

‘Transformation’ over ‘Incremental Change’

Transformation is ‘rebuilding the existing one like from scratch’. Transformation may be need of the hour in the context of an organisation, product, society, government, family, and any other use case.

Transformation is by design. It does not happen on its own. Reasons for a Transformation may be any & many. The driving factors for Transformation may be different for different transformation initiatives/projects in different situations at different point of times.

Transformation may happen out of obsolescence or aspirations. Either way, one makes the other feel and gives rise to the need of Transformation.

Transformation is significantly and absolutely different from Incremental Change. Incremental Change is like BAU (Business As Usual), happens to keep it alive and enhancing the status quo with the purpose of change and/or growth. Transformation is not about starting something new from scratch.

Transformation needs to have selected non-negotiable(s), i.e. Clear Vision-Mission-Objectives, Aspirations, Commitment, Inclusiveness, Lateral and Out of Box thinking, Evolving Roadmap with clear Targets-Responsibilities-Deliverables matrix, Risk taking ability with Risk mitigation, Willingness to take tough decisions, ... Transformation would always involve all-round investments.

Transformation programs may have learning from other similar successes, but each Transformation journey is unique. Hence, each Transformation program needs to be crafted from scratch, no copy-paste works.

Transformation should have evolving roadmap with element of agility & openness to embrace innovation and learning during the journey. Some of it may be even course correction, not to worry. Transformation is primarily ‘Revolutionary in nature with implementation approach be combination of revolutionary & evolutionary. The implementation approach is determined by many factors including and not limited by management mindset, legacy of existing organisation & system, degree & impact of transformation, size of the organization/ ecosystem, risks taking ability, and others.

One of the recent examples in India of Transformation is GST. GST is absolutely a revolutionary indirect tax transformation program of Government of India. Unlike earlier Tax reform VAT (Value Added Tax), GST is a nation-wide one go implementation and rollout from an effective date. GST had many new first time stakeholders. GST has the component of revolutionary and evolutionary implementation strategy. The evolutionary aspect of GST covers five (0, 5, 12, 18, 28) tax slabs with provision of cess unlike one tax rate. The exclusion of Petroleum products from initial implementation, but provision in legislation for anytime inclusion is part of evolutionary implementation approach. The exclusion of Liquor for human consumption from initial implementation and also from legislation carries the spirit of revolutionary & evolutionary. The reasons for all the evolutionary implementation are different on their merits. The ‘GST Council’ is provisioned to take review of evolving situations and scenarios to take quick review & decision than leaving on monolithic government structure & interests is like provisioning the agility in such a marathon implementation.

Transformation is like disruptive in nature and involves shaking the 'as is' or questioning the 'Status Quo' in terms of people, processes, products, pretty much any & every aspect of yesteryear's 'as-is' including ecosystem constituents. Transformation may have element of fantasy, however it needs to be neutralized to realities. Transformation may continue to have some element of envisaged change from fantasy perspective that some or many stakeholders may take time to believe-in. no worries.

For any Transformation, role of Consultant and/or advisor is always envisaged and involved. There is no simple answer to it. Throughout the Transformation journey, it has to be inclusive. Transformation is never about few things to be done by some stakeholders. Each and every internal and external stakeholder gets impacted. Initially, being disruptive in nature, Transformation would typically stress and strain more. In the beginning, it may even have impact on outcome even vs. yesteryear. Transformation is expected to hit people's comfort zone esp of those who have been 'overly efficiently inefficient & ineffective' by doing something same thing over years and/or hiding behind in the system.

Transformation is expected to bring-in higher transparency and change in roles of people with new perspective. New players/ stakeholders may have higher visibility and role play during Transformation. This too is expected to hit comfort zone of people. At times, comfort zone couple with vested interest and power center.

Transformation lifecycle may be led by a task force/ duly empowered committee or team; however it is NOT about set of people doing few things. Transformation being inclusive, everyone internally & externally needs to be active participant. Transformation cannot be achieved by good old day's Quality Control or HR function; it is all about one system. There is no existence for people, who are not willing to be or not able to be part of Transformation.

Transformation's one of the critical success factors is change management that includes various type & level of training, capacity building, and change management programs with built-in measures & course correction mechanism.

Transformation does not and cannot happen every day. Beyond BAU incremental change, Transformation happens once or twice in lifetime over years/ decades. The periodicity is determined in the context of unit, i.e. Nation, Organisation, Society, Family, ...

Transformation lifecycle and journey needs to be planned and executed very carefully and scientifically, though it will have a component of art during implementation. Tough decisions would need to be taken and must be taken @ appropriate times. Any weak link can perish even the 'as-is'.