

## Change Communication in Public Sectors: Practice of Yeka Sub-City Health Office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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### Abstract

Internal communication has an important part to play in the effectiveness of change initiatives. This study explored Practices of Communication to Manage Change in two woredas health offices and health centers. Managers and employees were a target population to this study. The study sought to answer types of communication strategies and factors affecting the effectiveness of communication. A mixed approach was used for gathering the data required to answer the research questions. Survey was administered to 154 employees. Two focus groups discussions were undertaken with two woredas 16 board members of the health centers. Five managers from sub city and two woredas health offices were interviewed. The data gathered from these three methods were analyzed utilizing frequency distribution and also percentage for categorical variables. Qualitative data were grouped and interpreted. Analysis revealed that the major communication strategies including communicating objectives of the change, providing training about directives of the changes and introducing success of the change were employed successfully. However, lack of trust due to lack of answering for employee's questions and introducing the effect of the change before the change took place were among the problems identified. A number of barriers to communication effectiveness including attitudinal problems and skill gap were identified. Managers within the offices should be more comprehensively briefed and trained about communication by integrating with change processes. In relation to this there must be a need to address the perceived gap between communication strategies with those employees who agreed or not perhaps initially through improved communication.

**Key words:** Communication Strategies, YSCHO, effectiveness

### 1. Introduction

In the past, the majority of organizations had been designed for stability rather than change. Whereas now days, organizations have no choice but to change. As John cited, the current dynamic situation world trend of managing changes, world is moving and shifting fast; leaders trying to cope, they are applying their best thinking to the structures, systems, and processes they need to compete by managing changes (John, Charles, William and Gary, 2015).

Managing change is a process to make employees ready to accept change. In addition, it is a way to make them comfortable about change and to carry it out with enthusiasm and

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understanding the role of their actions in the unfolding drama of the company's fortunes, and believe that is worthwhile for them to play a part (Ash, 2009).

The escalating level of competition has caused organizational change to become an increasingly salient issue. To ensure their survival and growth in this neck-to-neck racing business environment and unlimited wants of customers, organizations need to change their working condition and performance from time to time and make the necessary adjustments depending on circumstantial factors (Kaplan and Norton, 1992). A study by Burnes and Jackson (2011) found out that lack of clear communication causes approximately 70% of change initiatives to fail on achieving desired results in organizations.

In the context of Ethiopia, primarily there exists a huge gap of information due to lack of resources like literatures, since local studies that can provide policy makers with reliable information in this regard are inadequate. Secondly most problems whatever good policy entertains them it's common to observe failures of different plans and strategy. But it's very crucial to answer why and how it happened.

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To manage the frequent changes of the organizations, effective communication plays a vital role and managers' main task should be communication (Parsaeeyan and Araabi, 1997). Communication is a very important skill and the need for effective management; through which managers establish and maintain interactions between employees to perform necessary daily tasks properly (Abbas, poor and Barootian, 2010).

However, organizational leaders often do not communicate the need for organizational change in an effective manner (Nelissen and van Sale, 2008). Rather they simply announce what the changes will be and expect everyone to comply with. This communication barrier, that may take different forms like resistance to change, in return adversely affects the effective implementation of the change initiatives in an organization. A study by Burnes and Jackson (2011) found out that lack of clear communication causes approximately 70% of change initiatives to fail on achieving desired results in organizations.

If the organization is not in a proper communication, circulation of affaires will be disturbed and messed. Coordination, planning, organization, control and other functions in the absence of an effective communication system are not realized and the possibility of managing organizations will not be provided.

According to Adebabay, (2011), in Ethiopian public sector organizations have been trying to implement various modern management systems and tools since 1995. Different policies, strategies and programs are developed for several years to improve the living standards of the citizen. But most of the time it is usual to hear: "It's a problem of implementation, not policies and strategies issue".

The Ethiopian health sector is developing and implementing a continuous program which is based on the transitional health policy of the country that was implemented through HSDP-I up to HSDP-IV. Now the sector is on the way to transform from the last HSDP-IV to the next program. In addition to this it is well known that the office have annual plan and day to day changes that should need the collaboration of employees for its implementation. However, there

is no evidence whether these changes were effectively communicated or not with the targeted audiences.

