

A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

**MAKING DINOSAURS DANCE:
ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT**



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1. INTRODUCTION

“The Government’s job is to govern, and through it, do all things that make good governance impossible”

- The Imperatives of a Government (unpublished)

1.1 The Government

Death and Taxes, as Benjamin Franklin said, are the only truths of life. And as long as there are taxes, there will be governments. Simply put, the job of a government is to ‘govern’, an apparently simple process of being elected (or self selected, as in the case of dictatorships), and making decisions on behalf of a collective state.

1.2 Features of most governments

Most governments started out as avenues for asserting national identity (a hangover of the colonial past) and hence the objective became to have large burgeoning vehicles of state-building rather than a group of efficient administrators. Further, the political nature of most countries required several ‘layers’ of government – national, state, local – to satisfy the need of various political groups and numbers. As a result, today, most governments in developing countries are saddled with problems of efficiency, result orientation and economy. Most such governments are now left holding mammoth organizations, staffed by people not always selected on merit, organized in a bureaucratic, hierarchical model with no incentive for individual initiative and a collective helplessness for any change.

1.3 Government in India

The situation in India is also quite similar. Layered at 3 levels, spread across 26 states and 7 Union Territories and involving politics, often bordering on war, being in government is a means and result of staying in power. With uneducated masses playing the game of democracy, winners are often decided not by merit, but by maneuver. The equation is further confounded by the essentially socialist pattern of development, with government managing many of the services such as railways, post and other infrastructure. Hence, its no surprise that the Indian government is the largest employer in the economy.

Yet, public services remain a common cause for complaint by the users. In fact, before the liberalization of the economy and entry of private players into areas like telecommunication, air travel etc., it was a major achievement to get a telephone connection; and despite the exorbitantly high fares charged by the government airline, if the flight took off on time.

However, things are changing now. The government is undergoing a paradigm shift, not only in competitive areas like airlines and telecom but also in core public services. They are eventually realising that the cost of inaction is costing the development of the country. In a

globalised world today, capital is attracted by the quality of governance which can be offered by countries, states and cities, *ceterus paribus*. And hence, the system of governance itself becomes the biggest barrier to the progress. And when things came to a pass, the government finally decided to do something about it – it felt the need for change (often called reform) in government!

1.4 The Analogy

This report is titled 'Making Dinosaurs Dance' and not without reason. The government today is a large behemoth, often pulled down by its own size and complexity. It needs to make a great effort to move and often lacks the nimbleness and agility required to respond to the environment around. But the analogy does not end there. Like dinosaurs, it lives in an age of change. And unlike dinosaurs, it cannot afford to make itself extinct. The only way out is to change. Yes, the dinosaur *has* to learn to dance.

1.5 This Study

This study seeks to bring out the unique perspectives of managing change in a government organization. Besides being topical and relevant, it also focuses on the largest organizational lever in the economy without which all organizational development in the private sector may be undone or will definitely lead to a growing disparity between the private and the public sector. It also seeks to synthesise theoretical knowledge and practical experience, leading to development of a model for OD in government.

2. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND ITS RELEVANCE TO GOVERNMENT

1.6 Purpose of Organisational Change

The purpose of organisational change, is simply put, to maintain the 'fit' of the organization with its environment. As discussed earlier, in an era of swift change and growth in the economy, government cannot afford to remain immune to these changes. Hence, the need for change.

1.7 Models of Organisational Change

Although there are many models of organization change, the essential framework all of them follow is that of Unfreeze ->Movement -> Freeze. Pioneered by Kurt Lewin, the entire organizational change movement hinges on this very simple model – how to unfreeze, how to facilitate movement and how best to re-freeze. The role of the OD practitioner comes in to make this movement and change possible.

1.8 The Government as an organisation

As discussed earlier, government is perhaps the largest and single most important organisation in any country. In India, for instance, there are layers of politicians, administrators and workers across the numerous central and state governments providing, (or trying to provide) a range of public services. Some unique features of such government organisations need to be kept in mind before going ahead so that the contrast with other private sector organisations can be understood.

