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**The Changing Role of Middle Manager- A Literature Review**

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***Abstract***

*A manager is a person who directs others for accomplishment of goals. The role of managers has been changing from past time. Now their presence is vital in every sector for successful implementation of policies or plans. These roles are essential to manage effectively. This article analyzes the changing role of middle manager.*

**Keywords:** middle manager, company, management, performance.

**Introduction**

The middle manager has positioned on middle positions in every company‘s structure and they have to implement strategies or objectives of top management to lower management or employees

The role of middle manager in every organisation is conflicting because they act as *controller* as they see work of juniors or *controlled* by seniors in the sense of implementplans made by upper management. Sometimes, their role is *resisted* because junior employees resist change. So, the role of middle manager is controller, controlled, resistor and resisted **(Harding, Lee & Ford, 2014).**

The old management theories by Taylor, Fayol and Mayo highlighted the concept of middle management **(Parera and Vallejo, 2013).**

The term *Manager* is defined as the person who inspires other through their performance (**Kokila & Muralidharan, 2015).** Dyer (1996) defined managers is a person who works within any organization by means of policies and practices **(Zhao, 2006).** A manager‘s job is to direct, accomplish and progress things which are already identified and existing **(Azeem & Fatima, 2012).** A manager is a person whose work is to manage and direct thework of subordinates to achieve the firm‘s objectives **(Robbins & Coutler, 2012).**

The manager is defined as the individual who works with subordinates to achieve the objectives of the company. They perform management functions like planning, organizing, directing, controlling; and play a different managerial role in the organization. In today‘s era of competition and globalization, managers require different techniques to tackle these different changing situations **(Robbins, 2005).** Presently, a lot of issues are due to incapable management. Almost all major objectives of the organization are achieved and directed by managers. So, any achievement is considered the success of a manager while any failure is the failure of a manager **(Banerjee, 2012).**

The managers in companies are mainly engaged at positions such as top, middle, and lower level. The top level persons are ones which on the topmost of organizational structure and have the accountability for the total company. They are positioned on the post of president, managing director, the chief executive officer (CEO), and executive vice president with

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objective to make long-term plans, goals, and strategies to analyze the environment in order to take right decisions for welfare of the company **(Robbins & Coutler, 2012; Daft,** **2010).** The persons who are working at the middle positions are known as middle levelmanagers. Their role is to implement strategies created by top-levels. They employed at designations namely department head, regional manager, division manager, manager of quality control, and project managers. **(Robbins & Coutler, 2012; Daft, 2010).** The individual s who directly deal with non-managerial employees is the first line managers. Their positions are office manager, shift manager, supervisor, and line manager **(Robbins**

* **Coutler, 2012; Daft, 2010).** In order to perform functions of management the types ofskills required. Firstly, technical skills where knowledge about techniques needed. These are compulsory for the lower level employees and first line managers due to their dealing with production. Secondly, Conceptual skills which are related to concepts or critical thinking situation and essential at the top and middle-level. Human skills are connected to the employees who work with groups or individual in order to motivate others. These skills vital for all levels of management due to deal with manpower **(Robbins & Coutler, 2012).** A manager‘s job is to achieve the goals of the organization through management functions like planning, organizing leading and controlling **(Robbins & Coutler, 2012).**

The competency of a manager is related with the success of organization to achieve competitive advantage **(King, Fowler & Zeithaml, 2001)** Managers are the persons who highly demanded in the organization for their effectiveness. Nowadays, the companies are competing in terms of human resources such as managers and employees which act as a competitive advantage for them. Therefore, managers are attracted and retained so that they can‘t switch job from one firm to another. So, companies are making an investment in order to retain an effective manager **(Ali & Patnaik, 2014).** In this competitive world, there is only one way to survive and grow for organizations i.e. knowledge management. The role of a middle manager is becoming challenging as they have to handle and successful for knowledge management **(Al-Hakim & Hassan, 2011).** Knowledge has become an increasingly important factor in an organization‘s competitiveness. To be successful, knowledge is shared and centralized so that the organization can get benefits from it. Although, middle manager‘s position is very important for the organization as a knowledge sharing process is managed by them **(Gaál & et al, 2012).**

