

Chapter 10

10.0 Barriers to Change

Taking a cue from discussion in chapter 2, one can say that there are four different types of barriers (or restraining forces) in a strategic change, representing physical infrastructure and financial, organisational and human resources¹. Out of the four, the first three are passive elements, while the last one is an organic element, which may actively resist a change initiative and therefore requires a better understanding. Before proceeding further on the topic, it will be useful to understand some other, related issues.

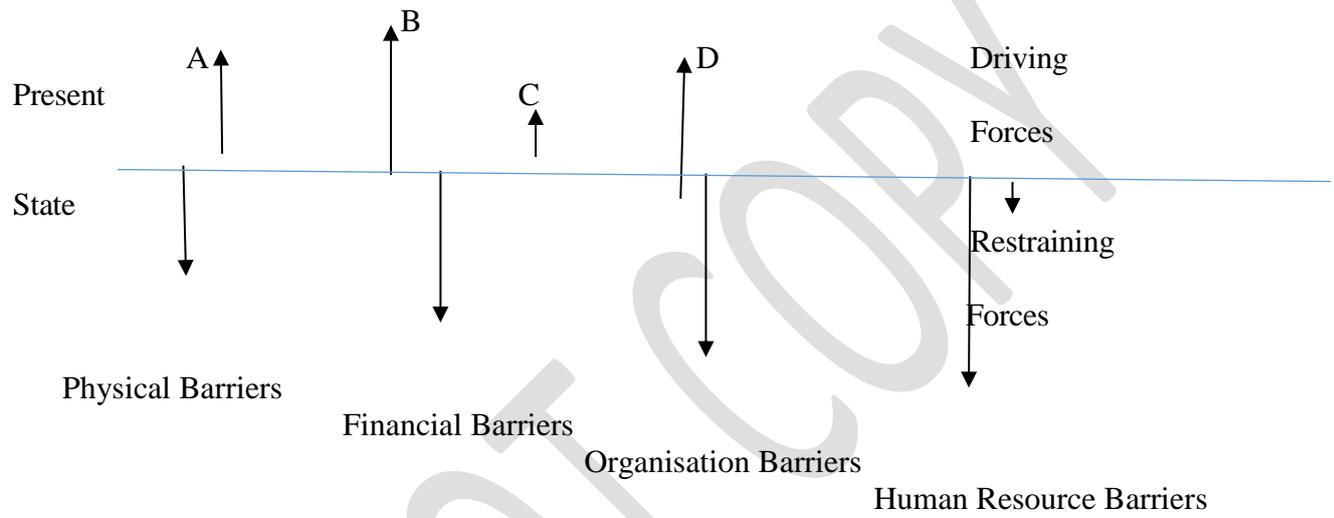


Fig. 10.1 Barriers to Change

10.1 Response to Change

The basic aim of making any change is to reap its complete benefits. It would be imperative to minimise, if possible to eliminate, any adverse reaction (called resistance) from all those, who are affected by the proposed change.

In as much as the word "resistance" connotes a negative meaning, and also the fact that change need not always be resisted, it would be better to use the word "response" or "reaction" having a positive, negative and neutral connotation.

People respond to a proposed changes in a variety of ways. Their behaviour reflects the reaction which differs from person to person, place to place and time to time. Possible behaviour patterns of people resemble a spectrum (see fig. 10.2), from active cooperation to active resistance. The response is determined by two factors, representing two axes, namely perception of change programme and magnitude of perceived stakes. If the change target sees change providing an opportunity and stakes are high, they actively cooperate. If they see it as threat and stakes are high, they actively resist. If they find neither an opportunity nor threat, they are indifferent. The level of active or passive cooperation or resistance depends upon magnitude of perceived stakes.

The intensity of reaction to a change programme is determined by the perceived stakes of the members of the change target. If the perceived stakes are high in terms of opportunities, the response is more in terms of acceptance. If on the other hand, the perceived stakes are high in

terms of threats (of deprivation) resistance to change will increase. If perceived stakes are negligible, indifference will be noticed. The success of the changed agent thus has in how much he could increase the component of opportunities and develop ways and means to reduce threats of change, to critical mass of the organisation, to effect the change.