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Hence, in this study an attempt was made to explore the practice change communication to manage various day to day change initiatives in the YSCHO, Addis Ababa City Administration; and to suggest working strategies how public sectors leaders will improve their communication skills that can enable them to effectively implement change initiatives. More specifically, the study attempts to address the following questions. a) Which communication strategies were employed in YSCHO? And b) what factors were affecting the effectiveness of communication in YSCHO?

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1 Change Management**

Change management is the process of planning and coordinating the implementation of all changes through individuals, teams, and organizations. This process basically is defined as problem solving which is a shift from problem state to a desired future state (Beakdal, and Hanssen, 2006). It is the application of many different ideas from psychology and sociology fields, business administration, and system engineering (Lawson and price, 2003). Managing change is a process to make employee ready to accept change. In addition, it is a way to make them comfortable about change and to carry it out with enthusiasm and understand the role of their actions in the unfolding drama of the company's fortunes, and believe that is worthwhile for them to play a part (Ash, 2009). To assess the impact of change and to monitor its implementation, it is essential to have a policy and procedure for Management of Change (Hirschfield, 1999).

Modern companies are in a state of cultural change. Globalization, outsourcing, mergers, acquisitions, new technologies and new processes, are all common issues that companies must face as they evolve. According to Gilgeous (1997) factors resulting in the initiation of change within the organization are external factors New technology, changes in the market place, change in customer expectations, competitor activities, quality and standards, government legislation, and prevailing political values and economy cycle and Internal factors (Management philosophy, organizational structure and culture, and system of internal power and control). Therefore, as change is frequent to cop up with those both factors it is important to manage the change effectively and efficiently to get the desired outcomes. For today's leaders, the ability to manage change determines the survival and success (Gilgeous, 1997).

### **2.2 Communication**

Communication is an action between at least two persons, where messages are delivered, received and reacted to among participants. It proves to be the most significant tools in social life and business management. Communication also plays a crucial role in organizations to generate and interpret messages between employees through both directional (one-way) and bidirectional (two-way) manner (Beakdal and Hanssen, 2006). It is noted that within much of the change

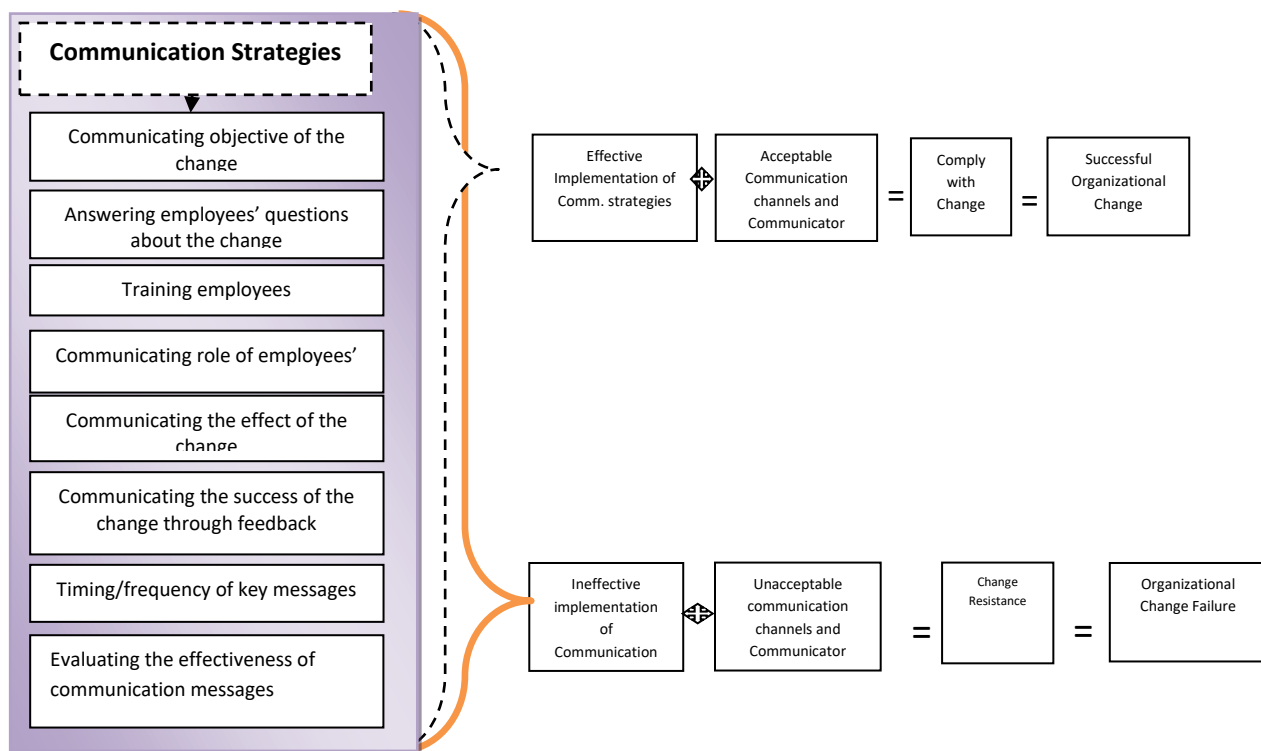
management literature, communication is important to the success of change programs (Koivula, 2009).