1.8.1 Large, nay, huge

The government's unique claim to fame starts with its size. As the largest employer in the country (and daresay among the largest in the world), the government deals with a huge number of employees. Starting from the Secretariat, down to various directorates, then to district offices, block offices and even at times right upto the village level, they employ a humongous mass of people. Apart from Indian Railway's commonly known claim to fame (being the largest employer in Asia), there are even individual state departments (for instance the Health department in West Bengal) which has more than 100,000 employees. All these call for a seasoned approach to OD in light of the complexities involved.

1.8.2 All are owners, yet no ownership

Unlike corporates where shareholders are the ultimate owners and to whom everyone is eventually accountable, government lacks the single locus of accountability. Technically, all of us are owners, since the government uses taxpayers money, yet in practice, we all remain excluded and perhaps not even interested in the running of the affairs of perhaps our largest investment. Hence, government is often seen as an abstract concept with consequent lack of accountability and result focus.

1.8.3 The privileged class

Government as the model employer, treats its employees with extra-special privileges. For instance, security of job is perhaps the defining character of any government job in India. Further, because of the huge numbers, the government follows a bureaucratic model of management and hence not promotions and incentives are time or seniority based, rather than based on merit.

1.8.4 Bureaucratic and Hierarchical

As mentioned above, bureaucracy and government are synonymous. Although Weber's model of hierarchical and position based authority was essentially to streamline routine functioning of large organisations, it has today become a ruse for delays, inefficiencies and an inability to take quick decisions. As somebody remarked, '*Bureaucracy leads to a situation where individually nobody can do anything, and collectively, they ensure that nothing can be done!*'

1.8.5 Political Leadership

Another unique aspect of government is the political leadership which shape organizational policies and priorities depending on the hue and colour of the party in power. Further, discontinuity in leaderships accentuates the lack of ownership resulting in lack of an owned vision for the organisation.

1.9 The need for change in government

But, all is not yet lost. The winds of change are blowing. The government today realises it has to be responsive to the changing environment and perform to the expectation of its citizens. Some of the major reasons for this recent change in heart are:

- Legislations for government performance and accountability are both, the cause and effect of demand for good governance. With recent initiatives like the Right to Information Act, the Government Disclosure laws etc., there is an immense pressure on governments to perform.
- Citizens have also started expecting and demanding more from the government. Increasing literacy and awareness in urban areas has made people less responsive to political sways and emotional appeals. Now, citizens demand performance;
- Judicial activism is also a key aspect of the changes being brought in government. Governments have had to start responding because of the pressure from courts for performance;
- The competition among states for capital is also another reason why governments are trying to outdo each other in the race of reform and change. The quality of

governance is becoming a critical and often decisive factor for this, as in the case of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh etc.

- The emergence of international television and easy accessibility to foreign tours have shown the people that another world of governance is possible and can be created;
- Media's role in creating an environment of accountability cannot also be ignored. By pointing out failures and highlighting success, they have created a further incentive to perform in government.
- And finally, there is no doubt, an improvement in the political maturity of the elected representatives. Politicians have started long term visioning and increasingly realise that people now demand performance, not promise, in lieu of votes.

3. ORGANISATION REFORM & GOVERNMENT –LITERATURE REVIEW

1.10 *The need for organizational change*

According to Aakerman-Anderson¹ an organization is initially born out of a new idea that serves the needs of its environment. IN serving these needs, it grows and matures until it reaches a status quo or plateau of growth due to competition, capability or changes in the demands of the environment. As it continues to function in this holding pattern, it begins to experience failure, productivity drops, loss of control. It moves into a period of struggle between chaotic shifts within and without and attempts to maintain some semblance of order and control. The disturbance level increases until finally something snaps- the organization either goes out of business or institutes some entirely new direction. The old way of operating must end or die, for the realization of the new to emerge from its remains. The phoenix effect is a decent analogy here. The transformed organization rises out of the ashes of its old form to take on a new direction, one that raises its performance capability to a much greater level of functioning, sophistication and responsiveness. It is accompanied by a broader awareness, often inspired by having broken through to a greater context and purpose. The death and rebirth process occurs over an extended period of time. Most of the variables are not to be controlled, rushed or short-circuited.