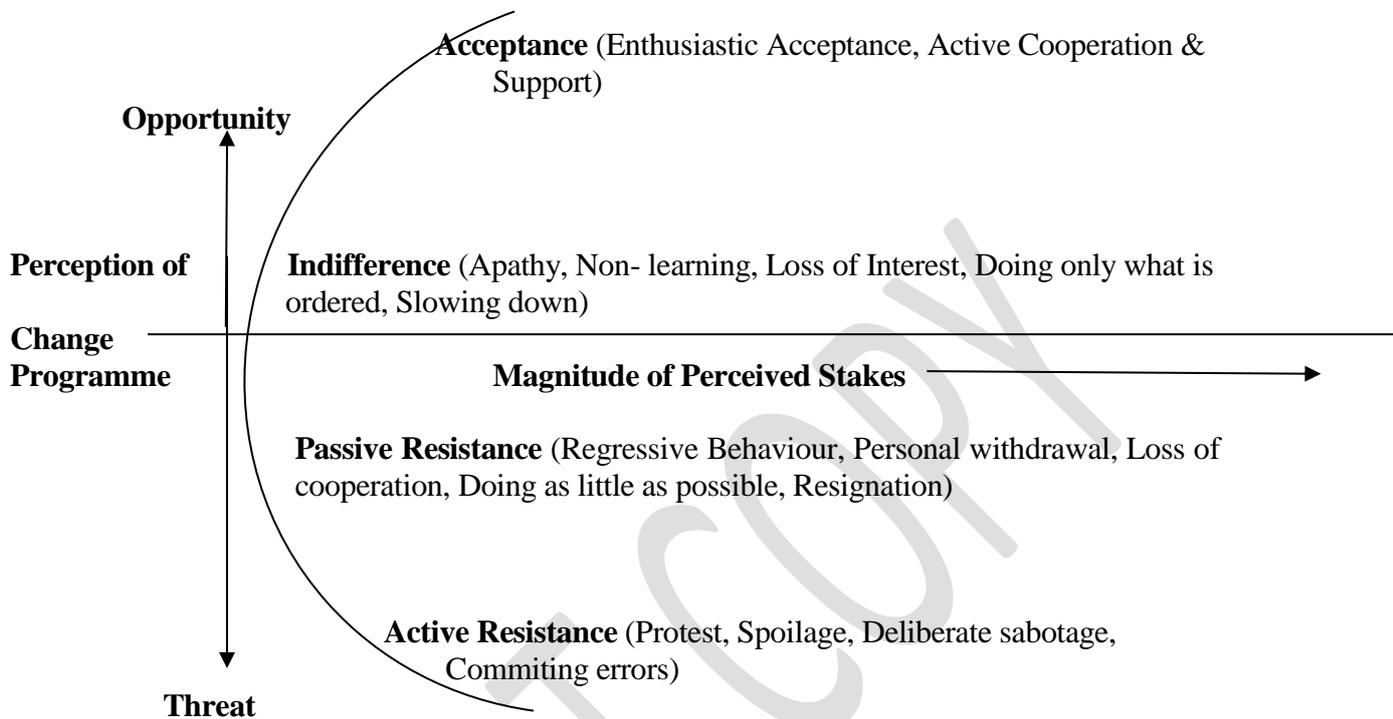


Fig.10.2 Responses to Change Programmes

10.2 Meaning of a Change to Change Target

The reaction of individual to a change programme depends upon the meaning he attaches to it, as he sees it, as he feels affected by it. The difference in meaning that different set of people attach to the same change programme is often of astonishing order and comes as a shock to the change agent and/or clientele. In an organization a new personnel officer was recruited for developing HRD plan. The Chairman, realising the importance of first exercise, attached the officer to his own office. As this was the first exercise and certain key data for developing HRD plan was not available, the officer designed and administered a questionnaire to the staff to develop personnel inventory. He got a jolt when he came to know that all powerful staff union president had issued a circular to all the staff member asking them to refrain from furnishing the information. Shattered with a total loss of the very foundation exercise on which he was to develop HRD plan, he almost prepared for resigning. When he happened to meet the president of staff union and enquired the reason for such a hostile action on the latter's part, he was stunned to know that the union had considered this a managerial action to locate the trouble makers for "suitable action" like transferring, changing job etc.

Ability to see through the meaning that individuals and group attach to a change programme helps considerably in identifying the power of restraining forces and in containing the pent up resistance (see section 10.7) on one hand and dealing with resistance to change on the other. These meanings can be represented in terms of barriers to change.

10.3 Barriers vs. Resistance to Change

In the discussions on management of change mostly the word "Resistance" or "Reaction" has been used to represent the difficulties in effecting change. Though it captures a major part of the difficulties, it does not represent the hurdles which are not the forces of opposition to be overcome. For example the organisation having sunk a good fortune in a technology may find it extremely difficult to switchover to another technology quickly. Difficulties in arranging financial resources or designing organisational resources are also hurdles or barriers, which are not resistance to change. The phenomenon of hurdles can be captured better in terms of barriers to change than resistance to change. It may, therefore, be more appropriate to use the word "barriers and resistance" to change, to represent the problems that make effecting the change a difficult task, some of them are more akin to hurdles and some lead to manifestation in terms of "resistance" to change as in general parlance.

The barriers and resistance to change are of various types^{2,3,4}. They can be classified into four major categories, namely:

10.4 Sources of Barriers and Resistance to Change

A more comprehensive picture on challenge of managing strategic change is shown if the barriers to change and resistance change models are integrated into one as shown in the fig.10.3

