

*Review*

# **Impact of culture on economic development and resistance of marginalized people**

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Received 31 October, 2020; Accepted 16 April, 2021

**Understanding the factors responsible for low socio-economic condition and political status of a marginalized community is imperative to comprehend their culture of resistance. The major focus of this study was to become aware of the resistance of marginalized communities in their cultural milieu. A review of literature is made to establish the fact that cultural resistance plays an important role in a community towards development and progress. The author studies how culture impacts among marginalized people in various communities affects the growth of economic development both positively as well as negatively. The findings are applied to the marginalized communities (Dalits and Tribals) in India which is not part of this paper. Yet, the paper also reveals the cultural resistance of the Savara tribe in Andhra Pradesh, India.**

**Key words:** Culture, resistance, development, culture of poverty, culture of silence

## **INTRODUCTION**

Anthropologists and sociologists perceive the development, progress and growth of a human community in an evolutionary point of view. From savagery to civilization, the human community has passed through various stages of progress. The growth of a community is assessed within a particular time and space. History evolves and within the history the human community also evolves. Change is brought about in response to the environmental conditions during the particular period of time in a particular environment. Economic development happens when there is interaction between human beings and nature. Resistance to change is a part and parcel of human interaction in a prevailing environmental condition within their culture. Hence, an attempt is made to study the impact of culture on economic development of people

and resistance of marginalized people in particular.

### **Environmental impact on economic development**

According to Thomas Malthus (2008), population growth in the world doomed people to a declining standard of living. He believed that the total wealth available on this earth is constant. Malthus perceived that land and the available natural resources are strictly limited. As the population increases, certainly in future, most of the world's population will engage themselves in fighting over the available limited natural resources. If we do not take care of the sustainability of nature now, the nature also will not take care of us in future. Efforts to safeguard the

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sustainability of the nature with all its richness at present only will ensure the sustainable livelihood of the humanity in future. Since human culture and nature are interlinked, we cannot avoid the study of nature vis-a-vis its impact on human culture when we deal with the study of change and development of marginalized community in their environment.

Pope Francis writes in his encyclical *Laudato Si*, “the human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together: we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation” (Francis, 2015).

### **‘Social capital’ impact on economic development**

Guiso et al. (2006) identified as to which values are more important when economic development faced hazard. Like Banfield (1958), he proposed a cultural explanation for underdevelopment. Banfield considered the slow economic growth in southern Italy because the people had narrow self-interest. They could not trust anyone outside their family. Similarly, Robert (2000a, b) also observed that certain areas in Italy which enjoyed free city states (Civic institutions) centuries earlier had much better track record regarding development than those places in southern Italy which did not have such civic institutions. Those civic institutions enhanced a ‘sense of trust’ among people. People were prepared to invest in social capital, where these civic institutions were effective. Over the years people developed mutual trust with one another beyond their own extended family. Social capital is defined as “the institutions, relationships, attitudes, and values govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development” (Grootaert and Van Bastelaer, 2002). Efforts to strengthen the social capital among the marginalized communities wherever they are will certainly enable them to prosper gradually.

### **Cultural factors impact on economic development**

David (1999) is of the opinion that the cultural factors play very important role in the progress of national economies more than any other factors. He suggests that human values such as thrift, hard work, tenacity, honesty and tolerance in a community make all the differences. Talking about the impact of culture on economic development Tabellini (2010) proposed a set of four values namely trust in one another, a strong belief in individual effort, generalized morality and autonomy. He concluded that in all those regions in Europe where these four cultural values were so strong and visible, there the yearly economic growth and per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) were high. Such values may not be fully

present in marginalized communities especially in India. This is because the marginalized communities in India are economically impoverished, socially discriminated, politically subdued and culturally looked down upon by others.

By giving this example Guido Tabellini emphasizes that the following attitudes and values held by people in Micronesia are paramount for any community which is on the road to growth and development.

#### ***Trust in one another***

This may differ in societies depending on how broad and concise the supra-familial institutions are present there. In the islands of Pohnpei, Yap and Palau in the Micronesian country in Western Pacific ocean, socio-political institutions were relatively well developed in ancient times. Whereas such socio-political institutions were absent in Atolls of the central Carolines or Chuuk which were smaller, un-stratified societies. There, they may not have developed trust in broader institutions.

#### ***Strong belief in individual effort***

People living in Island societies have never been identified for their individualism rather they had collectivism in all their dealings. They had communal identity and individuals were known for their subordination to group interests. Where there is collective consciousness leading to collective effort and performance by the people there actual growth and development were found.