1.11 *Initial steps to facilitate change*

In any change programme, first steps are usually small and initial visions that focus energy effectively often address immediate problems. What matters is engagement in service of a larger purpose rather than lofty aspirations that paralyze action. Indeed it's dangerous trap to believe that we can pursue only great visions – Peter, Otto²

It is important to help people come to their own resolution regarding the need for change. Leaders have to paint a broad picture of change and resist the urge to fill in all the gaps for people. The people have to fill these gaps in on their own. If the leaders get too detailed, it prevents people from making the connections on their own. Thus having patience is very important. Once people have had the initial insight or epiphany that change is necessary, they need to repeat the experience in order to reinforce it and to experience the potential pleasure that can be derived from it. Moreover leaders need to make change, personally relevant story to the affected people.³

Nobody goes home thinking he or she did a fair day's work. Instead , egocentric as humans all are, they think of the hassles they had to confront and the unfair burden that seemingly fell on their shoulders today. Without constant positive feedback, access to continuing training and various team and individual incentives schemes, they consign ourselves to getting mediocre results – not the routine “above and beyond the call of duty” that's

¹ Linda S Aakerman-Anderson, Development, transition or transformation, OD Practitioner, 1996, 28 (4), 5-16

² Presence by Peter Senge, Otto, pg 138

³ Tom Peter, :Pursuit of Wow pg 82

necessary if a product or service is going to stick out in an increasingly crowded global marketplace.⁴

1.12 The pre-requisites

According to Conner⁵ two prerequisites for successful organization change:-

- i. **Pain**:- A critical mass of information that justifies breaking from status quo.
- ii. **Remedy**: Desirable accessible actions that will solve the problem or take advantage of the opportunity afforded by current situation.

For prolonged change both elements must work together. Orchestrating pain messages throughout the organization is the first step in developing organization commitment to change-

1.13 Dealing with resistance to change

Nothing is more frustrating than trying to get people to alter the ways they do things. According to Koch⁶, resistance to change manifests itself in a different way or in different setting- a refusal to throw away that old slide rule, or to look while the nurse draws your blood, or to dance at weddings. We all refuse to change our ways for reasons that are often hard to articulate. He feels this is because change hurts. Not the boo-hoo, woe is me kind of hurt that executives tend to dismiss as an affliction of the weak and sentimental, but actual physical and psychological discomfort. This is due to way the inside of brain works. From a neurological perspective, our response to change are predictable and universal and we all respond to change in the same way: we avoid it.

According to Harvey⁷ there is no such thing as resistance to change. Using Lewin force field analysis to help managers overcome change is just wasting everybody's time. People are not resistant to change but resistance to being punished. Therefore instead of focusing on the concept of resistant to change, OD consultant should look for conditions in an organization which makes change rewarding or punishing. Conceptualizing and intervening from such theoretical base might even make it useful when an organization is in process of changing. Further time is not a relevant variable in an OD programme. What is relevant is the competency of the consultant to deal with issues which arise as time passes. If time is used competently, significant change in the emotional and technological climate of the organization can occur nearly instantaneously.

⁴ Tom Peters, :Pursuit of Wow pp 84-85

⁵ Daryl Conner, op. cit., pg 99

⁶ Christopher Koch, in an article New Science of Hange, Real CIO World, Nov2006

⁷ Jerry B. Harvey, Eight Myths OD consultants believe in and die, Organisation Development Classics, Chapter 3, pp 36 - 44

According to Daryl⁸ patterns and principles not rules are key to change. Human transformation is too complex to be described by set of rigid laws. Change is not discreet events that occurs by linear progression. Rather it unfolds on many different levels simultaneously. Acknowledge the complexity of change by focusing on patterns and principles. Human lives are most effective and efficient when they are moving at speed that allows them to appropriately assimilate the change they face.⁹

1.14 Change as a novelty

According to Peters¹⁰ Change is a pain. Human beings need constancy in their lives. Wise managers spend a lot of time helping employees find new constancy in the midst of perpetually stormy commercial seas. A ton of solid psychological research says that human need stability and equally we need stimulations. In many tiny ways, and in much bigger ways like job searches, new project, new hobby, people seek stimulation, while they also value stability. Message is not to treat change with kid gloves. Don't assume that they or you can't cope with it. Do realize change is as normal as breathing, and that we want lots of it, along with lots of constancy.

According to Adams¹¹ Any change has the potential to create distress and a desire to cling to status quo to the extent that it creates novelty (surprise, unfamiliarity, uncertainty). In order to be most effective in implementing change, it must be done in ways which minimize surprises, and develop mechanisms for clarifying and familiarizing employees with the new ways of operating.