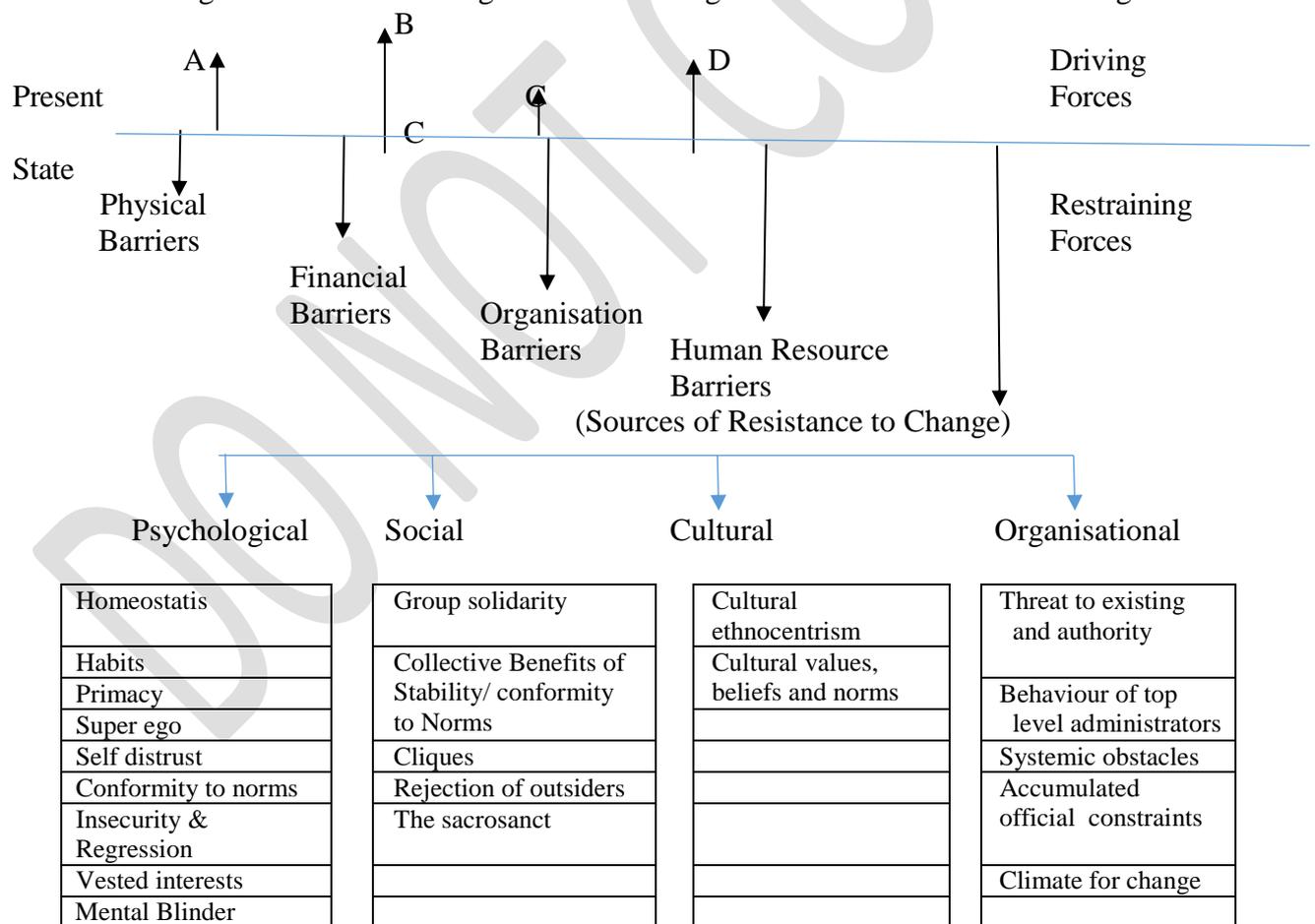


Fig. 10.3 Sources of Barriers and Resistance to Change

It is necessary to elaborate a bit on resistance to change. Zaltman in his seminal work has identified several key sources of resistance to change, classifying them into four broad

categories; namely psychological, social, cultural and organisational. Zaltman called them as barriers, but the word “barriers” has much wider connotation (as mentioned earlier) which includes physical infrastructure, financial and organisational resources hurdles also, rather than being limited to human resource issues only.

The total number of key sources of resistance pointed by Zaltman are twenty one (see fig.10.3) To this if one adds resource and infrastructure constraints, the total number of possible barriers in a strategic change could run as high as twenty four. If one considers (multiple) group resistance issues, the challenge of managing strategic change becomes truly formidable, making the task of strategy implementation a complex and difficult one to comprehend and execute.

10.5 Modes of Resistance

The resistance could be individual or group resistance. The latter is more challenging to manage. The challenge depends upon the size, diversity and other traits of the group. The problem gets further complicated if there are multiple groups with varied backgrounds, ideologies, manifestoes and open or hidden agendas⁵.

The resistance could be active, in the form of protests, demonstrations etc. or passive. The latter becomes more difficult to gauge and manage as the change target’s moves and actions are not open and visible. It is realised from behaviour. The change target does not act as expected or ordered and extends convincing excuses about why things could not be done, but they do it post facto.

10.6 Decision-room Resistance Techniques

There is another very powerful mode of resistance, called “decision room resistance” to change⁶, in which the proposals of change are blocked by powerful groups through various methods like creation of false obstacles by false arguments, using false analogies to justify activity trap, as shown in table 10.1

The manifestation of the resistance to change from the change target will vary depending upon the sect of the group affected. It is necessary to distinguish two different sects of target groups resisting a proposal to change. One of these comprise of those who are members of the group taking decisions on the change proposal. The other comprises those who are not involved in the decision making process. Those who are in the former category and opposed to the change, often resist the change in quite subtle ways, unlike physical manifestation of resistance by those who form the non-decision making group. The decision room resistance to change is far more important and powerful. The modus-operandi is to deviate the attention from the merit of the change programme by not letting it be understood and appreciated⁷. The techniques of such resistance are shown in table 10.1.

