"MANAGING CHANGE THROUGH FOSTERING EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT"

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ABSTRACT--The employees in today's scenario have a powerful impulse of getting involved in taking decisions which may influence them. They are getting more and more confident about their knowledge regarding the crucial operational issues and they also wish for contributing their insights. The organizationsrequire to establish mechanisms for taking advantage of unique skills, creativity and talent which could be of much value when allowed to be conveyed. Involvement of employees in decision-making aids the individuals who are involved, to interpret the situation, persuades them that the organizational leaders are not making an effort to double-cross them, and alsoguarantees the utilization of inputs of the parties making efforts to execute and accept the changes undertaken. The purpose of this study is to explore the role played by EI in managing change. Possibly the best way to commence with the understanding that why the establishments require to work more towards ensuring the involvement of their employees in implementing changes is to examine the failure of change efforts. Hence, firstly this study focusses on the factors contributing to change failures. Secondly, this study focusses on establishing the EI as a means for ensuring successful change efforts.

Keywords--Change management; Employee Involvement; Organizational change; Participation; Resistance.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to a popular belief, the new economy would persistently confront an accelerated speed of change which is predominantly motivated by rapidly increasing growth and world-wide access of technologies, information and infrastructure based on technology besides the growth in world-wide infrastructure of transportation. Contemporary establishments are submerged in a virtual storm of transformation because of their endeavour to accommodate the growing needs of global and domestic markets (Chandler, 1993). Those organizations which fail to respond or adapt to changes on time expose themselves to dangers of losing vital workforce, losing market share, vulnerable shareholders support, and perhaps even closure (Rosenberg &Mosca, 2011). Hence, the primary challenge faced by the organizationshas been recognizing the requirement for undertaking change whereas, the secondary challenge and probably lot more compelling challenge has been to ensure the efficacious organization of strategies for change implementation (Self &Schraeder, 2009).

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Consequently, organizational change became a vital matter of research. Many of the researchers have described the basic principles of change, the ways of change management, and the reasons of facing difficulty in accomplishing the change. Despite of several models, theories, and approaches, the leaders of the establishments are deficient in a clear-cut interpretation of, and the potential to become involved in the steps required to successfully apply change (Armenakis& Harris, 2002). Studies have indicated that the main issue is the limited comprehension of the techniques of implementing change as well as the incompetence to alter the style of managing. Models, theories, and approaches may not incorporate enough guidance for successful implementation. Moreover, the ability of the establishments for attaining their change goals is also affected substantially by the resistance of change agents (Ford et al., 2008).

In today's as well as in the coming scenario, the organizations would develop gradually not by the way of random transformations but by formulating determined strategies intended for managing and leading change efforts that are foreseeable and are able to counter effectively with the fluctuating and uncertain demands of the market (Sims, 2002). Modern economy demands the acquisition of contemporary skills for discharging our roles and functioning together with other individuals in change management, and this calls for adopting new frameworks for fulfilling the demands imposed on us (Sims, 2002).

II.   EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

During 1960s, the participative management theories recommending the allowance of at least few tasks to the worker's discretion started to get eminence (McGregor, 1960). These participative theories of management suggested that the employees taking part in decision-making have more productivity as well as commitment towards the institutional goals. The doctrines of management which stress on participation of employees in decision-making and problem-solving incorporate democratic management, participative management, quality of work life and EI practices (Mackie et al., 2001). The logical development of EI initiatives is in the direction of considerable organizational flattening and, in numerous instances, the eradication of considerable amount of staff as well as support operations (Lawler, 1994). The approach of involvement relies on the notion that establishments should be devised from top to bottom for making sure that the employees are in their destiny's control and they are in a position to take part in the establishment's business. Fenton-0' Creevy (2001) referred EI to be an exercise performed by the employees of influence regarding the way their operations are conducted and organized. The programs of EI advocates that sizeable quantity of operations performed by the managers are futile as they directly reinforce a control and command management perspective that is unrequired and unfruitful in today's scenario when the employees have the calibre to self-manage (Lawler, 1994). The term "Employee Involvement" has a much broader meaning and has been described in several different ways such as the practices of "high involvement", "participative management", "high performance", "quality of work life", "work design", "empowerment", and "industrial democracy". It encompasses varied approaches to obtain higher participation of the employees in the decisions influencing their work.

Lawler (1991) viewed involvement as identical to participation and categorized the concept of EI in four elements: knowledge, rewards, information, and power. According to Lawler (1986), EI has been described by a

work environment in which all the workforce acknowledges that (a) they have the information about the business results, strategies, events, processes, quality and customer feedback , (b) they are having the knowledge and skills needed for interpreting and taking action on the information provided, (c) they are provided the requisite decision-making and problem-solving power in their expertise areas, (d) finally, they are being rewarded on the basis of individual growth, business results, contribution and capability.