Support for novelty management needs to come in four areas:-

- a. information needed to adjust to change
- b. skills needed to adjust to the change
- c. attitudes and values which must be developed to support the change
- d. reward mechanisms for adopting the change.

1.15 Organisational Change in Government

According to Ostroff¹², Leaders of government agencies operate under handicaps largely unknown within the private sector. But the best of them have improved performance by adopting and adapting some goals and methods that have proven in business. The profound differences in their purposes, their cultures, and the contexts within which they operate

⁸ Daryl Conner, *Managing at speed of Change*, pg 99

⁹ Ibid. pg 13

¹⁰ Tom Peters, *op. cit.*, pg 82

¹¹ John D. Adams, *Creating Critical mass to support change*, pp 148-149

¹² Frank Ostroff (Managing Partner, Ostroff & Associates, a management consultant firm in US), *Best Practice, Change Management in Government*, Harvard Business Review, May 2006

conjure up quite different obstacles. The greatest challenge in bringing about successful change and significant, sustained performance improvement in the public sphere is not so much identifying solutions, which are mostly straightforward, as working around four unique obstacles. These are identified as follows:-

- a. leaders in public sectors are appointed on basis of their command of policy, technical expertise in the agency's work or political connections
- b. This person has limited time due to tenure restrictions, to see a change effort through, let alone create a sustainable change. Therefore in such a situation, they try to enact reforms which are easy rather than which are time consuming, but mostly required.
- c. Government rules on procurement, personnel, budgeting are highly inflexible which inhibits initiative
- d. Finally in a democracy everyone has a stake in the working of the public sector undertaking- the government leaders, controlling department bureaucrats, legislatures, public interest watchdogs, public etc. Some or the other activities of the public sector undertaking, will meet with disapproval from one or the other of these interest group.

Public sector undertakings aren't created to maximize shareholder wealth. Rather they are charged with promoting a particular aspect of the public's welfare. Effective and efficient execution of their mission is what taxpayers pay for. It's also what motivates the undertaking's staff. However this mission can get blurred or lost as political priorities shift and agency leaders come and go. Even in the best of situations, mission is subject to varying interpretations.

According to Cumming and Worley¹³, Public sector institutions

- Operate in an environment of competing political, social, and economic factors
- Face increasingly complex and significant challenges in responding to citizens, crafting public policy, and providing public services
- They differ from private sector organization on four key dimensions
 - Values and structures
 - Multiplicity of decision makers

¹³ Thomas G. Cummings and Christopher G. Worley – Organization Development and Change, 7th edition, Thomson South-Western, pp 601-608

- Stakeholder diversity and access
- Extent of inter-governmental relationships
- Values and Structure
 - The overarching purpose of public sector is to understand and promote public good and demonstrate responsiveness to public wants and needs
 - Responsiveness is reflected in demands for representation, efficiency, individual rights and social equity.
 - They thus adopt a representation-implementation structural form
 - The representative function is the political or legislative domain
 - The implementation is the administrative domain- bureaucracy as we call it
 - Unlike the private sector, the purposes and values within public sector are not be necessarily shared by elected politician and the bureaucracy.
 - Political function is responsible for establishment and oversight of organization designed to implement the outcomes of legislative process
 - This makes the public sector less flexible as compared to private sector
 - Since politicians have electoral gains in sight, they may get into conflicts with bureaucracy who may want efficiency
 - Lastly these organization have life for eternity and are funded that sustains its existence regardless of performance
 - Therefore less responsive to citizen as the citizens are not directly funding their status.
 - Implication for OD practitioners
 - Primary mission set by law and can be changed through legislative action
 - OD intervention funding required from elected board

- Most OD applications will be conducted in public glare
- Values of political and legislative domains may differ from traditional OD values- Meritocracy over reservations
- Complexity in Decision Making:
 - Though delegated powers are given to subordinate, all decisions are taken by passing through a intricate web of approval process - hierarchy of order
 - Lowest cost is the criteria rather than meritocracy
 - This multiple decision makers makes it difficult to identify the client unless the intervention happens due to interest of the top political functionary
- Stakeholder Access
 - All interested parties like citizens, political parties, unions, employees, other governments, media, critics
 - These interested exert greater variety of pressures and values on the working of the public sector undertakings
 - Through unions', the employees exert collective bargaining power, therefore OD practitioners need to balances these interest
 - A poor labour relations and employee morale will make it very difficult, if not impossible to implement OD intervention successfully.
- Intergovernmental relationship
 - A latticework of interrelated government agencies & organisation provide different public services to same citizens and customers.
 - This result in problems of coordination and power emerging out of sharing of responsibility across public sector organisations
 - Different political parties controlling the levers of powers at local, state and national level can create difficult in OD intervention programmes