#### ***Generalized morality***

They had ethical standards common to all. This may vary from each place. This standard generalized morality was a specific contribution of Christianity in every continent. Sometimes, believing God with generalized morality brings people together for a common cause. The Biblical understanding of “*Thorah*” the sacred book of the Israelite community brought together the twelve tribes of the Jewish community and gave them a generalized morality.

#### ***Autonomy***

Autonomy was not a characteristic of an island society. In fact, island societies are known for conformity. It is very much needed as a strategy to survive in a small community which is isolated from the rest. In fact, like the rest of the Pacific, Micronesia did not have such cultural

values and attitudes that are more conducive in promoting economic development.

Tabellini further says that at present in Micronesia, money is considered as a means to gain more meaningful ends than increasing one's financial wealth. The island culture people do not multiply their money as it is done in any market oriented economy. Theirs is subsistent economy. Their economic considerations are very much limited by various other considerations than hoarding money. They strive for their own personal advantages and prefer more of their own security, status and solidarity.

The Islanders land holding provides more security, which is considered as the most valuable currency of wealth. Selling their own land for a business venture or for any other purpose will trap them into a very serious problem. They have to preserve their land at all cost. This same condition applies well to any marginalized community and especially the tribal community in India. People in tribal community are very much closely associated with land and other natural resources. Devoid of land and other natural resources they have no existence further.

Preserving status is a strong motivational factor for the Islanders. They prefer even to give up a business opportunity for the sake of giving contribution for Church's activities or community events such as social gatherings and religious celebrations. This gives them prestige or a higher position or recognition in such society. To maintain their status they will go to any extent to spend lavishly. Similarly preserving status is very important in any Indian tribal or marginalized society. The elders enjoy such status and power in their village communities.

Solidarity or a sense of belonging to the community is very important for any marginalized community in India like that of the Micronecia islanders. At times, they are ready even to forego a portion of one's earnings to a relative for the sake of strengthening the family bond existing between them. Even among the tribal communities in India people find their identity and strength in their solidarity and togetherness.

According to Amy (2004) and Gregory Clark (2009), we cannot simply conclude that the modern technology alone can boost the economy and elevate the living standard of the people. The formation of people's mindset with values and habits are even more essential for any community on its way to development, growth and progress.

Culture can have hidden effects in business, agriculture, industry, trade and development in a country. As we all know today, China has emerged now as a major power hub in the world; but it was not during the middle-ages. The economic condition of China during middle ages remained stagnated and went backwards. Pride and a feeling of self-sufficiency that led to closing of China's borders and the country remained insulated for

many years. Adam (1776) observed that a country which neglected or despised foreign commerce cannot transact the same quantity of business which it might do with different laws and institutions.

Sometimes in the past, economists considered that sufficient capital and large investments through national savings are the ones that would improve the economic growth in a country. Later on, they have understood that only stable political and economic institutions would ensure economic growth. Institutions are needed yet development of right attitudes and values among people are more urgent and necessary. In this context, when we deal with economic development of the poor and the marginalized community, we cannot but study about the culture of poverty reflected in their lives.

### **Impact of 'culture of poverty' on economic development**

The 'Culture of Poverty' speaks about the idea of a cycle of poverty. It explains why poverty exists despite introducing number of anti-poverty programs. The American anthropologist Oscar Lewis (1961) coined this concept "Culture of Poverty" by doing his ethnographic studies of small Mexican communities. He defined 'Culture of Poverty' as a set of norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors that are unique and basically not the same of the mainstream middle class people. He perceived that this culture of poverty is transmitted from one generation to another and perpetuated the condition of misery despite all changing circumstances. A low self-image, inferiority complex, total dependency, a sense of resignation, belief in fatalism and lack of future vision and many other human characteristics constitute culture of poverty. These characteristics do not allow the people to move forward. This set of characteristics, values, attitudes and behaviors are adopted generation after generation in reaction to the prevailing conditions that deter the poor to be incorporated into the mainstream society. The term 'Culture of Poverty' was primarily applicable in Third World and developing countries. It suggests that almost 20% of poor people are trapped in this cycle of self-perpetuating behavior or character that caused perpetual poverty.

