



THE NECESSITY, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR TRANSITION MANAGEMENT IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT – EVIDENCES FROM INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary society is evolving into a network society, presenting an increasing array of challenges that appear insurmountable through conventional methods and existing institutions (Rotmans et al. 2001). The modernization process in the industrialized world has generated these 'symptoms of unsustainability' as a byproduct of economic expansion, technological advancement, and the persistent rise in wealth. Global manifestations of unsustainability include the excessive consumption of natural resources, social and economic disparities, biodiversity loss, and climate change issues. At the local level, these symptoms can significantly and adversely affect individuals' lives: flooding, famine, deteriorating air and water quality, conflicts, and an overall detrimental influence on welfare, efficiency, and development [Kotter, J. P. (1996)]. In the Western industrialized world, indicators of unsustainability are evident. In addition to direct environmental repercussions, which are somewhat 'regulated' by environmental legislation, indicators of unsustainability include traffic congestion, electricity deficits, substandard food quality, spatial depletion, and pollution. The issues of unsustainability are directly associated with global challenges; the industrialized nations have, in effect, exported their difficulties by importing resources and exporting environmental burdens. In addition to the local unsustainability issues faced by industrialized nations, they also bear the responsibility [2 Ahmed, F. S. Y. (2013)] for challenges in other regions, such as Third World countries, both presently and in the future. Sustainable development and a responsible society should address both local challenges and global issues, along with their interconnections. This can only be achieved by contemplating the underpinnings of our society and its evolution while transcending the apparent symptoms.

Keywords: *Project Management, Challenges, Transition, Development, India.*

INTRODUCTION

The term 'symptoms' is employed to indicate the indications of societal development and structural organization. The industrialized world, propelled by technological, economic, and social advancements, has cultivated a culture, supporting frameworks, and individual behaviors that collectively constitute social systems with significant detrimental environmental and social consequences – affecting not only our own society but also extending globally. The adverse consequences of modernity compel our society to address these issues effectively, enabling a transition to a sustainable society that minimizes or significantly reduces negative repercussions both locally and in the future [Hiatt, J. (2006)]. This type of reflexive modernization must be converted into fundamentally new practices, institutions, and culture. This thesis examines transitions to sustainable development, concentrating on industrialized economies, with the Netherlands

servicing as a case study within the European setting. Dutch society is contemporary, highly advanced, and equitable. It is a nation characterized by a relatively high population density, an efficient administration, and a democratic political culture. It is at a developmental phase akin to other Western European nations: population growth is slowing following a period of prosperity and demographic expansion [Bridges, W. (2009)]. The prevailing paradigm of efficiency, growth, and globalization is increasingly contested by alternative perspectives across the political and social spectrum, alongside a rising discontent with the operation of our societal systems, including energy, agriculture, healthcare, education, housing, spatial planning, and mobility.

Opportunities and Challenges in Transition Management for Project Management Development

Transition management in Project Management describes the methodical process by which an organization, team, and stakeholders are guided during a transition in project structure; processes; technology; or organizational strategy. This methodical approach enables continuity and reduces disruption allowing for increased probability of achieving project success. With increasing global connectivity and changing environmental factors such as regulatory changes and technological advancements, organizations have developed into ever-changing entities and therefore, transition management has evolved into one of the most important capabilities for project managers and development teams [Kumar, V. (2020)]. Transition management can provide the opportunity for growth and improvement while also creating obstacles requiring strategic planning and proactive intervention. Therefore, it is necessary to understand this concept in order for organizations to increase their ability to achieve project success; satisfy stakeholders; and remain competitive.

Opportunities of Transition Management

- Structured transition processes ensure smooth handovers, reducing delays and increasing adherence to schedules and budgets 1[Ahmed, F. S. Y. (2013)].
- Proper transition management involves continuous communication, aligning expectations, and gaining stakeholder buy-in [Ahmed, F. S. Y. (2013)].
- Transition periods allow for systematic documentation and training, promoting skill development and knowledge retention [Bridges, W. (2009)].
- Implementing new tools or systems during transitions can improve efficiency, monitoring, and decision-making [Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (2018)].
- Organizations become better equipped to respond to environmental changes, regulatory shifts, and market dynamics [Burnes, B. (2017)].
- Anticipating potential disruptions during transitions allows for preemptive risk planning and management [Taher, A., Khan, R. A., & Khan, M. A. (2025)].
- Transition management helps formalize processes, creating consistent workflows across projects and departments [Hiatt, J. (2006)].