1.16 Identifying Change Agents

According to Adams¹⁴ finding out who in the organization, regardless of formal role, are solidly in support of an intended change and bringing them together can be one of the most important factors in successful change implementation. Their shared interest in the change virtually leads to some highly innovative ways to enroll the early adopters, As a result a critical mass favouring the change is generated rather quickly, and with little forcing. This network of solid supporters is the choir, which will generate lots of good ideas for gradually bringing in new choir members from early adopters. The main consideration relative to the hard core resisters is to encourage them to stay tuned and to avoid any confrontations which may cause the skeptics to throw their support to the underdogs.

This has been validated in study on OD programme in the Fire Department of one of the states in US by Packard and Reid¹⁵ It was found that the commitment of Chief executive is often very important element for a successful OD intervention in a public sector organization. The chief's commitment is the driving force for any change initiative. At the same time the contracting of OD programme has to have the involvement of the political leadership.

According to Conner¹⁶ attempts to introduce changes that are radically different from the current culture usually are also not successful

Empirical research on downsizing as part of OD activity is mostly negative . A Research result of National Research council by Packard and Reid¹⁷ concluded that downsizing as a strategy for improvement has proven to be by and large a failure. The authors contend that the success of downsizing efforts may depend as much on how effectively the intervention is applied as on the size of the layoffs or the amount of delayering.

1.17 e-Governance for management

Damini Grover¹⁸ states that it is time to take a holistic view of managing government with online help by roping in all the stakeholders. As people become more aware of the power of web and experience good service from the private sector, they become less tolerant of poor, impersonal service in the public sector. In the digital age, public service needs to be instantly accessible, round the clock from home to work. Internet aids good government by increasing transparency and customer oriented service delivery. E-governance is a way for government