In the 1960s in the United States, the favor enjoyed by the Blacks was very much related to the disorientation of their lives. The "Culture of Poverty" was very conspicuous among Black families as it was noticed in the disorganization of family set-up, increase in the number of illegitimate children and number of single unwed mothers and their complete dependency on social assistance etc. It was the total disorganization of the families and community that was considered responsible for poverty. However, the real problems encountered by Blacks were denial of access to opportunities for them to

be integrated into the mainstream society. A fact that cannot be denied or fully digested is that the poor Blacks lived a life of perennial insecurity, victimized by economic transition and discrimination by the whites. The situation of oppression and discrimination by the whites were the main cause for their perpetual abject poverty. They were victims of a context where they were denied of developing values convergent with those of the rest of the population in the United States (Clark, 2009). A similar situation exists in India too in the context of prevailing 'Caste System' and 'Patriarchy'. The hierarchy of caste system suppresses and alienates a section of poor people (Dalits and *Adivasis*) and keeps them permanently as victims of oppression by the people belong to dominant caste (Selvin, 2020).

In course of time in the US the 'Culture of Poverty' was understood as the 'Culture of Welfare' in as much as the latter was thoroughly criticized. Having lost their sense of social responsibility, the poor Blacks demanded welfare as their due. Social security and welfare measures to the poor Blacks encouraged them not to work and earn their living. They lavishly spent money on drugs and sex.

Daniel (1965), a renowned Sociologist, was in favor of Oscar Lewis. He made a comprehensive study on Black families in New York City and presented a report known as Moynihan Report in 1965. Many youth had children outside marriage. Family values became absurd and social norms were relegated. He stated that the primary reason for them not able to come out of the poverty trap is certain not-so-good values they held close to their hearts (Daniel, 1965).

Poverty has become systemic because it is deeply rooted in economic disparity, party politics, gender discrimination and social oppression. Some people languish in poverty by debt or chronic illness or lack of job opportunities. However, many others continue to live in a seemingly endless cycle of poverty generation after generations. The poor have fewer opportunities to climb on the socio-economic ladder. Their resources are limited and source of income is very minimal which they get through human labor.

Poverty was perceived as the absence (or loss) of mainstream values (family values and the work ethic). Those people purposefully excluded themselves from hard work. They become lazy and they are totally dependent on welfare measures which included subsidies and freebies extended to the poor. They have low level of hope and aspirations. Poverty has become part and parcel of their culture. Anyone who recognized poverty with culture of people and blamed the victims of poverty is likely to dismiss any social policy that is an absolute necessity to end the cycle of poverty and prove the living standard of the poor marginalized people.

It is very difficult to determine any particular behavior, attitude, characteristic and value as specific to the poor marginalized people. It is even more difficult for

progressive intellectuals to accept the conclusion that poverty is culture specific and ignoring the real fact that it is due to lack of opportunities. If this understanding holds truth, then, even an improvement in the institutional and organizational set up happens, the situation of the poor marginalized people will not be improved. No doubt, culture of poverty leads them to fatalism. At the same time, anti-poor policies of the government and willful neglect to improve the conditions of the poor marginalized people cannot be ignored by justifying the culture of poverty.

### **Impact of case poverty and insular poverty on economic development**

John (1958), an economist made in-depth study on poverty. He found the reason for poverty being transmitted from one generation to next. He classified poverty under two types, namely 'Case poverty' and 'insular poverty'. He considers 'Case Poverty' as some people face discrimination or certain limitations in their family situation, like a family member becoming alcohol and drug addict or prone to gambling which eventually led the family to poverty. This type of poverty is unique to some families and may not be the case considering the whole community. Here poverty is not a collective phenomenon. Whereas, according to Kenneth (1958), 'insular poverty' is a type of poverty in which the whole community is poor, unproductive and deprived of their basic rights. If we look at the people living in slums of Mumbai where the whole group is below the poverty line, we can understand this fact. In India, due to caste practices and gender bias, a vast section of people are discriminated because of their Dalit, tribal and gender identity. They are totally denied of work opportunities in par with the other members of the dominant caste community.

Considering the specific culture of the poor marginalized people, David et al. (2010) says that it is a defense mechanism against the domination being imposed on them. The poor marginalized group actively participates in the production of its own insularity with all the counter-productive effects of such an attitude of resisting.