Black &Gregersen (1997) described five additional aspects included in the rationale of EI programs. First aspect is the form, that extends from indirect form, which relies on representative or delegate roles handed over to other, to direct form, based on the immediate involvement of employees in the decisions influencing them. Second aspect is the structure, that extends from informal structures, contingent on open decisions and issues to formal structures, contingent on procedures and rules. Third dimension deals with decision issues that incorporate working conditions, task and work design, strategy matters, and investment and capital matters. Fourth dimension deals with the degree of involvement that extends from no information in advance at one and, through little information, to the inputs based on employee veto, opinion, and consultation, to the complete involvement of employees in the decision making at other end. Last aspect covered in the rationale of EI deals with the decision process and encompasses identification of problem, developing alternatives, choosing solutions, and planning the execution and appraisal after implementation.

Mainly, the decision-making scope and the power distribution may be considered as the dominant constituents of EI because in the absence of required power for decision execution (apparent in the form, degree and structure of involvement), the decision-making scope (apparent in the decision processes and issues) would be limited in general.

III.   CHANGE

Survival of the organizations in the present scenario demands the adoption of different structures and style of management in contrast to the approaches utilized in the past. Institutions are now confronted with challenges to be customer oriented, to be learning oriented, to be quality oriented, to be a leader in the technological innovation, and still to be a leaner and flatter institution. The norms of the environment have altered and so have the beliefs of management, organizational designs, as well as the courses of action for managing in these highly volatile and unpredictable surroundings. In a nutshell, whether in the past, present or future, organizations have to constantly make efforts towards making changes.

Change indicates the movement of an establishment from known position (present state) to an unknown position (future state intended) and this happens because the future of change is unsure and may deal with the competency, worth, and coping abilities of the workforce, hence could be resisted by the individuals until they are assured against the existing state (Cummings & Worley, 2019). The present scenario is facing an accelerated growth rate in the magnitude, timing, and volume of change. Herzog (1991)compared change with weather as both are found to be inevitable and advocated that individuals can make efforts to enjoy it, cope with it, harness it, or be fed up with it, but couldn't curb it.

According to the employee's perspective, organizational change may be seen as a crucial episode of an employee's life that could stimulate stressful reactions and further adverse outcomes. Since the organizational change has the nature of not being linear, the most common psychological condition caused by change is uncertainty (Ashford, 1988). Besides undergoing uncertainty, employees may regard change as a serious threat to their financial welfare, individual career paths, job security, as well as numerous intangible advantages related to their work domain like prestige, power, and a feeling of community at the employment. In this regard, March (2013) contended that the changes in the establishment generally indicate new statuses, personnel, salaries, goals, and methods, hence the employees who experience the danger of losing through the implementation of such changes resist them.

March (2013), described the diverse ways in which the resistance towards change may occur which are mentioned further. There could be a cutback in the contribution of the resisters to match the declined inducements provided to them. Many times, there could be a withdrawal by the resisters from the establishment; quite small cutting in the inducements may activate withdrawal provided that the affected employees identify much beneficial options outside the establishment. Undoubtedly, the withdrawals present opportunities to the establishment to employ new individuals having the value systems that have much greater consistency with the transformed structure of the establishment but there also exists a challenge of making the new employees build adequate personal connections, learn their functions, and become adaptable. The tenure needed for this incorporation postpones the establishment growth. At last, resisters could make direct efforts of convincing or compelling the establishment to abide by its prevailing structure.

Managing the establishment at any point of time may be troublesome, especially during the phase of executing the change successfully (Cameron & Green, 2004). The planned and cautious change management has always been crucial to the organizational survival and success. Change Management deals with equipping, preparing and supporting the workforce for effectively embracing the change so as to contribute towards the organizational outcomes. According to Moran & Brightman (2000), the process of managing change deals with frequently renewing the structure, direction, and capabilities of the enterprise to meet the dynamic needs of the employees, marketplace and the customers.

IV. CHANGE FAILURES

In this regard, Beer &Nohria (2009) suggested that majority of the organizational initiatives such as restructuring, new technology installation, downsizing, or seeking to alter the corporate culture have had less rates of being successful. They found that around 70% of the change measures fail and that only few organizations could manage the change operations in the way they want to. In a similar vein, Miller (2001) suggested that only around three initiatives among every ten initiatives crucial for the establishment's success, generate the return on investment as predicted by the leadership and seven among the ten initiatives fail in attaining the desired results. In such situation, how well the establishments are ready to thrive, change, and survive is believed to be an underlying matter of concern.

