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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND MODELS.

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Abstract

The paper presents a critical review of popular change management strategies and models used in the organizations. Change management is a continuous process and it requires a sound vision, plan, time, skills, motivation, financial and programmatic efforts to implement the change. Effective change management is an investment and contributes in organizational development. There are several strategies and models for managing the change in an organization. Selecting an appropriate strategy of change management is vital for a successful and smooth transition.

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Introduction:-

This paper aims to discuss change management, its significance and some of the best models used by organizations to effectively manage the transition phase. The author has studied the three mostly used models adopted by organizations for change management and has critically analyzed these models. The first section of the article explains the importance and necessity of organizational change management and; second section reviews different approaches used for change management.

The term 'Change Management' is explained in the literature by different authors. For this paper the organizational change management is considered as the full association and what necessities to change. Change management is the process of continually reinventing the organization's direction, structure, and capacities to assist in the changing needs of outer and insider clients and environment. Generally, change management denotes to any strategy or approach that supports the transition of an organization and its team using methods planned to re-direct the use of resources, business process, budget allocations and operational methods to redesign organizations.

Today, strength of any association requires change management strategies at levels from practical administration to planning. The changing social and socio-economic situations are affecting the contemporary businesses. Similarly, technological development and working environment adaptabilities increase the need for the managers to be pioneers in the change management techniques (Burnes, 2004; Senior, 2002).

In today's work environment management of organizations strongly emphasize on the strategic changes that synergistically deliver benefits to the organization and constantly make them competitive. Growing companies have variable demands of progress, consequently they face resistance from top administration and employees (Aladwani, 2001).

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Change affects all organizations at all levels (Burnes, 2004; Luecke, 2003). This is generally acknowledged that achievements of organization in changing world is unavoidable (Luecke, 2003; Moran & Brightman, 2001). Furthermore, situational emergencies in association also incite need of authoritative change (Burnes, 2004). However, different authors also highlight the need to limit the speed of change, which should not exceed the existing speed of internal business environment (Balogun & Hope Hailey, 2004; Burnes, 2004; Moran & Brightman, 2001). Therefore, there is increased significance of organizational change and its management is acquiring skills for the managers and top management to implement change management effectively (Senior, 2002).

There are various types of changes that occur in organizations, some of these are collected by (Todnem By, 2005) as: Discontinuous change, Incremental change, Bumpy incremental change, Continuous change and Bumpy continuous change.

There are many reasons for studying change management for organizations and individual because change management helps in understanding the operating environment and establishes relationship based on the internal and external environmental factors; it also supports the organizations in setting competitive objectives, formulating practical strategies and implementing them to know the impact of change on external and internal activities and project. Managing change is also important for employees' productivity. Employees are at receiving end of change management plans, consequently their performance is vital for organizational growth. Therefore, implementing change management through training and establishing high performing work practices are crucial to build reliable organizations. In the globalized world, technology influences and supports organizations to engross the impact of varying information for deciding on the production and consumption patterns and subsequently, enforce change.

Literature Review:-

Change Management is important for the sustainability and growth of organizations (Lozano, 2013). The aim of the change within organizations is to progress from the existing state to a required state (Ragsdell, 2000). This range from small changes (Dawson, 1994; Doppelt, 2003a; Gill, 2003) to more fundamental ones (Dawson, 1994; Maurer, 1996; Meyerson, 2001; McGahan, 2004).

European Commission represents change as an opportunity, however it must be predicted, organized and well managed (European Commission, 1998). It is evident and widely accepted that failure to respond in new situations, opportunities, processes, or technologies can result in economic and social losses. Thus, the primary reason for organizational change is making economic benefits (Cannon, 1994). Annually, external factors and events force businesses to make modest organizational changes, and major changes in four or five years (Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979).

Different authors emphasize on various approaches on how to bring the change. Most approaches discussed are Planned, Emergent, Contingency and Choice approaches for adopting change behaviors (Bamford & Forrester, 2003; Burnes, 2004). Change management involves organization development, human resource management, project management and strategic change.