Resistance to development has to be studied from culture perspective. There are some ethnic groups that do so well in business, even though these groups are minorities in other cultures. The Chinese in Philippines, who are less than two percent of the total population, hold 60% of the nation's private economy in their hands (Amy, 2004). It is very surprising to know that the four popular airlines, many hotels, shopping malls and almost all the banks are owned by these Chinese minorities in Philippines. The Chinese ethnic minorities have not only made their mark in the Philippines but also they dominate

business in many other parts of Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Thailand, Burma and Malaysia (Amy, 2004).

Chinese are known for achieving success with their hard and consistent work culture. As Amy (2004) points out, where ever we see, we find examples of “dominant minorities” who have remarkable ability to compete with others. She observed that the Croats enjoyed a much higher standard of living than the majority Serbs in Yugoslavia. Similarly in South America, she observed that the European descent succeeded overtaking darker-skinned compatriots in grabbing the economic power. Here in India, we find the Marwari community even though small in number has monopolized the trade and commerce in all the southern states of India.

Modern business, trade and many other economic and developmental activities require a constellation of cultural values suited for our daily life. Yet, no one has identified such values with precision and no one has come out with a strategy for inculcating such values among the people especially among the poor marginalized ones. It is highly necessary not to be insensitive to certain cultural aspects, especially the ‘resistance’ that is deeply rooted in their cultural milieu. Through participant observation, it is possible to understand the signs of resistance in the culture of the marginalized people in a community.

### **Impact of religious sentiments on economic development**

Adam (1776) known as the founder of modern economics, said that every person, motivated by his/her pursuit of own interests, contributes to the public interest in a system that is self-regulating. Adam Smith recognized that the “pursuit of personal interests” is very important than just acquiring more and more money. Hence, through his well-known “Theory of Moral Sentiments”, he speaks about what we would call ‘cultural values’. In the same wave length, John (1858) also made the point that cultural constraints (cultural values) on persons have strong impact on economy than the pursuit of monetary gain that seems to lead towards development.

Max Weber (1864-1920) the German social scientist gave more specific insights into how cultural and religious values can impact on economic output. He was right in saying how social attitudes and religious values in a community determine what economies will succeed and which will fail. He emphasized the reformation teachings of the protestant work ethic, which supported the pursuit of wealth as a duty. This sense of duty enabled people to strive for maximum economic gain. Protestants understood that salvation is ‘a gift of God’. They viewed wealth and prosperity as blessings from God. Hence, they emphasized hard work with duty bound. It was a fact; throughout Europe the Protestants especially in Germany and Great Britain were more productive than

the Catholics in Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Italy in the past (Amy, 2004).

In the Indian context considering economic prosperity, religious sentiments also play a very important role. Economic prosperity in terms of wealth, knowledge and strength is very much connected to people’s profound belief in the blessings of Goddess *Lakshmi*, Goddess *Sarasvati* and Goddess *Parvati*. They offer a special prayer (*pooj*) on tools and implements used by the workers both in the agriculture industrial sectors. This day is celebrated as *Ayuda pooja* in many parts of India to pay homage to work and labor force. They give thanks to gods and goddesses for all the blessings received.

In the process of enhancing the economic prosperity of the people, resistance to new proposals are bound to arise on account of differences in culture, values and belief system. The different environmental conditions also influence people’s response to change, growth and development. Though the conditions are more favorable, yet some people do resist and we need to understand their resistance from the perspective of their culture.

### **RESISTANCE THEORY**

Scott (1985) introduced this elusive concept of “Resistant Theory” in 1985. This concept is applicable in marginalized, subaltern, feminist, cultural, peasant and post-structural studies. Resistance is an oppositional act. Like all acts. Resistance is situated in certain time, space and relations. It deals with different types of actors, techniques and discourses. Peasants, serfs, untouchables, slaves, dalits, tribal, labourers, and prisoners are not free to speak their minds in the presence of power. These subordinate groups create a secret discourse that represents a critique of power spoken behind the backs of the dominant. At the same time, the powerful also develop a private dialogue about practices and goals of their rule that cannot be openly avowed (Scott, 2008). Everyday resistance not only undermines power acted upon them but also becomes an impediment to realize one’s own power within.

‘Overt rebellions’ are actually rather uncommon among the peasant. They do not occur normally, and often do not have much impact. Rather than seeing ‘resistance as organization’, Scott looks at less visible. He finds these particularly among rural people who are physically dispersed and less politically organized than urban populations (Scott, 1985). With his idea of ‘transcripts’, Scott recognizes that the dominant as well as the weak are often caught within the same web of socialized roles and behavior often expressed without any explicit or conscious intent (Scott, 1992).