**Literature Review**

Automation has changed the scenario in terms of number of middle managers in organisation and decreased their roles. Although the role of middle manager is related to performance of organisation as related to learning process. That means in restructuring of organisation the strategic role of middle manager should be reconsidered **(Floyd &**

**Wooldridge 1994).**

The position of middle manager is essential in the organization due to intermediary positions, strategic roles and contribution to implement change **(Rezvani, 2017; Robbins,** **2005).** Among these, other roles are an administrator, leader, decision-maker andcommunicator (**Rezvani, 2017).** Although, managers are involved in activities of organizational commitment, performance, productivity, and business planning. In spite of their role, they have to manage upwards influence from policy-makers to implement change and downwards managers or employees who resist change **(Currie, 1999).** So, their role of middle managers is often overlooked, leading to workload issues and role conflict **(Balogun, 2003).** They are playing strategic roles, face political tensions and often

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forced to balance conflicting situations **(Raghu, 2009).** Middle managers represent themselves as a core competence of the successful organization **(Towers, 1996).**

The role of middle manager is important in healthcare as act as a channel between top and lower level management. Manager is committed improve their effectiveness through implement of innovative practices in organisation. There were fourteen practices identified that will be useful while implementing innovations which lead to make manager more effective to bring change in organisation **(Engle, Lopez, Gormley, Chan, Charns, Lukas,** **2017).** Middle manager‘s role in healthcare involves the improvement and implementationof quality standards projects. Their roles performed by managers were coordinator, communicator, promoter and conflict manager. The activities related to these roles were to inform information of project to employees, monitoring their response, and handling queries to further in order to report top management **(Zjadewicz et al., 2016).**

The IT managers role and responsibilities vary depends on the size, structure, nature of the hospital and its technology adaptation. The core role and responsibility of IT manages include Managerial role, Operational role, Web master role, Consultant role, Training role, Team leader role **(Bakshi, 2013).**

Knowledge management is essential for every organisation to survive or grow in this era. It can‘t be possible without the support of middle manager as it leads to sustain performance of organisation **(Al-Hakim & Hassan, 2011b).** Presently, knowledge management provides major support to every company and it‘s difficult to appreciate middle manger‘s role to implement knowledge management which further leads to innovations. The major role played by middle managers are analyst, intuitive and pragmatic which are directly related to implementation of knowledge **(Al-Hakim & Hassan, 2011a).** The middle manager‘s role is important in organisation due to intermediary positions, strategic roles and contribution to implement change**.** Among these, other roles are administrator, leader, decision-maker and communicator (**Rezvani, 2017).**

The middle managers are also involved in strategy making process because they have the ability to create and estimate plans which further progress the performance of banks. It‘s the need of the hour that upper and middle management should together make decisions to ensure quality **(Wooldridge & Floyd, 1990).** The role of middle manager in strategy making process is important as they act as ‗analyst‘, ‗coordinator‘, ‗information source‘ and ‗communicator‘ **(O'Shannassy, 2014).** They are also involved in strategy implementation process when supported by upper management (**Qi, 2005).** The middle managers are also involved in Strategic process **(Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992).**

The role of managers in the implementation process had number of obstacles. Floyd and Wooldridge (1994) recognized the three different tasks performed by middle-level managers such as communication about objectives and allocation resources to implement the strategy; monitoring the implementation process, and answer the questions for the deviations from the objectives.