Organizational change is easily identified once materialized but assessing and setting a direction of the change during its on-going process is more difficult (Benne and Birnbaum, 1969). The greater success in change management is achieved through strong commitment from the employees (Lyon, 2004).

Organizations that take a selective view of issues are frequently incapable to address rising challenges (Lyon, 2004). Internal and external changes have different level of control within organization. Organizations have more control over their internal changes (Freeman, 1984), which enables them to be more practical. If organizations cannot predict and deal with external changes it makes them more reactive and reduces their opportunities and growth. The effectiveness of planned change is often related to the participation of members, at all levels of an organization, in assessing and diagnosing needed changes, and in formulating its goals and objectives (Benne and Birnbaum, 1969).

In any organization, change could take place in its different sections and functions, for example, in its operations, strategies, plans, philosophy, politics, behavior of personnel and teams. Often change is cross-cutting in all these areas.

Process of change management:-

Change management is an interconnected subject applicable to all functions in organizational development, such as, human resource, production, managements, procurement, marketing, finance and strategic management. Therefore, an ideal process of change management should involve all sections in the organization. The process of change management could be top-down or bottom-up. However, if change is initiated from bottom and stakeholders are involved then it results in permanent change.

Several authors and practitioners have discussed the change management process. For example: according to Beckhard & Harris (1977) there are three stages of change management process (1) The Current State, (2) The Transition state, (3) The Future State. Kanter at al, proposed three phases as: (1) Change Strategists, (2) Change Implementers, (3) Change Recipients. Grimley et al & Prochaska et al conceived the following by adding one stage as pre-contemplation: (1) Pre-contemplation (Unaware of need to change), (2) Contemplation (Need to change but no commitment), (3) Action, (4) Maintenance. In similar meanings Lynn A. Isabella's Model suggested: (1) Anticipation, (2) Confirmation, (3) Culmination and (4) Aftermath.

The best practice in change management is described by the USAID, it is divided into following step (USAID, 2015):

1. Establish a vision: It is the first step in the process of change management. It should be clear, simple and personally relevant.
2. Involve senior leadership: This step is critical for achieving long lasting change. The leadership needs to be committed and involved in the change process. This sets a motivation for the stakeholders and staff.
3. Develop a change management plan: This is the most important step in the organizational change management process. In the beginning of change management, a detailed plan should be developed. The plan should clearly demonstrate the organization's (a) Vision and goals, (b) stakeholders, (c) resources, (d) time-specific markers, (e) communications tools and strategy, including key messages, (f) metrics, (g) roles and responsibilities, (h) results from change readiness or risk analyses(USAID, 2015).
4. Engage stakeholders: Individuals are central to any successful change. Stakeholders' involvement in the change management process is crucial to reduce barriers in the beginning of development and it also resists to change(USAID, 2015). It also creates a sense of ownership (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006).
5. Communication at all levels: Communication is one of the most imperative basics to a fruitful change management process. Frequent communication should be at all levels to ensure transparency and feedback.
6. Create infrastructure to support adoption: Another importance part of the change process is supportive infrastructure in the organization. It includes the organizational structure, its Policies, Procedures and Systems.
7. Measure progress: It needs to be built in the planning process. An appropriate format or procedure that appropriately demonstrates adoption of the desired change should be adopted and staff should be trained to implement it. It is also vital to publicize the results of change management process throughout the organization. It will institutionalize change and reiterate its purpose(USAID, 2015).

Figure 1:- Change management process-best practices- adopted from the (USAID, 2015)