He says, “most of the political life of subordinate groups is to be found neither in the overt collective defiance of power holders nor in complete hegemonic compliance, but in the vast territory between these two polar

opposites” (Scott, 1985, p.136). There is a connection between resistance and the idea of hidden and invisible power. Just as hidden forms of power can be used by the powerful to keep certain issues and voices off of the agenda, similarly the powerless groups can employ strategies of resistance which ‘hide’ their actions from the powerful. In reality everyday resistance is integrated into their social life. Resistance is a recurrent social phenomenon that has often been ignored, feared, spiritualized, demonized or romanticized. It could be merely for their survival amidst domination, discrimination and subjugation.

### **Reasons for resistance**

The reasons for resistance among the poor marginalized communities often are hidden. The more we force things, the more people resist. Only by entering into their culture (that shaped their minds), one can understand the reasons for resistance. A real *emic* approach is needed to understand the resistance of the poor marginalized people when changes are introduced towards development. The following aspects are culled out by the in-depth study carried out among the poor marginalized community in India (Selvin, 2020), which could be considered as possible reasons for their resistance.

#### ***Misconception towards the process of change***

We can expect resistance from people if they fail to understand the need for change or not clear about such need. People strongly believe that the present way of doing things works well. Ambiguous language and inappropriate manner of communication might as well create misunderstanding and ambiguity. As a result, they lack clarity of vision and carried away by misconception of ideas towards the process of change (Selvin, 2020).

#### ***World view and uncertainty***

“Fear of the unknown” is one of the most common reasons for resistance. People can take bold and active steps to face the unknown if only they sincerely believe and feel deeply the urgent need for change. They must realize that risk of moving forward in a new change direction is lesser than standing still (Selvin, 2020). Future promises will not help, but presently one has to walk his/her talk. If our world view is camouflaged by uncertainty, then there is no hope in every initiative we take towards change, development, progress and growth.

#### ***Lack of competence***

Infused by fear, people normally do not accept their lack

of competence. Hence, periodical training will enable them to discover their hidden potentials and capabilities. They also should know the process of change. Some people would not be able to make the needed change even after undergoing a long training, because, their self-assessment is very low. There is a tendency to pass the bug on others. It is very important to identify the ones who are capable of performing well and they have to be encouraged in a community. Identifying the capacities, recognizing the talents and affirming the uniqueness of the poor marginalized people are absolute necessities when they are led on their way to progress.

#### ***Connected to traditions***

Doing things in a new way, even though it seems very rational, sometimes people will resist, because they are emotionally connected to the old ways. To detach them from their emotional attachment to their old ways is really a herculean task. Young people who are flexible to take up leadership role should move forward in the new direction and the elders should play an advisory role in a community. The principle of subsidiary has to be respected by the elders of the community when they create space for the youth to play their rightful role in community development. Freedom of thought and expression has to be fully utilized in order to reap maximum output.

#### ***Lack of trust in others***

If people do not trust the one who introduces change and the way to do it, then their cooperation in all change initiatives is very minimal. Trust in oneself as well as trust in others is significant for a steady and gradual growth. Sometimes, people do not trust the one who introduces change. Only by developing familiarity with the people one can win over their trust gradually. Building mutual trust among people is very essential for a change leader to be effective and to be successful. Lack of trust often leads to resistance.

#### ***Perceiving change as just momentary***

If people perceive that the change initiative is just a momentary and it will not last long or if they believe the change will fail, then they show less interest to cooperate with the change proposal. Moreover, if they feel that the change is contradictory or inconsistent to their values, they are likely to show resistance. Creating a long term vision for the future is essential on the road to change and development. A hope filled vision of the future will certainly minimize the resistance of the people.

***Not being consulted***

In the process of any change initiative people would like to know what's going on. They like to be consulted and want to share their views and opinions in the process. If people are prevented from participation and not sufficiently consulted, then their resistance will grow much stronger day after day. Recognizing the importance of every individual in a group and giving them due opportunity to express their opinion in the process of decision making will enable the change leader to be more effective. People will be alienated in the process if they are not consulted.

***Reduced hope***

People's compliance should not be understood as acceptance. People who are facing continuous and frequent change resign themselves and just keep quiet. They simply go along with the flow. They may be present in body, but their hearts are far away. They are already exhausted and do not possess any forward thinking. Their motivation and enthusiasm begin to ebb away. Their creativity is blocked. In such situation they show their resistance in a very subtle ways. Setting a high hope among the people would energize them to move forward.