¹⁴ John D. Adams, Creating Critical mass to support change, pp 148-149

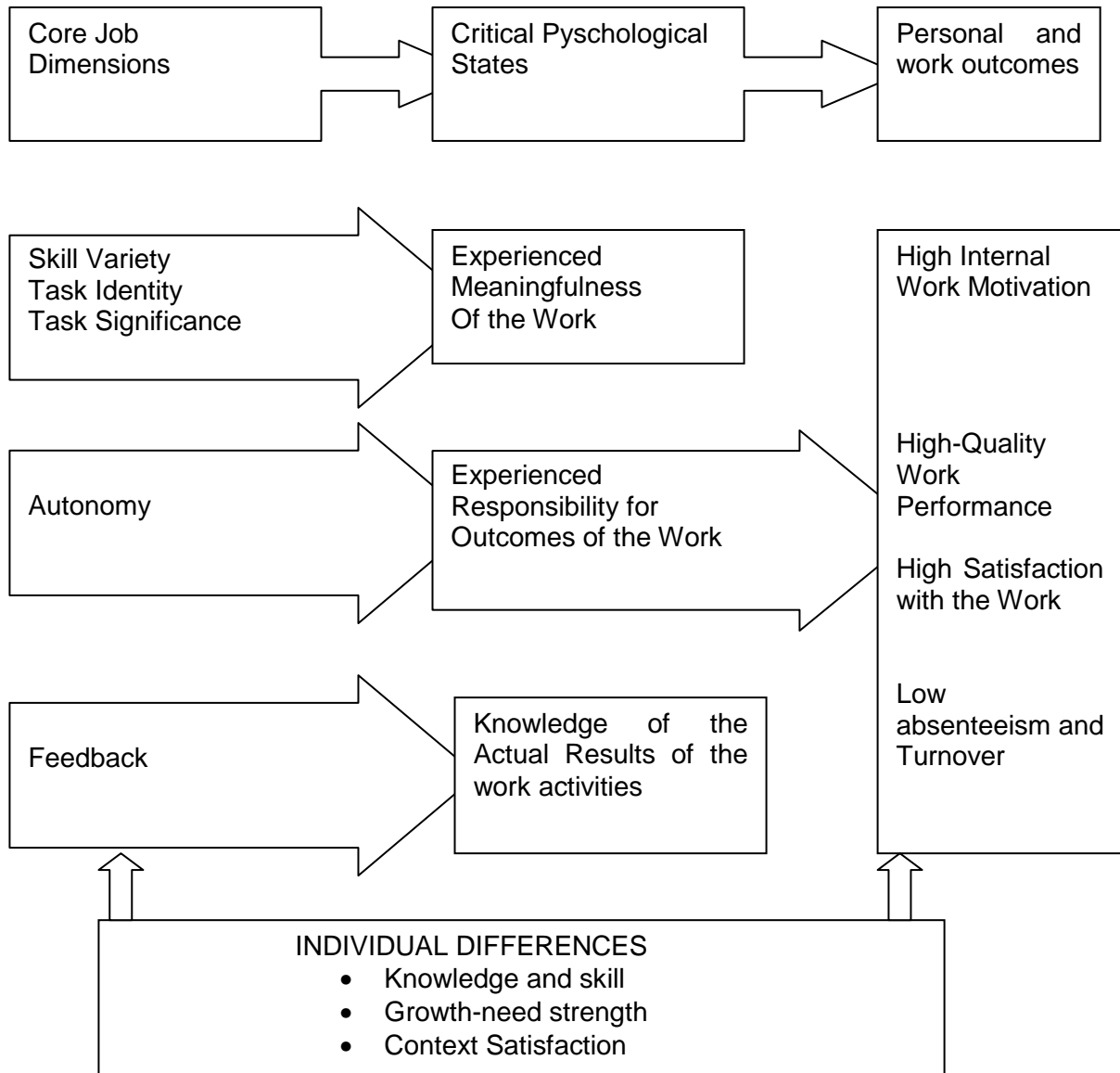
¹⁵ Tom Packard and Robin Reid, Institutionalizing OD in a Fire Department: A Case Study, (1988) pp 299-301

¹⁶ Daryl Conner, op. cit., pg 179

¹⁷ Tom Packard and Robin Reid, Results of Downsizing- Research result of National Research council.

¹⁸ Damini Grover (Institute for Integrated Learning in Management, Delhi) in her article " A New agenda beyond e governance" in Indian Management, Nov 2006

Relationships among core job dimensions, critical psychological states and Personal and Work outcomes



J. Hackman and G. Oldham, Work Redesign, from Organisation Development and Change-Cummings and Worley, 7th Edition, Thomson South-Western