Popular Change Management Models:-

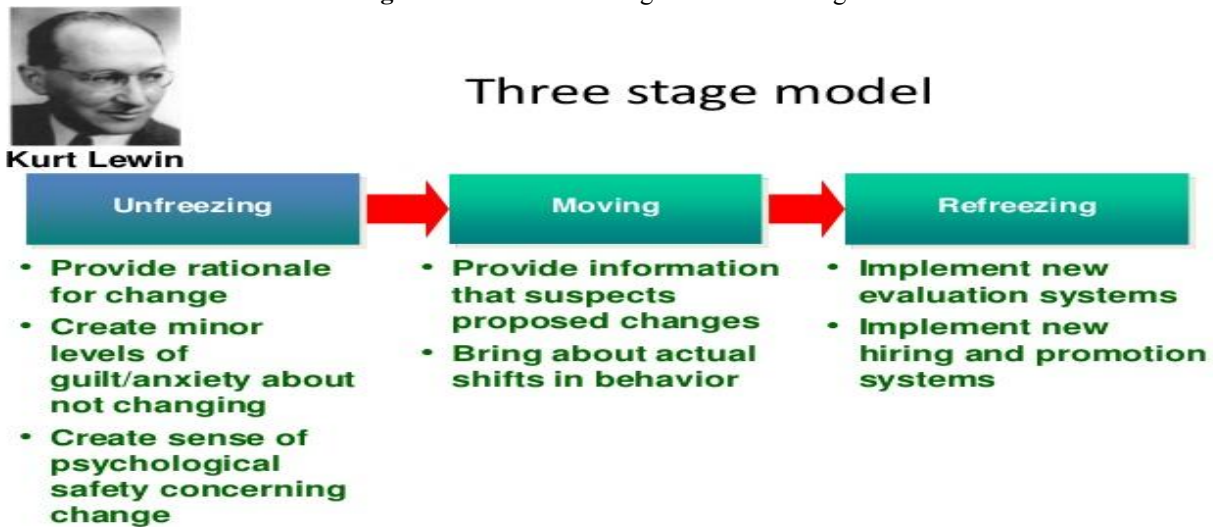
Organizational change management literature has various models and theories of change (USAID, 2015). In this paper three well-known models are discussed which are: (i) Kurt Lewin's model, (ii) Kotter's Model and, (iii) Prosci's Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement (ADKAR) Model.

Kurt Lewin's Model:-

In the 1947, Kurt Lewin anticipated a three-stage method to implement change. These steps are: (1) unfreezing, (2) changing, and (3) freezing (figure 3), (AMTCO, 2017; USAID, 2015; Fernandez & Rainey, 2006; Virtual University of Pakistan, 2017). His model is recognized today for its suitability in contemporary change management. The three stages are defined below:

1. **Unfreezing:** It is the first stage of change management process. At this stage willingness for change and acknowledgment of current state for change is realized. This stage aims to motivate the business for a change.
2. **Changing:** Second stage of the Lewin process describes the change. Change a time taking process. Lewin named the process of change as a transition. Transition is the internal progress of individuals or organization which occurs in response to a change. At this stage, the required changes are completed. Although, the changing stage is challenging because people and organization are uncertain about the change but it could be managed well if supported in terms of training, mentoring and learning from mistakes is available. Communication at this stage is very critical to share the progress toward anticipated change.
3. **Freezing:** This stage deals with setting up stability once changes have occurred. Once the change is acknowledged and accepted as new norm, people develop new relationships and become contented with their new practices and schedules.

Figure 3:- Lewin's 3 stage Model of Change.



Kotter's Eight Step Change Model:-

Dr. John Kotter has presented a change management model, which is based on his study of the several private sector organizations. He explains in his book titled "leading change" that the organizational change process is divided into different phases and it requires considerable time. It is not advisable to skip these stages because it affects the end results (Kotter, 1995). He has divided the change management process into eight steps in three phases which are mentioned in the figure 2.

Figure no. 2:- Kother's Eight step process.**Prosci's Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement (ADKAR) Model:-**

Prosci – It is a research firm developed this model (figure 4.) in 1999. This is a research based model founded on the change management cases of more than 300 companies. Managers use this model to identify employee resistance and then support their employees in the transition by creating an action plan for professional development.

Figure 4:- ADKAR Model.**A Critical Review of Popular Change Management Models:-**

The three change management models i.e. (a) Kurt Lewin's Model, (b), Kotter's Model (c) Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement (ADKAR) Model are most used models. Some of the key things in these models are creating the need for change, changing as desired with building skills of people and, sustaining the change.

