an integral part of business objectives. Generally, business firms are adopting cautious approach towards managing cost factor. It has a direct and significant effect on profitability of the business. Some sorts of changes may do the trick in reducing cost of an existing business. New and innovative method and effective means of operation introduced as a change dynamics became helpful for overall cost reduction.

(3) Need for improving quality of Work Life

Change is Growth. Need, wants or desires of consumers are kept on changing over a period of time. Expectations from the existing products and services may get increased in order to get better results. Companies are to bring some sorts of change in to their products and services from time to time to meet the changing work life style and need of consumers in the society.

(4) Domino Effect

Domino Effect refers to the repercussion of an act or event which affects all associated entities with it up to certain extent. It is so named in the light of the circular arrangement of dominos where falls in any one domino lead to a complete collapse. Change is a feasible solution to counter such domino effect on business. Business firms prefer to make certain changes in their existing system to control and manage the domino effect.

(5) Deficiency in the existing system

Business firm needs to make certain change in the existing system to cover the loopholes prevail in the existing system. Changes in the current structure or process may help in repairing the damage caused due to the loopholes in prevailing business system. Inefficient of management, lack of specialization, centralization of authority, lack of coordination are regarded as the major loopholes in a business concern.

(6) To enhance innovation

Sometimes, business organizations bring changes in to their existing structure and pattern in order to bring innovation. It helps in improving and developing the business. Changes are to be made periodically in order to introduce new and innovative ideas for upgrading and updating the business.

(b) External Forces

Following are some of the important external forces work as the driving force for change in the existing system of business:

(1) Change in the market situation both at national and international level

Business firms are to make necessary changes in their business plans, policies, strategies, products and services to survive and grow in the market. Market conditions have a significant effect on the performance of any form of business. It is inherent for an organization to act as per the prevailing market conditions. Such market conditions may include issues connected with price, promotion, channels of distribution, market competition, changes in consumer behaviour and entrance of new advanced technology etc. Changes in market situation both at domestic and international level may increase the need of change in the business.

(2) Changes in Technology

Technology keeps on changing from time to time in the form of up gradation or advancement or innovation. It affects the nature, feature and quality of different products and related services provided

by different business enterprises in the market. It becomes necessary for the business firms to adopt the latest and updated technology. A company should replace its antiquated or obsolete machineries and other equipments with the latest advanced ones for manufacturing quality goods. If it fails to change its existing set up, it may result in business failure.

(3) Changes in Population Dynamics

Demographic factors consist of number of aspects such as population size, life expectancy rate of the people, age and ethnic composition, rural-urban distribution on the basis of population, income pattern, population density, family size, the technological skills and educational levels of labour force, social class of people etc. All these forces can directly influence the operation and development of business units. As a result of which, business firms are to make necessary changes in their business plans, policies, strategies and operational styles at times to face these issues.

(4) Changes in the political scenario

Political environment involves several forces such as political stability, harmony, vision of the party in power and its representatives towards the business. All these factors may affect the business firms directly or indirectly. Political stability and clear majority may be helpful in building the confidence of the industrial sectors and vice versa. This situation may go in favor of some industries and creates threats for others. In the last few decades, government took many initiatives to promote private sector in India such as abolition of industrial licensing system, foreign direct investment policy, monetary policies, industrial policies and other relevant acts. It is clear from the above that with the change in political philosophy and ideologies, business environment in the country can greatly influenced. Hence, it becomes essential to make all necessary changes to face the effects of changes in political scenario in the country.

(5) Changes in the Legal System

All the business concerns are abided by the rules and regulations framed by government from time to time. If a business violates such rules and regulations, it will be considered as operation of illegal business. These legal restrictions are amended as per the need or requirement by the appellate authorities. Business enterprises are to change their plans, policies, strategies and

entrepreneurial structure due to the changes and amendments in government rules and regulations. Company deals in foreign trades are to cope up with the international laws, rules and regulations.

CAUSES OF RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Resistance to change is quite common in case of people and business organization. It's not always easy to accept sudden changes in the existing structure and functional system maintained inside a business organization. There are different reasons for such resistance to accept changes in a business and by individuals.

