Employee Interpretations of Change: Exploring the Other Side of the Resistance Story

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This study examines change resistance in Indian organizations by departing from change-agent perspective, and focusing on the employee interpretation of change. Change 'resistors' were identified based on inputs from HR managers implementing change, following which in-depth interviews were conducted with fifty-four such employees. The interviews were qualitatively analyzed to understand employee perspective. Findings revealed that employees may not perceive their actions as resistance and legitimize their behavior based on ideological reasons or their assumption that they are behaving in long-term interests of the organization. Poorly framed communication can lead to negative response towards the change, even if employees do not find the proposed change problematic.

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Introduction

Resistance is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that has been widely discussed in management literature, and more often than not, change scholars have identified employee resistance as a crucial factor that influences the success of change implementation. For the last several decades change research has focused on ways to reduce or eliminate resistance, with the primary assumption that it is dysfunctional and therefore thwarts change implementation (Lewis, 2011). Most of this work has been done in the Western context, with several researchers pointing towards the dearth of change management and change resistance studies in the Indian context (Bhatnagar, Budhwar, Srivastava & Saini, 2010). Bezboruah(2008) called for a need to understand employee resistance in India.

The concept of resistance was first introduced by Lewin (1947), and since then, it has been defined as a multifaceted phenomenon that leads to unanticipated delays, costs and instabilities in implementing change (Ansoff, 1988); behavior that attempts to maintain the

status quo when the organization wants to change the status quo (Zaltman& Duncan, 1977); willingness to engage in deception (Shapiro, Lewicki& Devine, 1985); or as a reactive process that signals power relations and organizational members opposition to initiatives taken by other members (Jermier, Knights & Nord, 1994).

Needless to say, most of the times resistance has been described in negative terms - it either prevents organizations from carrying out change implementation or creates challenges that make this process more difficult. Resistance research can be broadly divided into two approaches: the first which provides a more conventional, traditional view of resistance recognizes it as a barrier to change processes and studies it primarily from the change-agent's perspective. Researchers taking a contemporary view of resistance question the traditional 'change agent centric' perspective of change implementation and argue for greater focus on employee perspective. Researchers have begun to believe that resistance can provide valuable insights from employees and raise legitimate concerns about the change process itself. However, both these views have primarily been shaped based on Western concepts of change as well as resistance. Unfortunately, studies examining Indian perspectives regarding resistance are few and far in between. This article attempts to close this gap by taking a contemporary view of resistance by examining it from the employee perspective, and doing so in the Indian context.

Since resistance has been considered problematic for change implementation, most studies focus on attempts to 'manage' resistance. In an effort to understand (and prevent) resistance, significant body of resistance research has focused on identifying reasons that lead to resistance and thereby managing resistance.

Factors Leading to Resistance

Schein (1993) found change resistance to be a ubiquitous phenomenon in organizations. Researchers have identified a wide variety of factors that provide explanation for resistance: organizational culture, organizational politics, lack of resources, lack of commitment, insufficient information, poor timing, lack of trust, uncertainty, fear of unpleasant consequences (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Labianca, Gray & Brass, 2000), psychological support, gradual and flexible participation of change (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006), loss of status or power, lack of reward, disruption of routine (Gilley, Godak& Gilley, 2009). With the emergence of such wide variety of factors, some researchers attempted to classify them in to broad categories. Largely, literature suggests that resistance can be because of individual or organizational factors, though focus seems to be more on individual reasons for resisting change. This focus is not surprising because change researchers have acknowledged that it is not possible to change organiza-

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tions in meaningful ways unless the employees change (Poole & Van de Van, 2004).

Individual Factors: Effective change implementation assumes that employees begin believing differently, thinking differently and behaving differently, thus placing emphasis on individual level acceptance of change. For instance, change acceptance and resistance has been linked to individual personality characteristics (Oreg, 2003). In his study, Oreg developed a resistance to change scale based on personality attributes such as intolerance, reluctance to lose control, cognitive rigidity and dispositional tendency.