Sims (2002) suggested that the issue with numerous change programs till now has been the oversight of responsible change agents to blend people, process, and content. "People" indicates the emotions, spirits, behaviours, and minds of the people supporting, designing, executing, or being influenced by change programs. "Content" indicates the organizational aspects to be changed, like processes, technology, structure, and strategy. "Process" signals the way in which the changes in content and people would be designed, scheduled, and executed.

Many other researchers have associated the lack of success of numerous change initiativeswith a wide range of contributing factors like: absence of commitment and vision from the top management, badly planned schemes for implementation, limited unification with rest of the organizational processes and systems (Church et al, 1996), enhanced feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, ambiguity, and negative emotions among the employees because of the inability of the change agents to gather enough support from the employees (or establishment) for desired transformations (Sims,2002).

Among the most critical factors responsible for failed organizational change has been the attitudes of employees about change (Coch & French, 1948). The cooperation of the workforce is considered as an essential condition for ensuring successful change. Contrary to cooperation, that is resistance towards the change, could be signalled through hostility and quarreling, output reduction, slowdown of work, and negative attitude for the potential improvements (Lawrence, 1991). Resistance can be caused due tomany forces such as- political coalitions, individual inertia, prevailing cultural norms and values, individual and departmental investment in the existing state of affairs (status quo), motivation deficiency for amending the behavior.

In this regard, Granville (1996) contended that the failed change initiatives have surpassed the successes, and that the rates of improvement have been awfully low. Further, he asserted that the organizations are lacking much on the aspects of communication improvement,style of managing the change programs and other related aspects and as a result causing cynicism among the workforce about the change programs.

Similarly, Anderson & Anderson (2001) advocated that the establishments are devoting hefty amount of money on the change initiatives like installations of information technology, reengineering, still are not getting the desired returns on investment and as a result leading to enormous burnout and resistance, dropping of workforce morale, and turbulence in the organization's culture. Simply put, the managers of the institutions are becoming inadequate in their endeavour to successfully lead change.

The excessive rate of failure in the change programs has caused few researchers to come to the conclusion that the factors apart from those that relate to system-level and organizational variables are just as significant in implementing effective change (Devos et al., 2007). Schein (2015) contended that individual change acts as a mediator in the changes made in reward systems, structures, technology, and hierarchy. As per this viewpoint, numerous change programs turn to be unsuccessful as the individuals executing change underrate the significance of this cognitive-affective character of institutional change. Hence, it would not be enough for the institutions overcoming change to just make modifications in the structures, technology, or systems. The capability and urge of an institution planning to implement change and manage it successfully relies massively on its employees' commitment, openness, and drive to change (Armenakis et al, 1993).

Usually, the team working for change management fails to ensure the complete involvement of the individuals whose support is crucial for successful change and this failure leads to enhanced alienation and frustration among the employees.

V.   ADOPTING EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVES FOR MANAGING CHANGE

Notwithstanding that the processes of change have been conceived in different manners, the way adopted by the management to involve and treat the workforce at the time of change has gained maximum recognition and has been found to be a dominant factor deciding the reaction of workforce towards great changes of the establishment (Beer, 1980).

Organizational change has received a substantial regard in the business literature examining the adoption of EI practices. Particularly, effective change implementation demands for a facilitative approach of management which guarantees : (a) the implementation of communication mechanisms embracing information sharing, coaching and proper feedback are implemented, (b) the growth in the involvement of workers, and the support to social networks (Denning, 2005).

The situations in which employees regard that they haven't been referred to regarding the process of change, the chances of non-acceptance of both the nature as well the need of change would be high, signalling the poor adjustment of employees towards the event (Terry &Jimmieson, 2003).The positive effects of adopting EI programs on implementation and productivity of change has been advocated in numerous investigations by multiple researchers (Sims, 2002). Giving up control and permitting the employees to take part in decision-making causes productive outcomes.

Empirical evidence establishing the significance of involvementor participation of employees during the period of change in the establishment has extended over many research decades. Few of them are described further.

Lawler (1982) ascribed the productivity gains from adopting EI programs to enhanced motivation, communication and abilities of the employees, all of which aids in change endeavour. EI brings about positive outcomes due to the significant role played by it in minimizing uncertainty and ambiguity and enhancing the amount of knowledge related to the decisions. Cameron & Quinn (2011) advocated the building of an alliance of supporters for ensuring the social support needed for successful change efforts. Through discovering and inspiring these supporters at every organizational level, the chances of joining together to make change successful by the workforce enhances. For achieving this, Self &Schraeder (2009) recommended the establishment of opinion leaders in the organization and further contended that these leaders can be promoted to take direct ownership in successful change efforts via the adoption of participation and involvement programs in the processes of decision-making.