Challenges of Transition Management

- Employees and stakeholders may resist new processes, tools, or roles, slowing down transition implementation [Pollack, J., & Algeo, C. (2018)].
- Transitions often require additional time, personnel, and budget, which can strain organizational resources [Acevedo, G. A. (2015)].
- Miscommunication or lack of clarity during transitions can lead to misunderstandings and project delays [Jaaron, A. A., et al. (2022)].

- Aligning new processes, technologies, or structures with existing systems can be complex and error-prone.
- Organizational culture and employee attitudes may hinder the acceptance of new practices [Müller, R., & Turner, R. (2007)].
- Measuring transition effectiveness is difficult without proper KPIs, benchmarks, and feedback mechanisms.
- Transition phases may temporarily disrupt workflows, affecting productivity and quality outcomes [Zou, P. X. W., & Lee, S. (2016)].

Table 1: Opportunities and Challenges of Transition Management in Project Management Development

Category	Opportunities	Challenges
Project Outcomes	Enhances project success rates, timely completion, budget adherence	Potential project delays if transition is mismanaged
Stakeholder Engagement	Builds trust, ensures stakeholder alignment, improves satisfaction [Hwang, B.-G., & Low, L.-Y. (2012)]	Resistance to change, lack of engagement from key stakeholders
Knowledge & Skills	Facilitates knowledge transfer, capacity building, and staff training	Knowledge gaps if training is insufficient, retention issues
Technology & Tools	Enables digitalization, workflow automation, and improved monitoring [Aditya, G. (2025)]	Integration difficulties, technical failures, and user adaptation issues
Organizational Flexibility	Improves agility, adaptability, and operational efficiency [Liu, Y., et al. (2019)]	Operational disruptions, temporary inefficiencies [Motawa, I., et al. (2020)]
Risk & Compliance	Identifies and mitigates risks, ensures compliance with regulations	Risk of unforeseen challenges, regulatory misalignment
Process Standardization	Creates uniform processes, standard operating procedures [Jaaron, A. A., et al. (2022)]	Cultural and behavioral resistance, difficulty enforcing new standards

A transition management approach will provide an organization with a structured process for capitalizing on opportunity; this includes enhanced project results, engagement of stakeholders, enhanced skills, and increased operational effectiveness. The challenges facing organizations in their ability to capitalize on opportunity include the potential for resistance to change, limited resources, and issues associated with the integration of various projects or initiatives. For organizations to overcome challenges they must have a comprehensive plan of action, communicate clearly, provide adequate training, and monitor progress towards goals. Organizations that effectively manage the trade-offs between the opportunities and challenges of transition management are best able to maximize their chances of achieving successful project results and creating sustainable improvements [Eshtehardian, E., & Khodaverdi, R. (2022)].

PROBLEMS OF UNSUSTAINABILITY

The issues of unsustainability confronting modern society are marked by significant complexity, considerable ambiguity, and the involvement of numerous stakeholders with diverse perspectives and values (Dirven et al. 2002). The organization of our societal systems is perhaps unsustainable in the long term due to finite resources, constrained space, economic pressures, and a lack of growth opportunities [Shen, Q., & Ying, H. (2021)]. It is evident that, in the long run, these systems must undergo structural transformation to attain improved performance levels and address the sustainability challenges currently confronting us. This is not only essential for life but also represents a desirable and ethical progression in human evolution: to structure our society in a manner that aligns more harmoniously with our natural environment, and in principles of democracy, equity, and justice [Pollack, J., & Algeo, C. (2018)]. These difficulties cannot be addressed using conventional transition-promotion methods and processes, as they are profoundly [Taher, A., Khan, R. A., & Khan, M. A. (2025)] ingrained in the structures of our society. The essential inquiry is to how the requisite significant shifts may occur; an even more intriguing question is the direction they should take.