***Existing status quo is beneficial***

People's resistance can also shoot from their perceptions of change that is introduced. If they perceive that they will be worse off at the end of the change, then they are unlikely to give their full support and instantaneously they resist. If they perceive that status quo is beneficial to them, then they show resistance to the change initiative. They are more comfortable to remain where they are. Sometimes change involves momentary sacrifice from people, for which they may not be ready unless they are able to see lasting benefit in future for the sacrifice they made at present.

***Benefits and rewards not adequate***

People will surely resist change when the benefits and rewards for making the change are not seen as adequate for the trouble involved. They would feel that the change is going to make their life harder. They might perceive that meeting their needs and taking the risks seem to outweigh the benefits they get. Similarly, if people conceive that the change favors another group of people and not favors them, then there might be (unexpressed) anger and resentment towards change leader and change proposals. In such situation they show more indifference,

non-cooperation and resistance.

**Measures to reduce resistance**

As far as there is resistance in a community, no change effort could be made possible. People need to know each other well and be ready to trust one another. The matrix is 'United they stand, divided they fall apart'. From the study of action research conducted among the *Savara* tribe in India regarding their cultural resistance, the following measures are suggested to reduce the resistance found among the poor marginalized communities when they are led to change, development and growth (Selvin, 2020).

***By promoting a culture of trust***

A community constituted by culture of trust, clear and frank communication network, collective participation and cordial interpersonal relationships among people, there resistance is easily noticed and hardly is there occurrence of resistance. Detecting the sources of resistance is the first step toward arriving at good diagnosis and solutions. It is necessary to develop among them a "culture of trust" and hold people accountable and responsible for what they decide to do. The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown. So, all of them need to be provided every bit of information that binds them in mutual trust and confidence.

***By setting high expectations***

The success of any community where a change or a development project is implemented comes down to one thing, namely setting a high expectation. It is very essential to organize its members to focus on, and work toward the same purpose with high expectation. The people should know what is expected of them before they can be held responsible and accountable for anything. If the expectations and goals are made very clear, less time will be spent later clarifying what was really expected of them. Setting a high expectation and leading people towards it, indeed motivates them extremely to achieve the set purpose.

***By instilling profound commitment***

Just because people know what to do, does not mean they will do it. Their commitment is paramount. They need to understand how the goals will benefit them

personally and move the community forward in development and progress. They should be led to integrate the achievement of the goal and their interpersonal relationship in working together. Once this connection is made strong then they are more likely to buy into the goals by strengthening their mutual relationship with one another and show deeper commitment.

### ***By enabling self-assessment***

Provide sufficient information clearly time to time. Information is needed to hold people accountable for their participation. Their involvement in the developmental project depends on the needed information they receive. Measure their ongoing performance. It is highly necessary to gauge whether or not they meet the goals and expectations to which they had previously committed. Goals are only measurable when they are quantified. Calculate and analyze the results. If need be compare them to their goals. In this way, their commitment could be strengthened and their involvement could be intensified.

### ***By feedback and further follow-ups***

Feedback would not solve any problem by itself, but it will open the door for deeper study, reflection, analysis, discussions, clarification and follow-up actions. Create an ambience where everyone speaks freely without any hesitation. Giving correction and confrontation/care-frontation in a group is an art that everyone learns in the process. People need feedback time to time to improve their performance in areas where they fall short of expectations. Setting expectations high followed by authentic and genuine feedback hold everyone accountable. Appraise and evaluate how the process has been handled over a period of time. Take stock of the impact on the people. Make sure that the project implemented really benefits the target people. Demand responsibility, transparency and accountability from all. Weigh up pros and cons in implementing the development projects. Previous feedback, review and evaluation are highly necessary to move forward in future with effective plans and accurate strategies. Plans and decisions taken are not just reports that find its place in the files but they are put into practice with follow up action.

### ***By linking goals, commitment and performance***

Sometimes people do need incentives and external motivation to live up to their commitments. In their continuous struggle to reach their goals, they need help

and assistance. Profit or loss, success or failure –people should bear the consequences collectively. It is the responsibility of all. Relationship, goals, commitment and performance are equally linked. Goals must be tied to greater cause and ambitions that make a person committed to his/her role. As a result, the performance will be very high. People, who do not comprehend the roles they play, are more likely to be disconnected. People should be made aware that they are responsible for what they do in their community.