Kotter & Schlesinger (1979) contended that when the initiators of change make efforts to involve the probable resistors of change in matters regarding the implementation and design of change, the initiators could usually prevent the resistance. A growing body of research has suggested that participation gives rise to commitment, and this commitment is required to ensure successful change.

Lawler (1994) emphasized on the bottom-up change implementation and also advocated that for ensuring a promising start, the work relationships must be redesigned at the lowest hierarchy levels of an organization, and the supervisors must be retrained. He supported the idea of EI as EI deals with attaining considerable gains in the establishment's effectiveness as a consequence of adopting entirely new methods for work arrangement and new work frameworks.

Korunka et al. (1995) contended that the employeesperceiving great degree of participation at the time of new technology implementation in their organization displayed reduced degree of complaints about psychosomatic health besides reporting job dissatisfaction in contrast to those perceiving low involvement levels all through the process of change.

Prosci (n.d.) suggested the necessity for a structured approach towards managing change in which the key aspects have been employee participation, open and frequent communication, and devoted change resources.

Chirico &Salvato (2008) advocated that the most prominent strategy to tackle with the resistance of the workforce towards organizational changes is to ensure their participation in the process of change. Adopting the strategy of EI in the establishment leads to improvement in the bilateral communication besides delivering implicit signals to the workforce that they are beingtrusted and valued enough to be a part of the process undertaken to make decisions.

Lewin (1947) contended that just telling the employees that change will take place cannot be considered as a productive means for gathering their support to do efforts for successful change, rather, the concerns of the parties which would be affected by the change must be taken care of. He emphasized the significance of active participation of employees in implementation of change.

Dam et al. (2008) through his research founded noteworthy association among the resistance towards change and the three attributes of change process including participation opportunities, information provision, and trust in the individuals responsible for managing change.

Coch& French (1948) conducted an experiment to examine the ways to curb resistance towards change. They formulated research groups portraying diverse levels of participation. Experimental groups represented participation by the way of workers representation in planning the changes to be done, and total participation of all workers in devising the changes, and control group represented no participation on the changes. The findings revealed higher productivity levels of the experimental groups in contrast to the control group and summarized that participation in change programs leads to reduction in the resistance towards change or enhancement in the change acceptance. Resistance was found to be greater in the group representing indirect-participation and greatest in the group representing zero participation.

The probable benefits generated through allowing the participation of employees in change include enhanced readiness towards change, sense of control and ownership with respect to the process of change, and improved understanding about the state of affairs making the change essential (Armenakis et al., 1993). Likewise, it has been contended by Wanberg& Banas (2000) that by allowing the participation of employees in the decision-making procedure of change, their positive outlook about change can be established.

Overall, the findings indicate that if a concern is interested in altering the manner of managing the change in any way possible, then it is the need of the hour to augment the involvement of employees during, before as well as after implementing the change. The employees of a concern have always been the chief resource in managing the change successfully.

VI.   CONCLUSION

Managing the change effectively has been a complicated business with maximum of the studies advocating that 70 percent of the change programs prove to be unsuccessful to completely fulfil their original demands. A great deal of our earlier attempts in the direction of change management may not be suitable any more keeping in mind the requirements of the swiftly changing and complicated environment of today. The need of the hour is that the change agents should discover novel approaches to cope up with employee resistance and enhance involvement of employees in the change programs.

Change cannot be considered as a process which may be rushed or forced all together, instead it should be nurtured at the pace suitable for every involved employee besides the establishment at large. Flourishing change programs give the impression of being requiring clear vision, magnificent planning, and effective processes and systems in place.

For successful management of change in any enterprise, there is a need for metamorphosis in our notions regarding management, work organization, employment of resources, employee involvement, and leadership. As long as the change managers make more and more efforts to positively involve the employees in the change implementation, as well as direct the energy of employees spent in change resistance into experimentation with that energy, employees could more rapidly embrace new practices and methods of functioning cooperatively (Moran & Brightman, 2000). Enhancing the involvement of employees in the change programs indicates that the establishments should no longer restrict to a handful of people which are classically involved as change agents, rather make efforts to involve majority of the organizational individuals to ensure success change. Besides developing a critical mass, attaining highest involvement of employees in the change programs also boosts learning, adaptation, innovation, as well as the mentality of the employees as a change agent. In the end, it can be contended that through developing and reinforcing the involvement of employees in the change efforts, they gain the ability to influence the required transformations and bring about productive outcomes.

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