As a literature shows, communication has started with the early man while he was discovering the need to settle and began, to look for a way to solve his problems, understood the need to have information about his environment, and to communicate his culture to his young. Communication in the early periods in societies was done informally through the use of town criers and other local/traditional instruments and verbal means which made communication predominantly linear in nature (Amaoge and Jacob, 2015). Since now, in the modern era communication is used informally rather than using it in modern way. According to Amaoge and Jacob (2015) communication begins with language that could be sign, symbols, etc., of its the distinctive ability which has made possible the evolution of human society. At this time in advanced courtiers communication channels are being modernized through electronic Medias and the world is becoming one village.

### 2.3 The purpose of Change Communication

One of the most challenging and demanding aspects of any change project is communication. Communication is the key way that people are engaged in the change. Introducing successful change relies heavily on how the participants in the change view. Poor change communication is a common cause of complaint and change research emphasizes that change can be derailed if the communication plan is ineffective (Prosci, 2007). When any kind of change is announced, people are hungry for information. In the absence of sufficient information and opportunities to digest it through two-way 'conversations', change can be delayed. People will continue to work as they have done in the past; or rather than risk doing the 'wrong' thing, they do nothing.

**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**



According to Prosci (2007) effective communication is designed to create awareness and understanding in order to get subsequent supportive action. The rationale is that; if you want people to change, they need to invest in the changes you are asking them to make, and they are more likely to do that if they understand the benefits of the change. While not everyone has to be deeply committed to the vision for change to succeed, the majority of stakeholders must accept the need for change and commit to the direction that the organization is taking with it. Therefore, communicating well before change is implemented is simply to achieve the change by minimizing change resistances.

The literature reviewed indicates that consistent communication is necessary to effectively implement change and ensure its sustainability. In order to make new changes adopted in given organization, the articles indicate that the individuals who are directly or indirectly affected by the change should be properly communicated before change initiative, during change process and after the change happened.

There are no literatures that indicate whether changes are being communicated in this way in Ethiopian civil service sectors, especially in the health sector where the research is conducted. Therefore, it has been found necessary to study the practice of this sector to see if it is being done according to the above literature.

### **3. The Methods**

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

Based on the purpose of the study and the nature of the problem under the investigation, a mixed research approach was employed in the study Research Design

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is a procedural plan, structure and strategy of investigation; so concerned as to obtain answers to research questions or problems (Kumar, 2011). The type of research design to be adopted in this study was mainly descriptive as it used to describe the use of communication in managing organization undergoing changes. This paper is therefore used integrative perspective to explore the practice of communication to manage changes in YSCHO.

##### **3.2.1 Sample Design**

Sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. It refers to the technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items from the sample (Kothari, 2004). Sample design is the whole process of specifying the target population, determining sample frame, selecting sampling methods, determining sample size and selecting the sample unit.