The Kurt Lewin's model could be applied to explain change management phenomenon in societal, organizational and individual level changes (Virtual University of Pakistan, 2017). There are some implications of the Lewin's Model because the change can be focused, achieved and controlled but learning is a behavior and different people learn differently. It is not sure that the organizational change could also change employees' behaviors. Furthermore, change is resisted. However, this resistance to change could be resolved through planning, management and leadership. In the change process, the sequence of events has also greater impact on the product of change. Despite

the fact, that Lewin's procedure is significant yet, it doesn't determine how change is affected, or how to accomplish each stage (Virtual University of Pakistan, 2017). Change is also assumed linear in his model, however, in real life it is wavy. This model also considered that the future state is better than the current. Future could not be predicated, therefore; this model is criticized on assuming this notion. Furthermore, it is based on the cause and effect relationship and does not pay heed to the unforeseen events.

Another issue in this model is linked with its assumption of the end goal. People are not goal oriented; they value different things in life e.g. relationship, culture, their comfort and they change because of psychological or emotional reasons. The model does not reflect on their personal biases, favoritism, corruption, weak governance, systems and disconnection with those who planned the change process.

Despite this criticism, in the literature Lewin's model is considered to have pivotal influence on the behavior, learning and change management. Other models developed later also acknowledge Lewin's model and its strategies (Reynolds, 2015).

The best quality of Kotter's model is its initial two stages – creating a sense of urgency and creating the guiding coalition. Numerous organizational leaders reel into a program of authoritative change without having legitimately persuaded individuals which is prerequisite for change. Frequently, leaders or managers think they can drive the change by the force of their own identity, instead of captivating a more extensive group of individuals who realize the requirement for change. People sometimes have every one of the aptitudes and bits of knowledge expected to achieve effective authoritative change. That is the reason a change initiative gathering – a directing coalition as Kotter puts it – is so valuable (Reynolds, 2015).

Kotter's approach gives an extremely powerful agenda of the greater part of the things you must consider amid the change procedure. It helps many leaders to follow the correct frameworks and set up them before implementing the change. The need to make short terms wins similarly as individuals are losing confidence in the entire change process is likewise an exceptionally valuable knowledge for change leaders (Reynolds, 2015).

On the drawback, there are three vital downsides to Kotter's model. In the first place, it is basically a top down model. Kotter has a great deal of understanding of working with associations on enormous change undertakings, and most that experience is with vast enterprises. However, it is not very effective where individuals expect a more participative or bottom up approach to deal with change. Also, it is somewhat mechanical. Associations are not simply machines; they are groups of individuals. As an agenda, the model is overwhelming – as a well-ordered remedy for change. Even though Kotter's model is dynamic on starting change, however, it feels frail at managing the change. Its steps specifically do not give more details for sustaining the change (AMTCO, 2017; Reynolds, 2015).

The ADKAR model is founded on three phases and it deals with the process and steps to manage change. It is a goal oriented model and focuses on the activities for achieving results. The ADKAR model is more beneficial for integrating the management concepts in the change management process (AMTCO, 2017).

Conclusion:-

Nowadays businesses and people are operating in a constantly changing environment and adapting to changing needs and circumstances vital for the success of organizations and development of its employees. Change should be perceived as a new challenge instead of a threat. It should motivate and energize organizations and people. Change management is a cross cutting area in the organizations and it should involve all segments of an organizations. It could not be achieved and implemented in isolation. It should also be brought as a bottom-up approach for sustaining and ownership of the stakeholders. Each organization and individual are unique and have their own strengths and weakness, therefore; not a single change management model could be suitable or preferred for all organization. Effective change management is crucial for successful businesses. Change management is process that needs motivated human resource, time, commitment, structures and reinforcement activities. It is not linear process as described in the models of change management neither it directly progresses from present to future state. There is not a right or wrong model of change management for change management in organizations. Model of change management could be selected based on the needs, scope and application for any given project or organization. The most important thing to remember in the change management process is to communicate the need for change and

clarifying the process of adopting the change and diminishing the fears of individuals, because successful change occurs within the people when they make their own personal transition.

At last, it is concluded as there is no enchantment recipe or program of change management that fits all associations, though it is encouraging that the subject of change management is becoming more familiar and accepted for its worth and benefits to organizations and their stakeholders.

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