Resistance literature also emphasizes understanding the cognitive processes underlying employee resistance. Lau and Woodman (1995) tried to provide a cognitive explanation for employee reactions to change by using the concept of individual schemas. They posit that schema can help people make sense of information in the environment and when organizations undergo change, members have some interpretations and expectations of these changes. Understanding change schema can help us examine employees' current change orientation, anticipate expectations about future change and identify the possibility of change resistance beforehand. Similarly, Labianca, Bray and Brass (2000) found that change recipients' inability to revise old decision making schemas and enact new schemas can lead to resistance during change process. They found that resistance was instigated by employee self -interest and was further motivated by skepticism regarding management's commitment to the new change schema. Another popularized assumption about resistance is that emotional responses have predominantly negative implications for change implementation and scholars have associated them with irrational resistance (Kiefer, 2005). To a large extent, negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, stress and insecurity have been perceived to be an individual problem, wherein the employee lacks the maturity or ability to appreciate change (Carr, 2001).

Organizational Factors: Though several scholars have argued that resistance to change is also built into organizational factors (Burke, 2002), there are relatively few studies looking at macro level reasons for resistance. Waddell and Sohal(1998) identify systems, processes, climate and culture as factors causing a state of inertia that leads an organization towards greater reliability and predictability which, in turn, makes it difficult for agents to implement change. There has been some focus on understanding organizational culture and capabilities to anticipate and manage change resistance (Jones, Jimmieson & Griffiths, 2005).

Top management support and commitment to change are expected to play a crucial role in change acceptance, since skillful and strategic leader can successfully bring together disparate employees and overcome obstacles (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006). Employee resistance is also likely to be high when it is perceived that organizational resources and capabilities do not support the proposed

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change. Since planned change involves redeployment or redirection of resources, lack of resources can lead to higher stress levels and even neglect of organizational functions(Burke, 2002). Finally, factors such as broken agreements, violation of trust, communication breakdown and misrepresenting of situation have been found to be major causes of resistance by scholars (Reichers et al., 1997; Ford, Ford &D'Amelio, 2008).

Embedded Assumptions

These studies mentioned in the earlier sections provide ways of preventing resistance by identifying factors that can lead to resistance, but do not truly engage with the notion of resistance in a meaningful way. There is little interest in understanding how recipients make sense of this process; researchers are primarily concerned with efficient accomplishment of management goals, leading to preventative prescriptions for overcoming resistance.

During recent times, however, researchers have begun to question the conventional wisdom that people always resist change. An oft repeated critique of negative approach towards resistance is that almost all discussions of resistance take place from the change agent's perspective. Therefore any response that is not in keeping with the change agent's expectation is perceived as resistance

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(Bartunek, 1993). This one sided approach towards understanding change resistance leads us to conceptualize resistance as a problem that is invariably caused by the recipient and it is up to the change agent to manage or overcome this problem. Such 'change agent centric' view, according to Ford et al. (2008), assumes that an account of change resistance is an accurate report provided by an unbiased source presenting an objective reality. Human resource managers and change scholars have paid scant attention to the perspectives of those facing the change and overwhelmingly, research takes the perspective of the management implementing the change. Further, Piderit (2000) draws our attention to managerial tendency of associating resistance with recipient inability to accept change and fundamental attribution error. Change agents responsible for implementing change are likely to blame others (in this case, change recipients) for ineffective change implementation rather than accepting their own role in this process.Dent and Goldberg (1999) suggest that people do not resist change per se, but may resist the uncertainty associated with the unknown, or the way in which change is implemented, or certain rationale behind change implementation.

Objective of the Study

This study takes a contemporary view of resistance and views resistance from the employee viewpoint through in-

terpretive approach. This approach is not new; Isabella (1990) argued for the need to use interpretive approach to understand sense making during change process over two decades ago. It is only recently that this perspective is gaining ground (Putnam, Grant, Grant & Cutcher, 2005). According to Isabella (1990), change processes often unfold over a long period of time, thus demanding constant adjustment on the part of those involved in change. She argues that the studies that have focused on cognitive shifts and schemas have viewed the process from behavioral perspective and not interpretive perspective. Our understanding of change is restricted to a large extent to the observed behavior of the employees, but we know little about the interpretations associated with these behaviors. This study takes the interpretive approach by examining the notion of resistance at Indian workplace by focusing on the employees facing the change rather than those implementing the change. In other words, it attempts to look at the employee perspective for two significant purposes: first is to move away from traditional, change agent perspective of resistance and second is to contribute to our understanding of resistance in the Indian context, since there is little knowledge of how the change unfolds in Indian organizations. Accordingly, the study asks the following questions:

1:How do employees make sense of their own reaction to change initiatives?