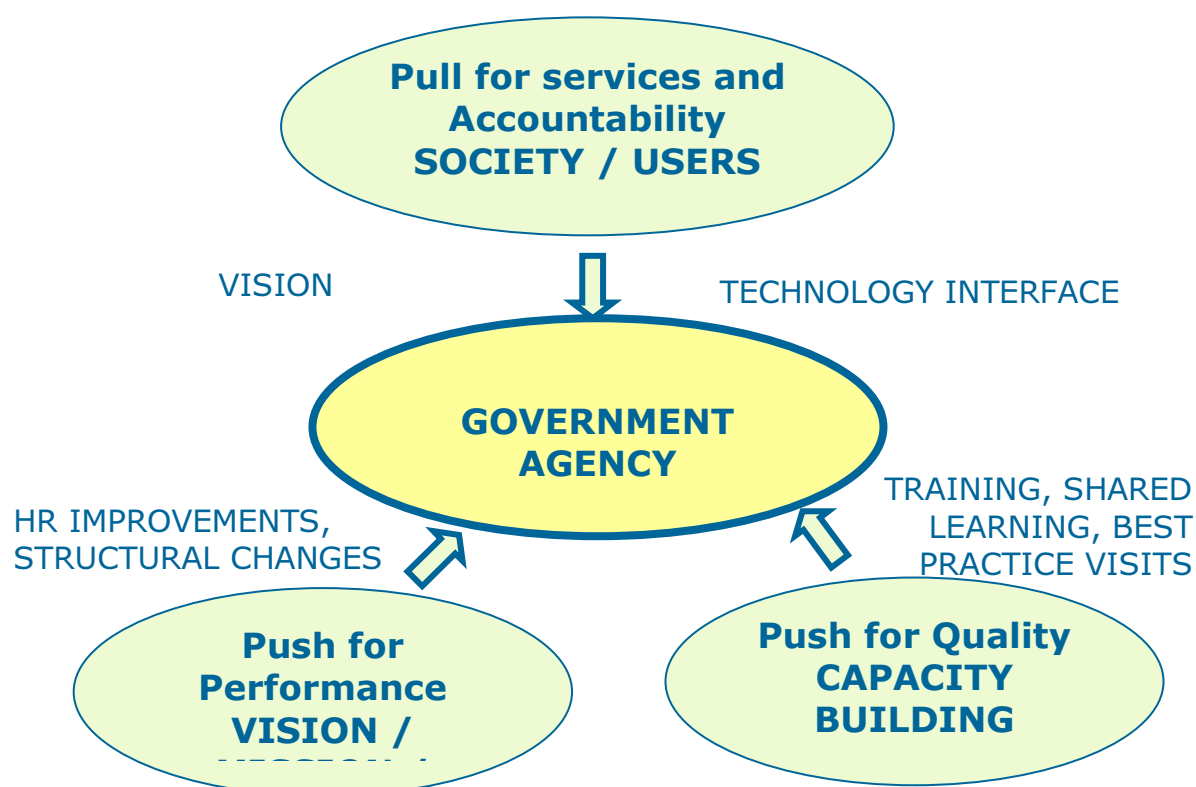
4. DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Based on the experience with government reforms and literature on the subject, it is understandable that the existing models of organizational change cannot be applied in a direct manner to governments. The basic nature of political leadership, and the absence of typical shareholder accountability makes the existing models weak for application here. Hence, we suggest a modified version of OD model for governments.

1.18 Push v Pull

Most changes happen either due to a push i.e. an inward realization of the need for change or pull i.e. an outward impact of change which forces you to change. This is also known as 'supply' led and 'demand' driven change. In our model, we insist that government needs a major effort which requires both demand and supply led efforts in order to be successful. Hence, we don't consider a Push v Pull, rather a Push & Pull model for change in government as below.

1.19 The Model



1.19.1 The focus on re-form

The sheer magnitude of changes and the deeprooted thinking or culture which it has to change necessitates that normal incremental models of change may not be sufficient to

bring about the changes required. Hence, here reform takes on a literal meaning of 're-forming' after changing the existing form. Hence unlike the normal Lewin's model of

Unfreeze -> Movement -> Refreeze

we may have to use instead, a governmental change model of:

Melt -> Reshape -> Refreeze

1.19.2 Implications

This implies that:

- Need for change needs to be even more pronounced;
- Effort must be made for second order (radical) change instead of incremental Change; and
- An action research model may have to be used keeping in mind the uniqueness of each government organisation.

1.20 The OD process for government

It shall consist of the usual Process of

- Diagnosis
- Feedback
- Action Planning
- Implementation

However, it is important to ensure:

- Political buy-in i.e. agreement of the political leadership for the change;
- Internal commitment i.e. motivation and agreement among employees to bring about the change
- Feedback should be sought and used at every possible step; and finally
- The OD practitioner should demonstrate agility and dynamism in his own organisation and team, in order to reverse, to some extent, the entropy in government organisations.

1.21 Going ahead with change

In order to go ahead with change, the following steps are suggested for governmental OD:

1.21.1 Systems approach

OD for government should adopt a holistic approach and cover all possible aspects of organisational change. This would include decentralisation, HR, technology, training etc.