##### **3.2.2 Population**

The target populations of the study were YSCHO, two woreda health offices, health centers leaders, employees and governing board members of the two woreda health centers as shown in table 3.1.

### **3.3 Sampling Techniques**

**Non-Probability-Purposing sampling Technique-** the YSCHO was selected using purposive sampling to conduct the study since the university is providing community services on this area and the health office was purposely selected because of the sector on a frequent change to

provide quality health services for the community. For the representativeness of the sample two woredas were selected purposely where the first is the nearest woreda for the sub-city (woreda 5), while the second (woreda 13) is far from the sub city.

Using non-probability sampling, 3/heads/ from YSCHO, woreda 5 and 13 health offices were selected for interview. Sixteen participants were selected purposely from two woredas health centers governing board members to participate in two FGDs. The members of FGDs participants were Chief Executive Officers, two medical directors, two heads of Finance office, two heads of Justice office, two representatives of women and children, two representatives of health center employees, two secretary of the board and two core process owners of the woreda health office as shown in table 3.1.

Probability Sampling-Stratified Sampling Technique: In quantitative research, the researchers attempt to select a sample in such a way that it is unbiased and represents the population from where it is selected (Kumar, 2011). Therefore, the sample size for quantitative data was determined by using probability sampling technique, stratified sampling after the sample was determined using the following Solvin's formula which helps to determine samples when the population is defined (Yamane, 1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(E)^2} \quad n = \frac{264}{1 + 264(0.05)^2} \quad n = \frac{264}{1 + 264(0.0025)} \quad n = \frac{264}{1.66} \quad n = 159$$

Proportionate to size was applied to represent the respondents from each sample unit by dividing the sample 159 to the population 261 and respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique in order to obtain a representative sample as shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: Sample size determination

		Sample Size						
		Non-probability Sampling /Purposive/			Probability Sampling/Stratified/			
No.	Sample Units	Heads		Managing Board of the health center	Core process owners	Support process owners	Health Professi ons	Support ive Staffs
		Inte.	FGD	FGD	Survey			
1	Yeka Sub city health office	1			2	1	13	4
2	Yeka Woreda 13 health office and health center	1	1	8		1	49	27
3	YekaWoreda 5 health office	1	1	8		1	39	23
Total		3	2	16	2	3	101	53
Total Sample	Interview	3						
	FGD	16						
	Survey	159						

Source: YSCHO (2016).

#### 4. Findings and Discussions

Among different methods that could be used in this study survey, interview and FGDs were used. These methods were very helpful to collect a great deal of data that was used to answer the research questions. Survey was administered to the employees with 154(96.6%) response rate where the interview and FGDs participants were participated fully according the survey plan. As the most appropriate method of analysis of this data that emerged from the research is thematic analysis, this section seeks to outline the themes that emerged from the analysis.

#### 4.1 Which communication strategies were employed in YSCHO?

Table 4.1: Communication Strategies employed in YSCHO

Communication Strategies	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Frq.	%	Frq.	%	Frq.	%	Frq.	%	Frq.	%
You were communicated the objectives of the changes	28	18	89	58	13	8	18	12	6	4
You got an answer for your questions regarding the changes	15	10	65	42	26	17	36	23	12	8
You trained about the directives of the changes	24	16	73	47	19	12	31	20	7	5
You were communicated about your roles in the changes	30	20	93	60	9	6	17	11	5	3
You were communicated in advance the effect of the change on your personal life and work	16	10	53	34	40	26	35	23	10	7
You were communicated about the success of the changes	20	13	72	47	21	14	32	21	9	6
You agree with timing/frequency of key messages	13	8	64	42	33	21	33	22	11	7
Your office evaluate the effectiveness of communication messages through feedback	30	19	73	47	15	10	27	17	9	6
You Comply with all changes in our office	39	25	91	59	9	6	10	7	5	3

#### 4.2 Communicating the Objectives of the Change to Employees

Communicating the objectives of the change will encourage employee's reaction to change. Employees feel as they are the part of the change and consider as they are very important. The survey in this paper implies among the respondents 117(76%) agreed as objective of the change is communicated to employee, while 24(16%) disagreed.