2:How does employee interpretation of change influence their reaction and readiness towards change?

Data Collection

Data was collected through in-depth interview method. Approximately 75 HR managers present at a management conclave on Change Management in India were requested to share information regarding change implementation. They were asked to provide contact information of the employees that fulfilled the following criteria: a) the employees were significantly affected by the change, and b) their response to the proposed change was perceived as negative by change implementers. After a 45 day gap, the employees were contacted to get their views on the change process. Eighty-seven employees were contacted on the phone and during the introductory conversation they were assured of confidentiality regarding the interview,along with the guarantee that their conversations would not be shared with any of their organizational members, including their supervisors (Appendix 1 for preliminary telephone script). The same introductory script was repeated for all the phone calls. Out of the 87 employees contacted, 54 agreed to do the interview (Appendix 2 for participant details).

Typically two or three rounds of interviews were conducted to build trust and allow participants to open up regarding their change experience (Table 1 for details). The interviews were conducted over a four-month period. Due to the manner in which participants were approached, none of the interviews were recorded. A research assistant was present during the interviews and was assigned the task of taking down the in-

terviews verbatim for purposes of transcription. Initially, a set of open-ended guiding questions (Appendix 3) were asked to get participant perspective toward change, though, as comfort level of the participants increased, the interviews led to deeper narratives of change.

Table 1 Details of Interview Sessions for 54 Participants

Number of Participants	Number of Interviews per participant	Approximate Number of Minutes per One Interview
27	2	120
20	3	80
5	1	180
2	1	120

Data Analysis

The data was examined using content analysis technique, defined as a "method for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1278). Content analysis requires development of coding schemes that work as translation devices and enable researchers to organize data into categories. Categories are themes that are either directly expressed in the text or are derived from the text by the analyst. The final step is to identify relationships among categories. For the purposes of this study, content analysis was conducted using the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti. The tools of the program enable researchers identify themes, create coding schemes leading to various categories of data, and recognize patterns that allow for understanding of the complex relationships between various codes. Through Atlas.ti large amounts of data in the form of documents and audio-visual files can be stored as hermeneutic units (HU), which in turn contain primary documents, field notes, interpretive memos, codes and categories, direct quotations, etc. A total of 178 primary documents were created in Atlas.ti, out of which 121 represented interview transcripts, and the rest comprised field notes in the form of observation notes, and memos created during analysis.

During the first phase of analysis, each line of each primary document was analyzed to understand the ways in which organizational members talked about the change and resistance to change. Specific text was coded by the same label when found to be conceptually similar, and as analysis progressed, codes were further refined. The first level coding facilitated creation of themes and categorized at the content level, and the second level coding led to identification of associations and patterns through inter-linkages of codes. The second level coding led to creation of Super-codes, which aided by the use of Co-Occurrence tool of Atlas.ti. This tool allows researchers to retrieve codes that occur in proximity to each other, which in turn facilitates recognition of connections between cer-

tain codes and allows for establishment of relationships.