1.21.2 Create a vision

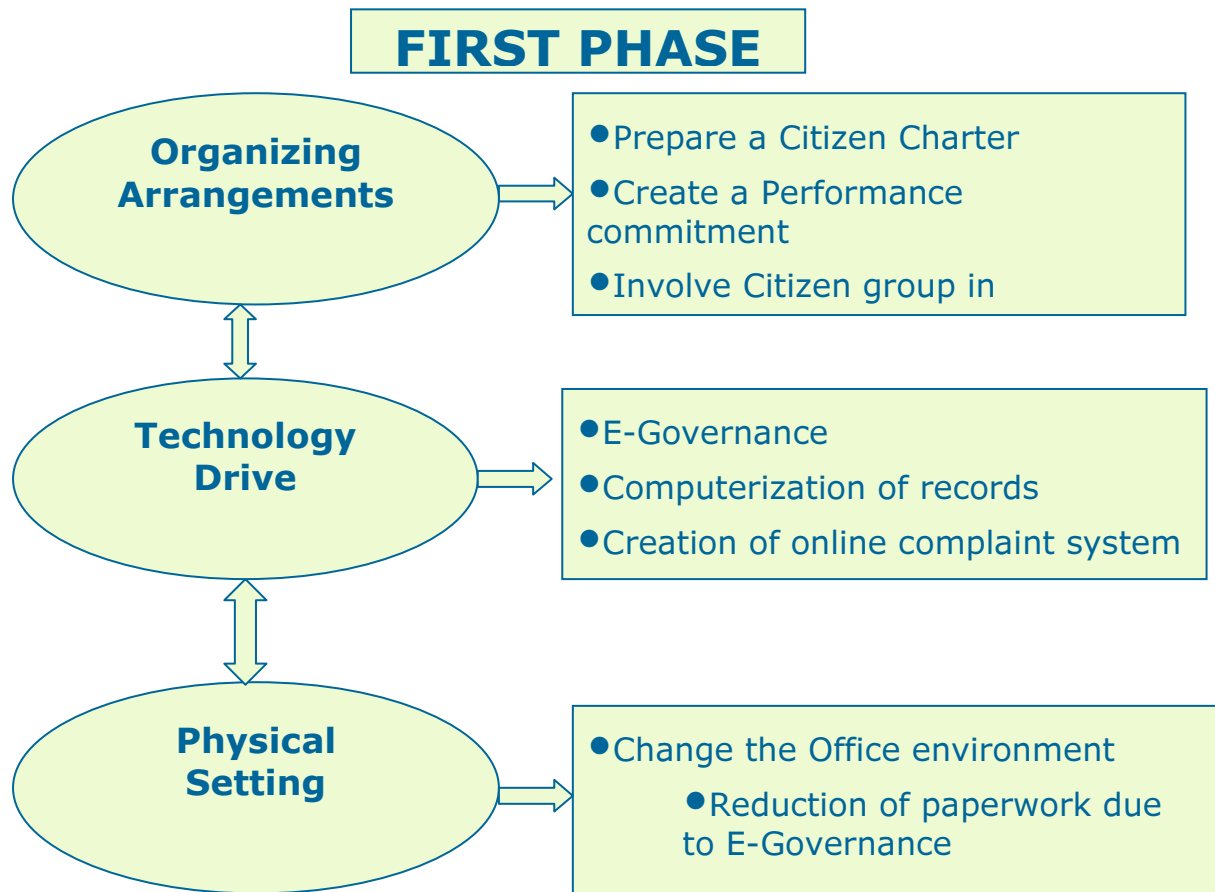
This is essential to galvanise the critical mass for change. Hence visioning creates a consensus and public commitment for change which is often essential to enable change.

1.21.3 Look for change agents

In a government setup, it is perhaps more important to look for Change Agents as access of consultants is generally not preferred. Hence, the OD consultant should look out and develop any person who could act as Change Agent in the organisation.

1.21.4 Address issues of culture

This is perhaps the most important aspects of OD, and more so in government organisations. It requires changing not only the work settings and climate but also the thinking and beliefs of the people over time.



1.22 *The First Phase*

- Diagnosis of the problem - distinguish between Symptoms and Disease
- Prioritize activities
- Visioning exercise
- Create the need for change - communicate to all

1.23 *Second Phase*

- Change in setting and use of technology
- Changed Behaviour pattern of the people.
- Transparency through E-Governance initiative
- Conduct the Future Search Conference
- Consolidate changes

1.24 Third Phase

- The Training Phase
- Can be modelled on the T-group and Behaviour Modelling.
- Use professional trainers and make the employees motivated.

1.25 Fourth Phase

- Consolidated through public perception.
- Media attention
- Positive image will reinforce the change in the minds of the employee
- This will led to those who have stayed behind in embracing the change to now come forward
- The public expectation will further rise creating further inward pressure to perform

5. CONCLUSION

If you pull the right strings, the dinosaur can dance.

Caveat. Use very strong strings.

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