Beakdal and Hanssen (2009) show that, in change manager it all starts from the vision or objective of the change and communication is the tool to make sure everyone involved with the change are aware of the vision and objectives related to it. As the result shows, YSCHO is familiar in the announcement of objectives of the change for most of its employees. The employees' understanding of the reasons for change is dependent on their relationship with their organization, the level of trust they have in manager and the beliefs hold by their coworkers (Koivula, 2009). Employees can only work effectively if they can participate in the organization and they can only participate if they are fully informed (Mayshall, 2009).

However, some of employees (16%) disagree and literature support that if the target audience does not understand the reasons behind the change, it is very difficult to be implemented (Beakdal and Hanssen, 2006). Barrett also argues with this idea "without credible

communication, and a lot of it, the hearts and minds of the employees are never captured” (Barrett, 2000).

#### **4.3 Communicating the Roles of the Employees in the Change**

Communicating the role of employee in the change will facilitate the planed work to achieve the targeted objective since it gives the duties and responsibility to each employee. Accordingly to the survey, in Yeka sub-city health office, 123(80%) of the respondents agreed on getting the information about their role in the changes, against 22(14%) who disagreed. Participation is generally regarded as a key success factor during organizational change. According to Hardy (1997), involving employees from start to finish in any change program has always been considered as a good manager practice of change. Therefore YSCHO has a good practice regarding on sharing the role of employees in change process and participate them well. Moreover, employees who have helped planning process and implement the change will embrace it rather than resisting it (Hardy, 1997), and the concentration and passionate dedication are necessary to achieve distinctive competence and success (Miller, 2005).

#### **4.4 Communicating in advance the effect of the change on employees personal life and their work**

Awareness of the impact of changes before taking effort is a psychological tool for initiating changes. Literature also support that excellent internal communication implies that everyone in the organization, at all levels, understands the need for change, what the changes are and how they will affect the business and each individual’s work (Tucker, Meyer and Westerman, 1996). However, it is seldom done in many organizations which negatively affect the expected outcome of changes. It is also will be a cause for change resistance since employees haven’t any information whereas the change will affect them positively or negatively. If changes are expected to occur over a long period and are likely to involve high uncertainty at some points, then this should be clearly communicated in advance in order to avoid potential loss of momentum, disappointment, and cynicism in certain groups of employees (Barret, 2002). Appropriate communications provide employees with feedback and reinforcement during the change which enables them to make better decisions and prepares them for the advantages and disadvantages of change (Peterson and Hicks, 1996).

Therefore, it is important to inform employees how the change will affect their work and individual live. The same is true in the survey that 69(44%) agree as they got information in advance before any change take place while 45(30%) disagreed and 40(26%) of respondents say they are neutral for this question. Yeka sub-city’s employees are well informed about the effect of the change according to the above findings. But the number of respondents who agree and neutral are also higher than other related parameters which need more work of the sub-city health office.

#### **4.5 Communicating the Success of the Changes to Employees**

Change to be effective there is a need to communicate the success of the change timely to employees. As Lewis stated, the importance of feedback in the change process is another important theme (Lewis, 2000). This mechanism can create a good motivation for further change which the organization planed on its communication strategy. The result of the survey shows 92(60%) of respondents agree as they are communicating about the success and only 41(27%) responded against it. With detailed feedback that includes such factors as quality, quantity, and



timeliness, people can become self-corrective and can more easily understand the big picture (Lewis, 2000).

#### **4.6 Comply With the Changes**

Many organizations use different mechanism to initiate employees to comply with changes. Because humans are creatures of habit, are generally satisfied with the status quo, and will tend to initially resist change. The other reason to resist change is uncertainty created by the announcement of impending change; it disturbs certainty and order of their work lives (Breakdal and Hanssen, 2006). The researcher tried to see employee on how they are complying with the change just to cross check the tendency of change resistance in the sector. The result shows 130(84%) agreed as they are complying with the changes in their office against 15(10%) with those who don't agreed. The result implies the above variables of communication strategies were effectively undergoing in the sub-city health sector.