The future evolution of our society remains a contentious arena characterized by ongoing debates: between progressive and neo-conservative ideologies, between globalist and anti-globalist perspectives, between environmentalist and liberalist agendas, and between democratic and authoritarian forces and movements [Eshtheadian, E., & Khodaverdi, R. (2022)]. Diverse stakeholders perceive the current global issues so dissimilarly that consensus on solutions is nearly nonexistent. Fundamental disparities in objectives, interests, and strategies frequently obstruct cooperation, agreement, or collective solutions, regardless of whether the subject pertains to climate change, development aid, or optimal pollution mitigation strategies [Alsofiani, M. A. (2024)]. Such challenges are frequently termed 'wicked' or 'unstructured' in academic discourse, indicating that many stakeholders perceive these issues in divergent ways. Nonetheless, in addition to being defined and perceived variably by different stakeholders, sustainability issues also stem from entrenched patterns of thought and behavior inside established institutions and frameworks [Leech, B., & Hanslo, R. (2025)]. This ultimately signifies that they cannot be addressed using conventional methods and strategies. Consequently, we define 'persistent problems' as a distinct category of unstructured problems. Employing a complex systems approach allows us to identify the underlying causes of these issues, thereby elucidating why they are so challenging to address [Cattani, K. D., & Martins, R. S. (2020)]. The reasons are: they manifest variably across different scales; they involve a diverse array of actors with distinct perspectives; they exhibit significant uncertainty regarding future developments; they necessitate long-term approaches; they are challenging to 'manage' in a conventional manner; and they are entrenched in various societal domains.

Ongoing issues are evident in sectors like agriculture, transportation, housing, energy supply, and water management. To effectively tackle the complexities of the necessary changes in these industries, it is essential to develop new policy or governance approaches that consider the intrinsic conflicts of interest, opinion, and value [Liu, Y., et al. (2019)]. These novel governance strategies must originate from the complexity, interdependence, and uncertainty inherent in our society [Acevedo, G. A. (2015)]. The variety of viewpoints regarding the nature of a persistent problem and the preferable remedy can be comprehended by

recognizing that individual actors perceive only fragments of the entire society [Hwang, B.-G., & Low, L.-Y. (2012)]. Their viewpoint is influenced by their personal history, roles, interests, expertise, activities, and similar factors, as well as their particular position within a system, the size at which they function, and the temporal framework they consider. We shall attempt to elucidate this using a straightforward example from the Dutch agricultural sector. At the local level, each individual farmer prioritizes the welfare of his family, thereby concentrating mostly on harvesting and procurement.

The primary concern of unsustainable agriculture for the farmer is individual economic survival. At the social level, policymakers, interest groups, and NGOs engage in advocating for issues within the political sphere, altering regulations, and formulating new financial and regulatory [Kumar, V. (2020)] frameworks through debate and negotiation with various stakeholders. At this level, environmental concerns and animal welfare are subjects of discourse pertaining to the formulation and execution of policy initiatives. This is a fundamentally distinct problem framing compared to that of the farmer [Cattani, K. D., & Martins, R. S. (2020)]. At the systems level, we notice a diminishing area for transition-promoting agriculture due to housing, water management, and foreign competitiveness. A reduction in agricultural output results in reliance on imported food and increases national vulnerability. The inquiry pertains to the relevance [Bridges, W. (2009)] of agricultural activities in the future vs the potential reliance on imported agricultural products, suggesting a shift towards specializing in agricultural knowledge and technology for export purposes. Consequently, at this stage, the perception of the situation is markedly distinct. Various actors work at these distinct levels, each possessing often contradictory perspectives – such as environmental movements, local citizens, project developers, and lobby groups – thereby exacerbating the complexity [Müller, R., & Turner, R. (2007)]. The discourse over the future of the agricultural sector in the Netherlands can vary significantly across different levels and views. The absence of a comprehensive framework or perspective results in a lack of discourse regarding 'the (sustainable) future of agriculture,' leading instead to disjointed discussions on new rules, specific locales or practices, and European policy, among other topics. [Bridges, W. (2009) Kotter, J. P. (1996)] The setting of these ongoing societal issues lacks cohesion, coherence, and systemic thinking. The example demonstrates that enduring issues manifest variably across scales, include diverse players with distinct interpretations of the problems, entangle with varying rates of society change, and present alternative remedies at multiple levels. In practice, actors are progressively engaging with other actors at both the same and different levels.