Sometimes false obstacles are created to forestall the consideration of the change proposal on its points of merits, by citing issues/ giving arguments whose veracity is difficult to establish on the spot, by creating doubts about the intention of the change agent, or making suggestion for suspending it for the time being (letting the proposal die its natural death). The other powerful method is using false analogies to continue with the current ways. This is because people at times think in terms of analogy (using personal experience as an analogy, direct analogy, imaginary analogy, symbolic analogy etc.)

Table 10.1
Decision Room Resistance to Change

	Creation of false obstacles by false arguments	Using false analogies to justify activity trap
a	False appeal to authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using tables/ analysis to psyche/ influence - Printed statements - Quotations /footnotes - Muscles of one's professional status - Weight of resources sunk - Invoked authority of masses - "King's ear" approach to winning argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fallacy of false metaphor - Fallacy of over exactness in analogy - Structurally false analogy - Fallacy of lost relevance - Fallacy of smuggled in comparison - Fallacy of using analogy as proof - Fallacy of futurism by analogy
b	Winning argument by attacking the change agent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attack on motives - "Considering his problems, it is understandable" - " Your friends there might like it" 	
c	Arguing to times gone by or times coming by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citing traditions (to carry errors of past). - Argument of stability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Argument to novelty (but suppose... ..happens) 	
d	A rogues gallery of managerial fallacies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appeals to gradualism's/moderation - Appeals to perfection's 	

The change agent has to analyse the characteristic of the decision room members and understand their mindsets to anticipate the kind of obstacle they are likely to put forward for determent or killing the proposal. He then prepares the counter logic, backed up by data and mobilise support of the members who have experience of dealing with the situation, to counter such resistances.

10.7 Pent-up Resistance to Change

It may be necessary to add here that resistance does not come due only to these barriers but also the way a change is introduced. Keeping the change target in dark about the purpose and rationale and not seeking their views in itself may lead to resistance to change in terms of pelt up grievances⁸. This kind of resistance to change is not due to barriers to change, and is uncalled for and avoidable. It is necessary to avoid and reduce this "pent up" resistance by:

- (a) Involving people (elicit participation/views of relevant change target) in the change process. In any case this is imperative for institutionalizing the change (freezing).
- (b) Ensuring proper communication, using understandable terms for relevant target group.
- (c) Avoiding self preoccupation in terms of obsession with technical details, (forgetting what it means to people) and rationalistic biases.

- (d) Avoiding assuming that resistance is inevitable, may be nothing
- (e) Broadening the staff interest; by projecting the change as "their baby," they will benefit not the change agent or change clientele alone.

It may be noted that unfreezing is generally associated with anxieties and one has to be extremely careful in attempting global unfreezing as the strains of anxieties may unnecessarily lead to exit behaviour which may have serious, adverse effect on the performance of the organisation during transition period. A major change programme phased out in a set of minor change programme provides a useful device for controlled unfreezing.

The resistance to change comes from some of the barriers to change, when people find it difficult to cross the hurdles while they are forced to do it. The way to overcome such resistance to change is to remove/reduce these hurdles or barriers or enable people to come through them. We shall discuss the approaches to overcome these barriers in the next section.

10.8 Managing Strategic Change: The Challenge of (New) Learning and Relearning

One of the challenges in many change situations is managing “(new) learning” and “relearning”, both at individual and organisation levels. The incidence of (new) learning/ relearning varies from situation to situation. For example, in expansion strategy the relearning challenge is less as more or less the same business is to be carried out in the same way, albeit at a larger scale. It may require some relearning in terms of handling a bit varied customer base, through additional/ new distribution network of similar type. Some change in scope of existing executive responsibilities may be involved.

However, the challenge increases while diversifying into new business. Not only physical infrastructure will be very different, the nuances of doing new business; new type of marketing network and policies, procedures, control system in totality is to be understood. Even the new skills for marketing, operations etc. are to be developed. So is the case with material procurement, project management and financial management etc. A whole lot of individual and organisational learning has to be managed. It is like learning a new language, something like a student of Hindi is to learn to follow English classics.

Strategic changes of third kind, complex and nonlinear, such as mergers, change in dominant business portfolio, turnaround and transformation have another component that enhances the challenge. De-learning and relearning is like cleaning the slate and rewriting on it. It involves not only learning a new language but unlearning old language and learning new language to work. The challenge of unlearning and relearning was seen in 120 years old railway workshops, when the periodic overhauling of steam locomotives was to be stopped in 3 months' time. Most of the senior skilled workers (almost half of total skilled workers) were in the steam locomotive division and they had to be rehabilitated in diesel or electric locomotive maintenance divisions, other odd jobs or rendered surplus.