(A) Reasons for Individual Resistance

Following are some of the important reasons of an individual's resistance to accept change:

(i) Habits and conventions

Sometimes, people are getting habituated of working in an organization in a specific manner. With the passage of time, it becomes a habit and creates a comfort zone for such individuals. As a result of which, some employees may ignore accepting change as it may require to move from their comfort zone and work in a different manner they may not be comfortable or affluent. Habits and conventions of people are one of the important factor responsible for their resistance to accept changes in any form.

(ii) Fear of unknown

Risks and uncertainties are associated with the business world every now and then. Due to this, people associated with business firms are apprehending about the unknown future. Such mindset and negative perception may cause threat in their mind about the possible consequences that may arise due to unknown and unseen future. It restricts them to accept changes in the existing set up of business.

(iii) Zero tolerance to change (Status Quo)

Some people engaged with business following a zero-tolerance principle towards any sort of change in the existing system. They are accepting prevailing practice as their Status Quo or Symbol. Ideologies of this group of people are of stereo type nature. They are not agreed to accept changes in any form what so ever.

(iv) Fear of Economic Loss

Possibility of Economic Loss can't be completely eliminated in any form of business. It is to accept by all the stakeholders of business firms that economic loss may occur at times. Some people may show their resistance and protest against bringing some changes to the business anticipating economic loss because of the change.

(v) Redundancy of Skills

There are number of employees working in an organizations are very comfortable with the existing system as it suits their skill and competence level. But when the organization adopts new and updated system of working, they may become unfit to perform as before. Changing business system requires employees possessing updated skill and knowledge which potentially they do not have. It may lead to through them out of the business being obsolete or antiquated. It forced these employees to resist from changes.

(vi) Egoistic Attitude

Some employees may have a different opinion about the changes made in the business. They may fail to realize the positive impact of change made in an enterprise. It may result in poor level of support and coordination from such group of employees in the organization up to certain extent. Egoistic attitude of these people is the primary reason for their resistance to accept change.

(vii) Peer Pressure

Workers are sometimes get over burdened at their respective work place and forced to perform under peer pressure to reach the target set for them. In such a situation, it may get highly difficult for them to accept new change in the existing work set up and to get themselves equipped with the changing dynamics. Hence, they may show their resistance to accept such changes in the business.

(viii) Emotional resistance to change in social groups

People living in the society and gradually developed their own social groups. They are attached with each other on the basis of emotional bondage and brotherhood. When changes occur and they are asked to work separately or at different work places leaving their social groups, it may cause emotional distress for most of them. It resulted in mass resistance from the workers linked with different social groups towards the change.

(B) Reasons for Organizational Resistance

Following are some of the important reasons of resistance of organizations to accept change:

(i) Constraints of Organizational Structure

Resistance to change may occur in some business enterprises due to existing organizational structure. Organization structure in a business enterprise reflects the posts, positions, authority, responsibilities of its employees belonging to different levels and departments. It shows the relationship between men, material and resources in an organization. People stood at different positions in the entrepreneurial structure may resist accepting change in the existing system.

(ii) Fear of the Unknown

Risks and uncertainties are associated with the business world every now and then. Due to this, people associated with business firms are apprehending about the unknown future. Such mindset and negative perception may cause threat in their mind about the possible consequences that may arise due to unknown and unseen future. It restricts them to accept changes in the existing set up of business. As like individual, this is also felt by the organization as a whole and sometimes may reject the proposal of change in the existing business.

(iii) Cost Involved

Changes in the existing business set up may certainly increase the cost factor up to a significant extent. Change of any type or form may cost more or less to the business. It depends on the financial position and planning of concerned enterprises to accept or denial of the proposed changes. Cost involved in bringing changes in to the business is a primary factor for organizational resistance. A business firm may resist towards bring in changes if not ready to accept the extra burden of expenditures.

(iv) Management's Lack of faith in change

Change can be seen as a form of internal restructuring of an existing business. All such decisions are generally taken by the Top-Level Management. Management may accept and reject the proposal of change as per their confidence level on the same. Lack of faith or confidence on the proposed change in the business may subject to denial or rejection from the top management.

OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Following are the important techniques used for overcoming resistance to change:

(1) Education & Communication

Creating awareness, educating people and effective communication are some of the important techniques used reduce the resistance of people towards change. When the people understand the benefits of changes introduced in an organization, they may not resist accepting the same. Nature, process and possible benefits of the proposed change are to be communicated to the people. Effective communication of all these aspects may overcome resistance to change.

(2) Participation & Involvement

There are some people resist to accept change in the business concern. It becomes essential to involve such resistors in a change programme. Participation and involvement of all such people in the new business environment will help in reducing confusions, chaos, misconceptions and most importantly resistance to accept the change.

(3) Facilitation & Support

Adjustment problems may arise in an organization with the introduction of change programmes. It may be difficult for some people to adjust with the changes in the existing organization structure. In such a situation, management should provide adequate support to all these people reluctant of accepting changes. Key elements of facilitation and support might consist additional training, counseling and mentoring as well as simply listening to the grievances of people affected by change.

(4) Cooptation & Manipulation

Co-option represents the process of assigning people some important role and responsibility in the change management system. Manipulation represents selective use of information to motivate people to behave in a specific manner. Manipulation is an option to overcome resistance to change but it is unethical and may create serious legal problems for the business.

(5) Negotiation & Bargaining

The negotiation and bargaining can be used an option to compensate the loss caused to some people in an organization due to change. They may offer better financial rewards on the conditions of acceptance of change programme. Negotiation is a popular means of controlling and overcoming resistance of individuals towards change.

(6) Coercion

Resistance of individuals in an organization can be avoided or controlled by forcing them to accept the change programme. This method is used at last when all other option fails to eliminate resistance of people to change. It involves lots of risk but helps in getting desired result quickly. Coercion may be of two types namely explicit and implicit. Under explicit coercion, individuals have informed about possible implications of resisting change while under implicit coercion, people are informed about the negative consequences for the business if they fail to accept the change. Threats of termination, demotion, loss of pay and transfers etc. are the example of

CONCLUSION

Change management is the systematic approach to adjusting and transitioning organisational processes, procedures, strategies, attitudes, functions or technologies from their existing state to one that is considered superior. It is an ongoing approach where resistance of individuals and organizations at times are expected. Despite of all these, steps must be taken to bring changes in the existing system which is essential for growth, development and a better future. Overcoming resistance to change remains always a challenge but not an impossible task. One should not forget the point that **"Change is the only constant".**

REFERENCES

1. Wayne H. Bovey, Andrew Hede, (2001), Resistance to organizational change, the role of defense mechanism, Journal of managerial psychology, 16(7), pp. 534-548
2. Lukman Susanto (2003), Organizational change, Resistance is rewarding with change, pp. 203-225.
4. Rod Farr- Wharton and Yvonne Brunetto (1995), Organizational relationship quality and service employee acceptance of change, a social exchange perspective, pp. 114-125.
5. Tim Wray and Martin R. Fellenz (2007), Communicating Change - Changing Communication, towards a Model of

Communication in Planned Organizational Change, pp. 245- 256.

6. Schraeder, Mike (2001), Identifying employee resistance during the threat of a merger, an analysis of employee perception and commitment to an organization in a pre-merger, Mid Atlantic Journal of Business, pp. 140-163.

7. Mohamed M.S., Kader M.A. and Anisa H., Relationship among Organizational Commitment, Trust and Job Satisfaction: An Empirical Study in Banking Industry, Res. J. of Management Sciences, 1(2), 1-7 (2012)

.

8. Kothari C.R., Research Methodology, Method and Techniques, Wishwa prakasham, New Delhi (2000) 13. Ashwathappa K., Organizational Behavior, fifth revised edition, Himalaya Publishing House, Mumbai, (2000)

9. L.M. Prasad, organizational behavior, edition 2004, Himalaya publishing house (2004)

10. Rath Jyoti Prakash (2020), ISC Business Studies, Kalyani Publishers

11. Rath Jyoti Prakash (2019), International Business, Kalyani Publishers