The manger‘s role is critical in strategy implementation because of knowledge or experience they have to perform functions and accomplish long-term goals of firm successfully **(Radomska, 2014).**

In case of decision for entrepreneurs the middle managers role is critical as they act as bridge between top and bottom level employees for effectively application of change. The dimensions such as management support, work preference, reward, time availability and organizational boundaries were associated with entrepreneurship in positive manner. Due

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to their middle positions, their role to manage resources, provide information to decision makers, giving emotional support to their subordinates, and communicating the strategic intent of senior management throughout the organization. It is our intention organizational leaders might use these findings to develop mechanisms to engage middle managers in the strategy implementation efforts and ensure their commitments **(Banumathi &**

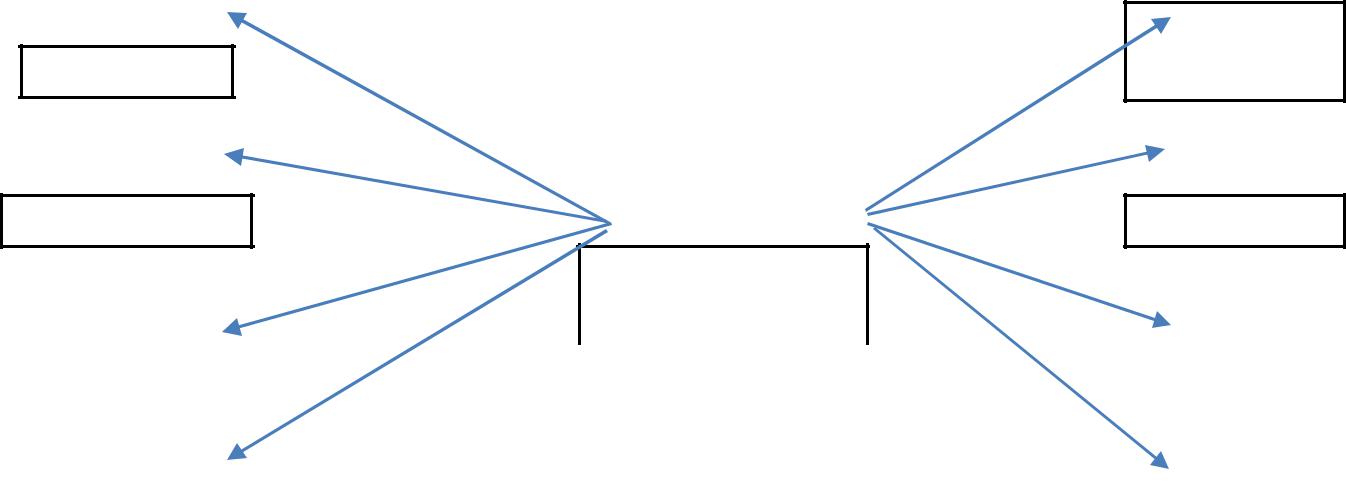
**Samudhararajakumar, 2015).**

The manager‘s contribution to develop/implement strategy is important for organizations. To the success of an organization, manager deals through soft skills on any organizational level **(Kealy, 2015).** The conflicting role of ‗change agent‘ managed by managers such as ‗government agent‘, ‗diplomat administrator‘, and ‗entrepreneurial leader‘ **(Gatenby,** **Rees,Truss, Alfes & Soane, 2014).** Currently, knowledge is an attractive factor which isprogressively significant for organizational competitiveness. The knowledge sharing processes benefit both individual who sharing it and the organization. So, the role of manager is vital in this process. The usefulness and availability were the major components find in this process (**Gaál et al, 2012).**

**Research Methodology**

The Objectives of the study to analyze the changing role of middle manager in organizations. The present research design is descriptive in nature and secondary data collection technique was used for this survey. In data collection research article, journals and thesis were studied to draw conclusion for study.

**Findings**



Strategic role

Analyst

Conflict

manager

Team leader

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|  | **Role of Middle** | |
|  | **Manager** | |
|  |  | Change |
| Coordinator |  | agent |
|  |  |  |
|  |  | Decision |
| Communicator |  | maker |

**Conclusion**

A manager is a person who directs others for accomplishment of goals. Now their presence is vital in every sector for successful implementation of policies or plans. These roles are essential to manage effectively. This article analyzed the changing role of middle manager. The various roles played by middle managers were strategic role, analyst, coordinator, communicator, conflict manager, tem leader, and change agent and decision maker. Although, the critical role played by middle manager in order to implement strategy and knowledge management.

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