Similar challenge was seen in Parc Tauli Consortium Hospital⁹, formed by merging four small hospitals, where doctors used to admit patients of their choice, while the newly formed consortium hospital had decided to give admission on first-cum-first served basis. Also a lot of people had to be shifted/ shuffled as a part of rationalisation process and work in new teams and as per new work norms. Even doctors had to accept accountability which many found difficult to do and quit. Reorganisation was a real challenge with 7 heads of orthopaedic in four hospitals could not be accommodated in one post of head.

When BHEL announced its corporate plan¹⁰ after merger of HE(D)L Bhopal (which was older and larger entity), it changed its concept of business to become an integrated whole, catering to power and energy needs of India and become a top ranking electrical company in the world. It envisaged not only manifold increase in size but also change from a loss making public sector company to a profit making company on a sustained basis and change the public perception of public sector company. It had to undergo a metamorphosis to get ready to undertake responsibility of power projects on turnkey basis rather than manufacturing and supplying power equipment. Lot of people had to accept new roles and be ready for transfers to plants in different parts of the country (while many had joined to retire from the same place). The staff in engineering and administrative offices (almost half of the total staff) had to accept 48 hours a week working instead of 42 hours earlier. The challenge of managing change was lot more than expansion related strategic changes. It is not impossible to manage complex nonlinear changes. But one must realise the challenge of relearning here is more than expansion related change.

10.9 Strategies for Overcoming Barriers & Resistance to Change

Having analysed the barriers to resistance, the next question obviously is how to overcome resistance to change. As mentioned, any change situation, the organisation is a quasi-stationary equilibrium, balanced in the state by the restraining forces and driving forces, working in opposite directions. The change in the status quo can be brought about by either adding one or more new driving forces (or increasing the strength of one or more of existing driving forces) or reducing the number (or strength) of restraining forces. The origin and the type of restraining forces have been enumerated in the earlier section. The driving forces typically are the external or internal environmental pressures on the organisation pushing it for the change. Changes in the expectation of key decision makers (especially the resource providers), the customers, regulatory agencies, employees etc. all may push for change. A powerful driving force is the innovation oriented organisation climate that encourages new ideas, methods to be introduced for improving organisation. The additions to driving forces could be strong incentives offered (monetary or non-monetary) to the change target to accept the change.

It must be noted here that while the strong incentives may get the acceptance, too much use of it may soon become difficult, with change target making increasingly large demands. If a series of changes are envisaged, it may become all the more difficult.

It is better as a strategy, therefore, to reduce the number and strength of the restraining forces. In case there are powerful restraining forces, it may be necessary to pursue a combination of strategies. From the view point of reducing the power of restraining forces, there could be four broad types of change strategies¹¹. They are called the facilitative strategies, the persuasive strategies, the re-educative strategies and the power strategies.

10.9.1 Facilitative Strategies

Facilitative strategies are the approaches which enable or facilitate the change target to accept and adapt to the change envisaged. It could be in the form of providing physical or monetary resources or other devices. For example, if the shop floor operator is provided with appropriate tools; jigs/fixtures, measuring gauge etc., he may easily adapt to the demands of improved quality of the output. Provision of a personal computer can considerably help the secretarial assistance to accept the increase in workload and the demands of high quality output. Sending people to acquire new skills, acquaint with new machine tools shall help them accept the changeover to highly complex

machine operation. The larger the magnitude of the intended change, the more important it is to undertake facilitative efforts. Certain attributes of the change object such as complexity, accessibility, and divisibility may require offsetting facilitative efforts.

Facilitative strategies can be used when the change target system recognizes a problem, agrees that remedial action is necessary, is open to external assistance, and is willing to engage itself. The facilitative approach must be coupled with a program of creating awareness among the target groups of the availability of assistance. It may be noted that different subgroups within the change target may require different facilitative strategies at any given point in time. Some care may be in order while using the facilitative strategies. The more general the goals to which a resource is committed, the more likely that it will be used effectively. The change agent should avoid tying a resource to a specific time period as it inhibits community participation in a change program and thus reduces the effectiveness of resources committed to the program. Further, it is desirable that new roles be created within change target, if existing roles are inadequate to utilise a needed resource.

There are certain limitations in using the facilitative strategies. When the change objective involves altering a firmly held attitude or firmly entrenched behaviour a facilitative strategy alone is unlikely to be helpful. The facilitative strategies are likely to be less effective if there is high resistance to change. When change must occur quickly and an openness to change does not exist, a facilitative approach alone is unlikely to be effective.

10.9.2 Persuasive Strategies

Persuasive strategies are desirable when a problem is not recognized or not considered particularly important or, when the change target is not committed to change. They are also required in change programmes where the magnitude of change is great and is perceived by the change target to be risky and socially disruptive. Further, when the time constraints are severe and there are difficulties in use of power, it is more desirable or necessary to use persuasive strategies.

Persuasive effort is appropriate when the change target is at the evaluation of legitimization stage of the adoption process. These become even more effective when the change cannot be implemented on a trial basis, is difficult to understand and has no visible relative advantage or when a particular solution to a problem is not perceived to be potentially effective.

Persuasive strategies are especially effective in combating resistance to change, although the strategies used to combat resistance to initiating change may not be those used to combat resistance after change has been implemented. Care must be exercised to prevent persuasive content from reaching the subgroup that would respond negatively to such messages, When a persuasive effort is appropriate to one subgroup but not to another.