TRADITIONAL POLICY PROCESS

The conventional policy process is organized such that the government oversees it and engages stakeholders to formulate policies [Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (2018)]. Nonetheless, these result from negotiations and consensus, and hence are rarely long-term strategies for radical innovation. While conventional methods may partially address these intricate concerns, they necessitate innovative governance strategies that consider the overarching systemic dynamics and inherent complexity. We may substantiate the case for innovative methodologies by leveraging Hisschemöller's policy problem typology (Hisschemöller 1993). This typology differentiates four distinct categories of policy problems, represented across two dimensions: the degree of consensus or dissent regarding pertinent standards and values

(pertaining to the nature of the problem) and the level of certainty concerning the requisite knowledge (also related to solutions). Within this range, simple problems are those for which solutions are provided, whereas complicated problems are defined by structural ambiguity and disagreement. Issues of unsustainability [Prosci. (2018)] fall into the latter group and inherently involve divergent opinions, unidentified remedies, and a lack of consensus regarding the nature of the problem. In addition to participative approaches aimed at achieving convergence or consensus for unstructured situations, persistent issues require a deeper examination of prevailing values and perspectives to facilitate transformative thinking that supports transition processes [Aditya, G. (2025)]. The advantage of this problem typology is that various categories of problems can be associated with distinct solution strategies or decision-making and policy processes. Simple problems necessitate technical solutions, such as constructing a bridge, but complicated and unstructured ones demand social learning procedures [Pollack, J., & Algeo, C. (2018)]. This viewpoint on societal challenges aligns with the shifts in policy thought over the past decade and sociological insights into society systems.

In all domains, transition-promoting thinking is increasingly influenced by the concept of 'networks'; diverse, multi-actor systems characterized by interdependency, self-organization, and a lack of overarching control. Nonetheless, not all straightforward problems have been resolved; rather, our vision and perspective on reality have developed, enabling the deconstruction of complicated issues into 'simpler' problems at a reduced scale. This method of deconstructing issues is fundamental to problem structuring, [Project Management Institute. (2021)] wherein intricate problems are divided into sub-problems that can be addressed with more targeted strategies and policy frameworks. While real-life issues cannot be confined to a single category, the typology elucidates a spectrum of complexity, hence necessitating a diverse array of policy instruments and strategies aligned with the specific nature of the problem. Due to the escalating complexity of society, more intricate problems are recognized, necessitating more sophisticated policy processes [Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (2018)].

CONCLUSION

Our society has been structured hierarchically and by sectors or policy areas, predicated on the notion that social issues can be addressed in a top-down and linear manner by disregarding uncertainties and unforeseen events. The existing institutions and organizations, including governmental, industrial, scientific, and non-governmental entities, are inadequately prepared to address complexity and ambiguity in both their design and activities. From this perspective, our society is [Hiatt, J. (2006)] presently in a lock-in situation: institutional frameworks, socio-technical systems, and specific routines and behaviors, which have emerged from decades of technological and economic emphasis on growth, specialization, and efficiency, are profoundly entrenched in our society. Problem-solving has frequently been limited to short-term strategies aimed at narrowly defined issues, resulting in only incremental and slow modifications. Structural change is limited as long as the prevailing institutions and frameworks endure. The present trajectory of development focuses on optimizing existing structures rather than innovating and creating new ones. Nonetheless, it may theoretically be the case that the continuous reproduction of current systems renders the attainment of lasting, [Burnes, B. (2017)] structural change extremely challenging in the long term. It is conceivable that many breakthroughs (technological, institutional, behavioral, cultural, and others) are necessary to address the

issues of long-term unsustainability effectively. This necessitates a fundamentally distinct approach to addressing social change and the associated function of government [Kerzner, H. (2019)]. As Einstein stated: we cannot resolve issues utilizing the same mindset that led to their creation.

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