#### **4.7 Overall Effectiveness of Communication**

Lewis, (2000) found that successful implementation of communication was a major predictor of success of implementation of change. The participants of survey, FGDs and interview were asked whether overall communication process in their office was effective or not. According to the survey respondents 89(58%) of them replied yes, while 32% replied negatively. The remaining respondents were replied as they have no idea about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness. All FGDs participants and interviewees were replied the same answer with the majority of survey respondents as overall communication process was effective.

To identify the manifestation of the overall effectiveness of the communication process the researcher was asked respondents why they say effective. Most of them replied that the communication process was helping them to introduce themselves with new day to day changes in their office including BPR, BSC, 1 to 5 change army group building process and for good implementation. The others replied that because of the good communication about any change in their office, they are working their job with full responsibility. The other reasons explained was the 1 to 5 change army group is working well because of members are communicating well about their day to day duties.

Among the respondents, 89(58%) were asked what was the positive effect of overall effectiveness of communication on their day today work performance. Out of 77(87%) respondents who were stated the effect of communication effectiveness on their work performance, 48% were replied they are implementing the directives of the government and plan of the office well, because of this, their customer satisfaction is increasing from time to time. 40% of them replied, they are motivated to more work. The others replied quality of job performance is improved; peer learning practice is improved, sharing responsibilities. As literature shows, the effectiveness and commitment of employees depends largely on their knowledge and their understanding of the strategic issues of their company (Tucker et al, 1996). Therefore, YSCHO employees were well communicated about the objectives of the changes and their personal role.

According to FGDs participants, because of overall communication effectiveness the performance of the health office is effective. One FGD 1 respondent says;

*“The most BSC plan of 2015/16, in our office was achieved 100% and patients were satisfied”.*

According to FGD 2, one participant reveals that;

*“We were ranked 1<sup>st</sup> for three continuous years from 13 woredas health centers at sub-city level due to the successful performance of our plan since 2015/16”.*

The report of the office shows the same result. Both woredas health centers have an award from the YSCHO for their achievements.

#### **4.8 Role of Manager in Communicating Change**

Survey participants were asked for different opinions on what were the strength and weakness of top and middle managers in communicating changes process. 106(69%) replied the weakness of the managers while 68(44%) described the strength of the managers in communicating change process.

Among survey participants 68(44%) replied the strength of the managers of the sectors. Out of those 68(44%) respondents 29(43%) of them described their reason as the managers have a culture of working together with employees; 25(37%) also stated as their managers were ready to complying with changes and initiating employees in the same direction to comply with change by providing early information. They explained examples of changes communicated by their managers like BSC, BPR and 1 to 5 change army group implementation successes. Among respondents 14(21%) explained the strength of the manager was supervising and supporting the implementation of change process through supervision, meeting and reporting system.

A number of participants in the FGDs, survey, and some of the interviewees mentioned managers as one of the primary sources of information and communication about change. Those who had a supervisory or manager role perceived that they had a particular role in the change communication process as they replied by interview conducted with three heads of the YSCHO and two woreda health offices. The managing boards' members of the two woreda health center also insure that as they are playing a vital role in communicating change.

Implementation of a change means that many people have to reorient, redirect, or engage in new activities whereas they need also the motivation, information and skill to do so. Any organizations need to outline guide line when delivering a communications strategy designed to inform and guide employees through a change event (Ryerson University, 2011). According to Klein (1996), communication strategy should coincide with the general stages of planned change and the relevant associated information requirements. Thus, managers need to plan for communicating change: when, how and to whom information will be disseminated (Kirti, 2012). The secondary data show the sub-city health office has a communication plan to communicated changes to their employees up to grass root level /community/ which shows the strength of the managers. This implies that communication is managed based on the plan. According to literatures, five elements should that have to be included in communication strategic plan are audience analysis, communication objectives, communication channels, responsibilities of the employee and managers in communication process, and timing /frequency/ of the information (Newman, 2016; Mayhall, 2009). The sub-city health office communication plan also includes the above elements.