In the case of self ignited changes, persuasive strategies are desirable when it is necessary to induce the change clientele to reallocate its resources from one programme or activity to the activity and advocated by the change agent. Persuasive strategies are often necessary when the change agent has no direct control over the client system through the manipulation of resources of value to the client system. Persuasive strategies are not feasible when the client system has no access to resources to sustain a change.

10.9.3 Re-educative Strategies

Re-educative strategies can be effective in providing the foundation for future action by establishing an awareness of a need (general or specific) for change. It may be desirable not to mention a specific change if it is potentially controversial until a clear need has been established. Re-educative strategies can be effective in (1) connecting causes with symptoms, (2) creating awareness of a problem, and (3) establishing that a known problem can be resolved. Re-educative strategies are effective in immunizing people against appeals to resist change to revert back to the previous situation. The higher the anticipated level of resistance, the more necessary it is to initiate educational programmes well in advance of the actual introduction of the change. Re-educative strategies are essential, when the change involves a radical departure from past practices.

Generally, re-educative strategies alone are insufficient for accomplishing large-scale change in the short run, particularly where motivation to change is low relative to the magnitude of the change required. The other limitations of the re-educative strategies are they are less impactful, if the change programme requires a high degree of commitment. Further, if the change agency does not possess the resources to sustain a needed long-term involvement, a reductive strategy may not be effective.

10.9.4 Power Strategies

Power strategies are desirable when a protracted adoption -decision- making process is likely but change must be immediate. Further, there is greater need for a power- oriented strategy, if the perceived or felt need for change among a change target is low. It may, however, be noted that although power strategies may be desirable when commitment by the client target is low, they are unlikely to increase commitment.

Power strategies can be effective in overcoming resistance or in creating change rapidly before resistance can be mobilized. The less susceptible to modification a change is, the greater is the need for a power strategy to force changes. Power strategies may also be useful in securing a trial use of the change.

It would be realised now that the various barriers to change are not amenable to any particular coping strategy. In most situations a combination of strategies would be required especially in the case of major and mega changes.

10.10 Designing A Change Programme/ Planning for Change

Planning for change is an important step for introducing any change. Failure to do so even in apparently small and simple changes can not only create serious difficulties and derail the whole process but even led to loss of face (see illustration below). The problem compounds in case of a major or complex change like diversification, mergers/ acquisitions, change in dominant business portfolio or turnaround and transformation exercise.

10.10.1 The Case of a Change without Proper Planning

Mr. H.B. Vatia, Branch Manager of Kenya Main Branch of Kamini Bank¹² was wondering as to what can be done to restore the punctuality of staff in his branch. Majority of staff was taking time off from the work on number of occasions during a day which resulted in work remaining incomplete, besides it involved payment of overtime for its completion.

The problem was generally not faced by other banks in Kenya, except in Bharat Bank, another

Indian Bank having branches in Kenya. Other local and British banks were able to exercise sufficient control over their staff to ensure proper attendance.

Initially Mr. Vatia tried to persuade the staff for being punctual. He indeed sermonised them too on a several occasions. None of these, however, made any dent on the problem. Failing on these methods, he finally resorted to punishment to the erring members of the staff. This led to some improvement but not the desired one. Mr. Vatia also felt that prolonged use of this method may indeed lead to a more serious trouble. He, therefore, thought to analyse the situation and identify the root cause of the problem.

His investigation on the habits formed revealed that the unauthorised "time off" was used mainly for personal work which included shopping, personal errands, meeting friends, going for coffee, etc. When caught the general explanation given by the staff was that they had gone out for a cup of coffee. Mr. Vatia noticed that no canteen facilities were available in the branch nor there was any space where it could be set up. The British and other local banks, however, had made adequate provision for the purpose.

An automatic coffee vending machine was installed, but the move did not succeed as the staff complained that the coffee given was not up to standard. The members of staff protested and refused to use the machine.

Mr. Vatia also noticed that the muster roll of branch did not have any provision for making the period of the absence by a member of staff in the event he had to go out and it was not possible either to know or to control the period of his absence.

To overcome this, he decided to install a "time clock" at the main gate with 'in & out' trays and the staff was advised to use the attendance cards for marking their arrival, departure and also absence periods. Authorised outside work could be authenticated by the immediate Officer/Supervisor.

The idea was brought to the notice of branch union by the staff. There was resistance to the idea initially. Mr. Vatia however, pointed out to them that this was a scientific method of recording the attendance and it was not possible to falsify the same. As happened, during that period only, services of three members of staff were terminated for dishonesty and fraud. They had altered the time marked in the muster rolls for departure, thereby claiming overtime for period not worked by them. This was proved by the photocopy of the day's muster taken by Mr. Vatia from time to time by unscheduled visit to branch, late at night without any indication to any one in the branch.

Mr. Vatia pointed out to the union representatives that by the introduction of "time clock" the temptation to alter time by members of the staff would be removed as such it was in nature of long term benefit to the staff. The union almost came round to accept the idea, but still was not fully convinced.