## **DEALING WITH RESISTANCE**

The only possible way to deal with resistance is to identify the root cause of resistance, which is “Fear”. The psychoanalytic theory calls it as phobias and it is relatively more applicable with poor, subjugated, subaltern, marginalized and displaced communities. It is believed that phobias are the product of unresolved conflicts between the id and the superego. We need to understand how ‘fear’ has been transmitted from one person to other and how fear works in a community. Ultimately we need to understand how fear operates as collective resistance of the poor marginalized people.

### **Conflicting perception creates ‘fear’**

Fear operates in a person through ‘conflicting perception’. How one looks at this world and interprets it, differs from another. This is based on one’s experience, memory and history. So, when people experience change, the way they perceive and interpret its result influence, whether they involve in an action or reaction or a positive move forward or a knee-jerk type of resistance. Suppose between two persons, each one profoundly believes that one’s own perception is the only “accurate” perception of reality, then there is a disagreement between them. This causes conflict and leads to resistance. To understand fear in a person requires understanding how he/she perceives and interprets the reality. An *emic* approach is very much needed here to understand the cause of one’s fear. Perception determines the experience and how it is interpreted what is being experienced. So, resistance to change happens because his/her experience actually runs “counter” to his/her perception. The antidote to deal with resistance is basically not the perception or experience but we need to counter the root cause – fear.

### **Threat to basic needs creates ‘fear’**

According to Maslow (1943) fear is caused, when people’s greatest needs are threatened. Maslow explained this in his “Theory of hierarchy of needs”. He





**Figure 1.** Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

pointed out that people are motivated to attain certain needs in their life. Some needs have priority over other needs. Physical survival is the most basic need, and this will be the first thing that motivates people's behavior. Once that level is fulfilled automatically people move forward to fulfill their other needs on the hierarchy level up as Maslow mentioned. The fulfillment of every need up in the hierarchy leads to change and development. The poor marginalized people hardly find opportunities to satisfy even their most fundamental physiological needs. It is very hard to imagine how they will move up on the ladder of hierarchy of needs (Figure 1).

#### ***Physiological needs***

These needs are biological necessity of survival, such as air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, sleep, sex. These are very fundamental and basic needs. If these needs are not fulfilled one cannot function optimally. Maslow considered physiological needs are the most important needs among all other needs.

#### ***Safety needs***

Everybody wants to live in 'safety' and 'security'. Threat to safety and security of life in any situation makes one's life miserable. Everyone seeks protections and wants

freedom from fear. No innovative and creative action will flow when people are under constant threat. Freedom and security are more essential for a person to grow and mature in all aspects of life. In a caste ridden Indian society the Dalits live in fear of the dominant community. Their safety and security are always under threat.

#### ***Love and belongingness needs (Social)***

Love and belongingness are the next level of human need. According to Aristotle, human beings are 'social animals'. They are interrelated beings and they are more interdependent beings as well. The need for interpersonal relationship motivates their behavior. Hence, everyone looks for friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance, mutual love and affection. They are nothing but social capital that enriches their life in a community. Everyone wants to be affiliated to a group, family, friends and work environment. Every person wants to love and be loved. Love and belongingness characterize their identity and well-being.

#### ***Esteem needs***

The fourth level of human need constitutes two categories: Self Esteem— this consists of self-worth, achievement, mastery, independence; and Desire for reputation – expecting respect, human dignity and

recognition of their status and prestige from others. Maslow observed that the children and adults need respect and reputation to form their own identity. When one's identity is under threat then there is a fear which results in resistance. Every person wants to get recognition in life and wants to have security in life. When these needs are threatened, people resist.

### **Self-actualization needs**

The fifth level of human need according to Maslow is, "realizing one's own personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences. It is a desire to become everything one is capable of becoming" (Maslow, 1987, p.64). This makes one's life contented. Opportunities are given to people to use their creative potentials. Attending to the need of what they are and capable of contributing to the growth and welfare of the society, will certainly enhance their growth and development. In a nut shell, every person wants to take control of his/her life. They cannot easily give up controlling others. The perception of loss of control, recognition and security are also reasons for resistance. Though the fact remains the same, people will go to any extent to rationalize and justify themselves to support their resistance. They easily point out others as the reason for their resistance. The external symptoms may trigger resistance a bit but the real cause is the internal disposition - 'fear' factor only. This fear factor could be well understood from the prism of people's psychology, cognition and ideology imbedded precisely in their culture.