The plan include the background/situation analysis/ of the office with relationship to the message to be communicated and what it will impact on the office. The plan indicated what messages will be communicated the goals for implementing the communication. Audiences are identified in the plan with the messages communicated to them. The other important part of the plan is the method of communication which are; meeting, seminars, brochures, magazines, electronic Medias and banner. The managers at all level, communication committees, role model employees and all employees are the responsible persons to the implementation of the plan.

Regarding the time and frequency of the plan, it is distributed quarter. Barriers to implement the communication plan and the way overcome these barriers are included in the plan.

### **What Factors were affecting the effectiveness of communication in YSCHO?**

According to the finding most of employees were agreed they were got answer for their questions regarding changes undertaken in their office. However, 48(31%) of employees were replied as they didn't got answer for their questions and 17% respondents were neutral about this communication strategy which is not simple number. In addition to this respondents were asked the strength and weakness of the managers regarding the role of communicating change process in their office. Lack of quick answer was the weakness of the managers. As question and answer helps for the clarity, unanswered for the questions raised from employees lead to resist the change.

44% respondents agreed they were communicated in advance the effect of the change in their personal life and their work before change take place in their office. However, 30% disagreed and 26% were neutral which results more number of respondents were disagreed and neutral with 56%.

Communicating Key Messages Repeatedly and on timely to Employees is a very important communication strategies to help employees to understand about the change. Even if 50% of respondents were agreed with repetition of key messages half of respondents were disagreed (29%) and neutral (21%). Among the 77(50%) who agree on repetition of key messages asked the number of repetition they received from concerned manager and 44(83%) replied they got two time repetition while the rate decreases as repetition number increase. According to Newman, (2016), frequency the message will be repeated is important. The first time announcement helps to employees, to wonder how it will impact them and not focusing on the details of what communicating to them about. Repeating key messages ensures that what the organization want to get across is heard by employees (Newman, 2016). This result show that frequency of is two times which is not enough to help employees to understand the message and implement it as needed.

Most of respondents comply with changes in their organization while 15(10%) were those who don't comply with the changes. However, FGD 1 and 2 were also asked they had any change resistance in their office. All agreed that attitudinal problem, skill gap, the structural problem of health centers, lack of trust, and the budget constraints were change resistances. Regarding the attitudinal problems FGD 1 participant explain in detail by saying:

*"Attitudinal problem is the failure for any changes and to support this by example, our country was regulated the community health insurance and it was undergoing to mobilize the community to be a member of the insurance in order to minimize the risk of cost for medication. However, starting from the top managers of the health sector in Ethiopia up to grass root level (the community) there was a gap of information or unawareness for its overall benefits. That is the reason behind for its unsuccessfulness in the sub-city. However, the benefit and practice of health insurance is crucial as it's learned from different countries of the world".*

The government of Ethiopia is trying to build change armies in different aspects to accelerate the growth of the country; one of this is health development army group which is on implementation in most areas of the country. This group is involved in prevention of transmitted diseases at community level by fulfilling health extension packages. As interviewee 1 here below replied, the health development army group is in a good success at country level, but there are remaining works due to the communication gap.

*"The communities are expected to be organized in 1 to 5 health development army group and to be trained. However, due to the gap of communication with the professions and leaders of the sector, still this structure is not functioning as expected. Especially, some health extension workers are doing it for the purpose of reporting rather than changing the communities' life. Therefore, communicating change is a very good means to implement any changes".*

The second cause for the change resistance was gap of skill at different level of the sector. According to the FGD 1 participants, sometimes training provided to a change agent of the sector are not sufficient to influence other. The other reason to resist change according to FGDs participants and three interviewees is the constraint of budget and important input. According to the secondary data of the woreda 5 and woreda 13 health centers, they are providing the health service for significant number of people who came from different woreda of the Yeka and Bole sub-city and Oromiya regions which results to the constraints of budget, input, examination rooms and overload of employees.