At this stage, however, the Regional Manager having come to know of the proposed time clock from the president of the union suggested to Mr. Vatia that as no other bank in Kenya which had adopted the procedure, Mr. Vatia should have this scheme approved by the Secretary of the Kenya Bankers Association.

The approach to Secretary was a failure. He was a man of old British traditions and was shocked at the idea of introduction of a time clock in the banking industry there. All efforts to convince

him that there was nothing wrong in it and that most offices of major cooperations had this system did not move him. Other bankers when individually contacted also did not favour the idea.

Not willing to go all alone, the Regional Manager advised Mr. Vatia to shelve the idea.

The above short and simple case illustrates how the changes fail due to poor planning. Mr. Vatia erred on several steps -firstly perhaps he attempted to introduce a change which was major (in the sense, deep freezing in terms of organisational practices had taken place) without realising the magnitude of change. Second, he affected the strategies without analysis, and even after analysis he did not base the strategies on the results of analysis (the investigation had showed that people went out to meet friends, do shopping etc. but he installed coffee machine to solve the problem instead). Finally, he developed and affected the strategy without realising the scope and the fact that he is no more change clientele himself and he needed necessary sanctions from the change clientele to effect he change. As a result not only he failed in his change effort, with every change he made his ground softer, reducing more and more the chances of success in subsequent change efforts.

10.11 Steps in Managing a Planned Change

There is a set of task to be undertaken by a change agent for developing and successfully implementing a change programme¹³ as listed below. Although the steps listed out here are for external change agents, most of them hold true for internal change agents as well. Likewise some steps may not be very relevant for certain types of strategic changes by top management. It may however, be advisable to keep the steps in mind and ignore those not relevant ones, while playing the role of change agent.

a) Establishing Necessary Relationship with the Client System

The first and perhaps one of the key steps is to establish adequate relationship with the clientele system, which is to provide necessary permission, sanctions and often the resources for introducing the change. Failure to do so may lead to serious setbacks even humiliation to the change agent, as the change clientele may not want to put heart in the programme. The credibility building exercise is time consuming but necessary, especially in the case of internal change agents.

- i) the client system should come to know the change agent as a competent and legitimate person(s) whose task is to help the organisation
- ii) there must be exchange of expectations between the two (scope and nature of examination to be done, what may be done and what should not be done etc.)
- iii) the change agent must get adequate sanctions (ie., authority for undertaking analysis and effecting the change).

b) Diagnosis

Once the green signal for initiating a change programme is given, the change agent has to undertake/ update the diagnosis revolving around the following key factors:

- i) What is the change issues/ problem?
- ii) Is it clearly defined?
- iii) What is the need for change in the system?
- iv) How much is the openness to change in the system?

- v) What are the resources available for change?
- vi) How much is the commitment of the key members of the client system to the change process?

The change agent should be extremely careful to avoid his own personal biases in defining the change problem or any biases coming in the diagnostic analysis arising out of the change clientele's perceptions dominating his considerations, scope of study of the issue, and also any premature commitment to change etc. A realistic assessment of the resources available and commitment of the change clientele is utmost necessary as often the change clientele wants to introduce a change programme more of a fad than necessity and is not very serious about it.

There is another set of diagnostics required when the change implementation is not progressing on expected lines, i.e., the behaviour of people not changing as expected, the objectives of change programme not being achieved as expected etc. The diagnosis of organisation incoherence of various types can be done per se also, to improve organisation. Discussion on the tools for same is deferred for section 12.5.1

c) Selecting the correct helping role

- i) feeding back diagnosis to the client
- ii) choosing which of the helping role he can perform

d) Determining the Change Objectives and Scope

Once the basic analysis for the change intervention is completed and the need for the change is realised, the following change issues become important for drawing out the change programme.

- i) What is the nature and scope of change programme going to be?
- ii) Who are the people that would be affected?
- iii) What exactly the change programme is trying to change (attitudes, values, beliefs or behaviour).
- iv) What are leverage points i.e., who are the persons of subgroups that the change agent should work if he wants to have impact on the system.

e) Dealing with Barriers/ Resistance to Change

Once the change programme is defined in terms of the nature and scope, and the people to affect are identified, the force-field analysis can be done to identify the barriers/ sources of resistance to change. Depending on this analysis, the strategies for dealing with “unfreezing” and “moving” can be easily developed. Care must be taken to contain the pent-up resistance to change by:

- * creating a vision/ explaining the rationale of the change and the long term benefits expected out of the same,
- * involving members of the change target (also those of the change clientele in case of the external change agents), to the extent necessary in determining the change objectives,
- * finding out their perception of the changes in order to see if there is any misunderstanding about the programme.

Care must also be taken to guard against the decision-room resistance to change, by having anticipatory back-up analysis duly supported by relevant data done before hand.

f) Maintenance of Change

The maintenance function during the change programme is to achieve

- i) Institutionalising the change programme (i.e., refreezing)
- ii) Change agent remaining in the client system and provide support in the implementation process to come over the difficulties.

The above lists systematically the steps in planning and effecting a change programme. In terms of specifics the change plans may differ from organisation to organisation and programme to programme. As a general approach, however, they remain same, whether the change is minor or major or whether the change agent is internal or external.