### **RATIONALIZATION AND JUSTIFICATION OF RESISTANCE**

Fear is a hidden factor and people normally do not accept it as a cause for their resistance. They always rationalize and justify their resistance. The narrative analysis brought out from a marginalized community gives the clarity about their cognition towards change and the following interpretations were drawn.

#### **I want to stay where I am**

People who remain continuously in the same place for a long period of time are usually in a state of comfort. They do not feel comfortable any more to the new proposal or suggestion towards change. To live blissfully in their 'comfort zone' gives meaning to their lives. Sometimes, even though they are not fully happy where they are, still they are not ready to move forward accepting the change proposals.

#### **My needs are already fulfilled**

Needs are fundamental basic stimulus of any action. If all their needs are fulfilled and the current situation is relatively comfortable (particularly in comparison with the proposed change) then they are happy to stay where they are. When their needs are already met here, they hardly cooperate with any change effort.

#### **I have invested heavily**

When people have invested lot of time, money and energy, in building up their social and organizational positions, any change proposal may appear to them as bad news. A sense of identity, security and belongingness are derived from their social investment. Organizational investment gives them control. They do not want to give up their status and position in their social arena. They do not want to be controlled by adapting to change initiatives.

#### **I hardly understand what is proposed**

We cannot simply assume that everybody understands all the changes that are proposed. Until people, 'get' the rationale for change, they are less likely to go along with it. It takes time for people to figure out what it really means. Less clarity and more ambiguity in change proposal will be resisted naturally by them. Such people often say, "We do not understand what is being proposed".

#### **The goal looks worse compared to the beginning where I am now**

Although people want to move towards the goal, they show resistance because the final resting place of the change looks significantly worse for them when compared to the current situation of their beginning. It should never be like jumping out of the frying pan and falling into the fire. They cannot make such mistake in life. Thus, they resist and justify their resistance.

#### **There is nothing to attract them to move forward**

If the change perceived by people has nothing to do with them and if they perceive the benefits for others only, then resistance is spontaneous. If they do not get the same 'vision' of the one who introduces change, then there is neither a pull nor a push factor towards the intended change. When there is nothing to attract them to move forward, normally they will show indifferent attitude

to change proposals resulting in resistance.

### **My journey there looks painful or bad or wrong**

The final goal may be great, but when the process to reach their goal looks very hard, challenging, tedious and not comfortable, then resistance is bound to happen. The imminent pain of the change is more instantaneous than the joy of the remote and muddled future. Certainly a person responds more to the present than to any inspiring vision of future. If the change or the final destination contravenes existing norms and values, then people will consider it to be bad or wrong. At this juncture, they will be very reluctant and show more resistance.

### **Lack of trust on those who propose change**

If the people's experience of the change leader has not been trustworthy in the past, then they will not buy the vision of the future proposed by the change leader. If the people continue to perceive it as a dangerous journey, then they will not trust the leader. The integrity of the leader is an important attribute. If the change leader wants people to follow, then a good reason must be given to trust them.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Break the silence and understand the power structure**

Resistance also stems from 'culture of silence'. Observing the poor marginalized people in India, particularly the study carried out among the *Savara* tribe in Andhra Pradesh by Selvin (2020), it is revealed that the people who have internalized the 'culture of silence' over a period of long time have personalized submissiveness and passivity in their life. As a result, they are neither expressive nor vocal. They are not ready for any open clarification, confrontation or rebellion. They silently suffer bearing everything happening to them. They are reluctant to express their resistance for the fear of losing the patronage of the dominant and powerful people in a caste ridden society. According to Scott (1992), resistance depends on the form of power. Michel Foucault claims "Where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978). Abu-Lughod observed, "Where there is resistance, there is power" (Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 42). The important characteristic of everyday resistance is the 'pervasive use of disguise', through either the concealment of anonymity of the resister, in which the personal identity of the protesters is kept secret, or concealment of the act itself.

Scott said, "Instead of a clear message delivered by a disguised messenger, an ambiguous message is delivered by clearly identified messengers" (Scott, 1989). So, to understand the resistance of the poor marginalized people we need to understand the operation of power in the hand of the one who initiate changing measures as well as within the power structure where he/she functions. Resistance of the poor marginalized community could not be fully understood without taking note of how power is in operation. Thus, any economic development initiated among the poor marginalized community should seriously consider their inherent resistance in their cultural milieu and the ambiance of the power structure where a poor marginalized community is identified.

## **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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