YSCHO have the communication plan which helps the office to manage changes. But the managers lack to include in the communication plan of the office how will the effectiveness of the communication effort be monitored, how will feedback be obtained internally and externally to ensure understanding of the message communicated, how will feedback be used to evaluate, monitor and adjust the initiative and goals, how will adjustments and changes to the decision, based on the feedback, be communicated.

Out of all respondents 106(69%) replied the weakness of the managers in communicating change process. Among those 34(32%) of them outlined a sense of uncertainty and disquiet resulting from their managers not being able to answer questions; while 20(19%) explained as the manager lack transparency about the change in detail and they forced the employees to accept the change. Inconsistency of change, insufficient training to employees, lack of awareness about communication strategy plan, deficiency of budget and input to implement the changes were other manifestations of weakness.

One FGD 1 participant stated:

*"There is lack of trust of employees on the manager of the sector, because of their questions are not replied on time. This is because they have a direct contact with customers who need more satisfaction. However, there is no sufficient response and actions for what employees are rising like, lack of pharmaceutical inputs and others. Therefore, when some changes communicated, employees tend to lack trust on the manager to accept the change since their questions were not answered before"*

According to the above mentioned participant of FGD 1, it is important to improve the trust of employees through answering and fulfilling their questions to make them to comply with changes.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

Communication is a vital part of the change process, since poor communication making change more likely to fail. It is therefore, very important that organizations place a great deal of emphasis on communicating change to employees.

The research revealed that all communication strategies were practiced. Therefore, the researcher can conclude that communication strategies to manage changes in YSCHO were

implemented effectively. The effectiveness of change communication helped the office to achieve the major BSC targets of the office.

Factors affecting the effectiveness of communication in YSCHO where the findings revealed little unease about communication strategies, for indicating as the strategies had limited effectiveness for participants because of personal attitudes, skill gap, the structural problem of health centers which hinders not to get the expected health service, lack of trust, and the budget constraints were among the activities caused for change resistance.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

A number of implications regarding communication within YSCHO emerged from this research. Based on that the researcher recommended the following points:

1. These have the opportunity to perform communication strategies more within the office as a whole and to keep up the way they are doing currently.
2. It is recommended that managers within the offices should be more comprehensively briefed and trained about the change communication by integrating with change processes. In addition to this there is also a need to address the perceived gap between employees who agreed, disagreed and neutral about practice of communication strategies in their office.
3. As seen on selected health office the gap for enrolling communication specialist was a challenge to evaluate the communication flow for managing changes. So, ministry of public service recommended that, rather than communicating changes through a communication committee it would have been better employing communication expert at all level of the public sector to manage day to day changes through effective communication.
4. The communication plan of the office should need to include important elements like monitoring system of effectiveness of the communication, feedback mechanisms and how feedback will be used to evaluate, monitor and adjust the initiative and goals, how will adjustments and changes to the decision based on the feedback be communicated.
5. There are important issues about factors affecting communication effectiveness like the lack of trust within the office. These issues need to be addressed as they are not only influencing the effectiveness of communication; but also affects the successful operation of the office. It seems likely that involving employees in change processes prior to implementation would have benefits for both the change process and the communication of the change. Earlier involvement is likely to result in improved initiative from employees, and also improved receptivity to communication about the change. Feedback from employees on the change prior to implementation may also improve the substance of the change. It is also likely that uncertainty about the change would be reduced, lessening the possibility of resistance to the change. It is also suggested that this would contribute to building trust within the office, and may reduce employee distrust about change.
6. The office should continue to use multiple methods of communication to ensure that employees are kept informed. The communication channels previously used by the office were recommended to be continued for effectiveness of communication should need to be employed well. Whichever channel managers choose to communicate with employees, they must take into consideration that communication must be a two-way process.
7. As recommended by respondents and as practically known, the sub city health office should need to use electronic communication channels encompass email, internet, and social media platforms. This channel can be used for one-on-one, group or mass communication. It is a less personal method of communication but more efficient. When using this channel, care

must be taken to craft messages with clarity and to avoid the use of paradox unless the message specifically calls for it.

8. The future researchers should need to study at country level and comparative study need between different public sectors.

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