It may be noted that the steps outlined above are reasonably clear and sequenced only for “programmed change” like introduction of a new performance appraisal system, introduction of budgetary control system etc., which are incremental changes, whether anticipatory or the reactive type. In the case of strategic, transformational changes (whether reorientation or re-creation) that involve multiple or a series of change, the process is somewhat modified. The unfreezing, the moving and the refreezing may be going simultaneously in tandem for a number of changes. Often refreezing for one change may be differed pending “moving” for another change, or till the experimental try is over. Further details are differed for a subsequent chapter.

Care must be taken against the “quick-fix” approach to managing change¹⁴. Depending upon the change issues involved, the relevant organisational tracks (namely the cultural, the managerial skills, the team-building, the strategy-structure) may be modified. A change programme which is more of a fad than necessity and in which change clientele/ target is not very serious should not be undertaken.

10.12 Important Characteristics of a Change Programme

Success of a change programme depends as much on affecting it as on the design of the programme itself. Several attributes¹⁵ of the change programme make them more amenable to success than failures. These are:

10.12.1 Relative Advantage

The relative advantage of the proposed change over the existing alternative practices, policies, system etc. make it more saleable. the advantages may be in terms increased efficiency, reduced costs/ recurring problems and the reduction in uncertainties/ anxieties faced by the people.

10.12.2 Divisibility

It enables the introduction of change on experimental basis and gradually spreading it to the whole / relevant parts of the organisation, in phased manner. This allows testing the validity of the claims of relative advantage made, mobilising the resources for implementing the change total change programme, allows cancelling the programme if need be, without incurring heavy losses, and

provides an opportunity to try out new things and so on.

10.12.3 Reversibility

It is an extremely important attribute, particularly in when the change is high on innovation and costs. If reversibility is low, it may not be accepted even if the expected gains are high.

10.12.4 Compatibility

The compatibility of the proposed new system, policies, practices or any other component of the organisation with the (existing or new) other components of the organisation is critical even if the change programme does not involve all or many elements of the organisation. Without compatibility the change programme may limp for a while but can't succeed in the long run.

10.12.5 Communicability

The fact that a change programme aims at influencing the behaviour of a large mass of people with different background and perceptions, brings the aspect of communicability to the fore, as the people often see different meanings in the change programme. If it involves a new concept or new technology, unknown to them, apprehensions create biases that block communication. What, why and who part of the change programme are key factors that ought to be well understood by the change target. The complexity of the message, spread of the organisation, available modes of communication and cost thereof, skills and expertise available for designing the messages, risk of misinformation campaigns and the grapevines etc. determine this dimension of the change programme.

10.12.6 Time Available

The time available to a change is not unbounded, although in the case of an internal change agent, as the change initiator, it may be expanded to an extent by differ a move until "the time is ripe". Having initiated a change programme, however, the timeframe of the action plan is very critical. Sluggish actions reduce the overall impact of the change and lead to loss of momentum, so critical for the change process. Allowing too much time also provides opportunity for breeding of new sources of resistance to change, which might not have been present in initially. Occasionally the non-availability of time considerations that do not allow proper unfreezing, before "moving" and at times push people to adopt/use power strategy. Although time available is a factor to be considered, given too much time for effecting the change can also be cause of failure.

10.12.7 Risk and Uncertainty

The change programme involve risk and uncertainty associated with any new thing, as the dilemma of "one in the hand is better than two in the bush" exists in the mind of people. The higher the risk involved or the lower the probability of the success of the change programme in bringing the improvements envisaged/ claimed to accrue, the lower is the chances of the acceptance of the change programme by the change client. The risk factor virtually discounts the relative advantage proposed by the programme. The uncertainty and risk can be mitigated to a large extent by soundness of the analysis undergone in the development of the change programme.

Review Questions

1. Differentiate between resistance to change and barriers to change.
2. Discuss different classes of barriers to change.
3. In what way pent up resistance to change differs from other barriers to change?
4. "Decision room resistance to change affects strategy formulation". Comment.
5. What are coping strategies for psychological barriers to change?
6. How can one face the decision room resistance to change and pent up resistance to change.
7. "Power strategies alone may not be adequate for strategic changes". Do you agree? Give reasons.
8. Which strategies are useful for managing "moving" and "refreezing" phases of a typical change programme?
9. Enumerate various steps in managing a planned change.
10. How should one plan for change? What characteristics of a change programme can help in it?

References

1. Krishna Kumar, Strategy implementation
2. Watson G. "Resistance to Change" in Watson G. (Ed.) **Concepts for Social Change** Washington D.C. (1966) Cooperative Project for Educational Development Series, Vol.1.
3. Zaltman G. et. al. **Strategies for Planned Change** New York (1977) Wiley, Interscience.
4. Kaulfman, H., **Limits to Organizational Change** Albama (1971) University of Albama Press.
- 5.
6. Odiorni G.S. **The Change Resistors** Englewood Cliff, New Jersey (1981). Prentice Hall Inc.
7. Ibid
- 8.
9. Krishna Kumar, Parc Tauli Consortium Hospital
10. Outline of a Corporate Plan, IIM Ahmedabad
11. Krishna Kumar, Kamini Bank
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

DO NOT COPY