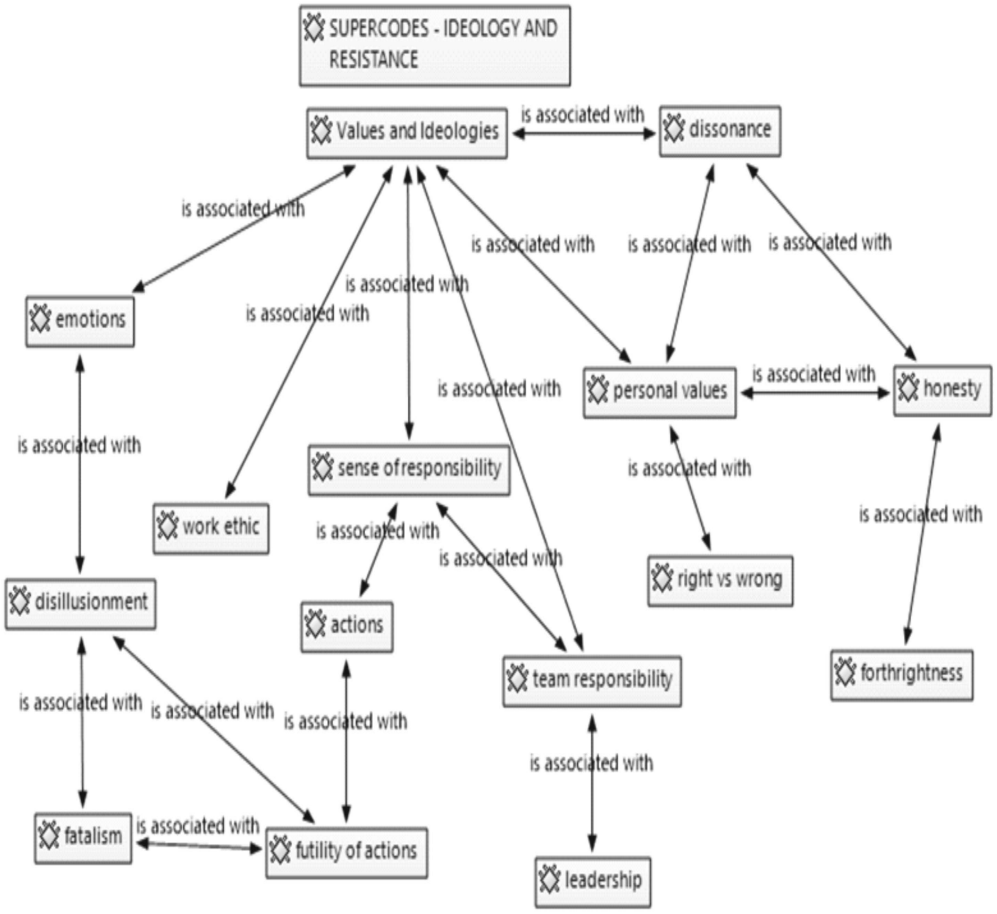
The study found three main themes running across the notion of resistance at workplace, namely ideological reasons, organizational good and expression of voice.

'Ideological' Resistance

Analysis of the interviews revealed that several employees viewed their reaction not as resistance but as a stand taken to conserve certain principles or world views (fig.1). When discussing their reactions to change, most of them chose to term their actions not as resistance but as behaviors undertaken out of sense of responsibility or obligation.

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Fig. 1 Atlas.ti Network View for Super-codes on Findings for Ideological Resistance



The reasons for the sense of responsibility varied, depending on the context of change, their designations and the organizational affiliation. Further, the stand taken was either to reduce the dissonance between individual values/norms and the perceived changes within the organization or dissonance between organizational values /norms and perceived changes. The study found age to be a crucial factor with regard to the type of dissonance. The narrations by the older generation typically centered on perceived conflict between *what is,* namely current organizational culture, and *what will be,* namely future organizational culture, due to the change implementation. One of the participants who was faced with organizational change related to pay structure and performance appraisal stated: "With 20 years in this organization, I can tell you we are going in the wrong direction. This incentive will lead to cut throat competition and inter-departmental fights. It won't matter to me because I am not interested in rising up at the cost of friends, but it is my duty to point it out. I have written to the Chief General Manager, but let's see whether he listens." (Participant # 7)

As mentioned earlier, those with 10 or less than 10 years of experience typically cited how they struggled with the proposed change primarily because it clashed with their personal beliefs regarding what was the 'right' thing to do. For instance, a 32 year old corporate communications employee talked about her discomfort with the decision to outsource the design aspect of their brand building:"Even if the company has a rationale related to cost cutting or something like that, the studio employees have been hired for their creative abilities, not liaison with some ad agency. There needs to be respect for individual talent. Speaking up is the only thing one can do, and I would rather do that than keep shut and go against my beliefs."(Participant # 13)

Symbolic or Sacrificial

The study found that those who opposed change due to ideological factors did so based on certain assumptions related to how these actions would play out within the organization. One of the findings was the belief that their actions would be more along the lines of symbolic gestures and may not yield any concrete results.

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The undertaking was more of an attempt to delegitimize the change rather than a call for action against the change implementers. The attempt to discredit the change took many forms, such as signature campaigns, emails to the business unit heads or other top management officials, refusal to participate in input solicitation regarding change and refusal to provide feedback during change implementation. As noted by participant # 53:"It may not make a difference in terms of outcome, but it is my duty to

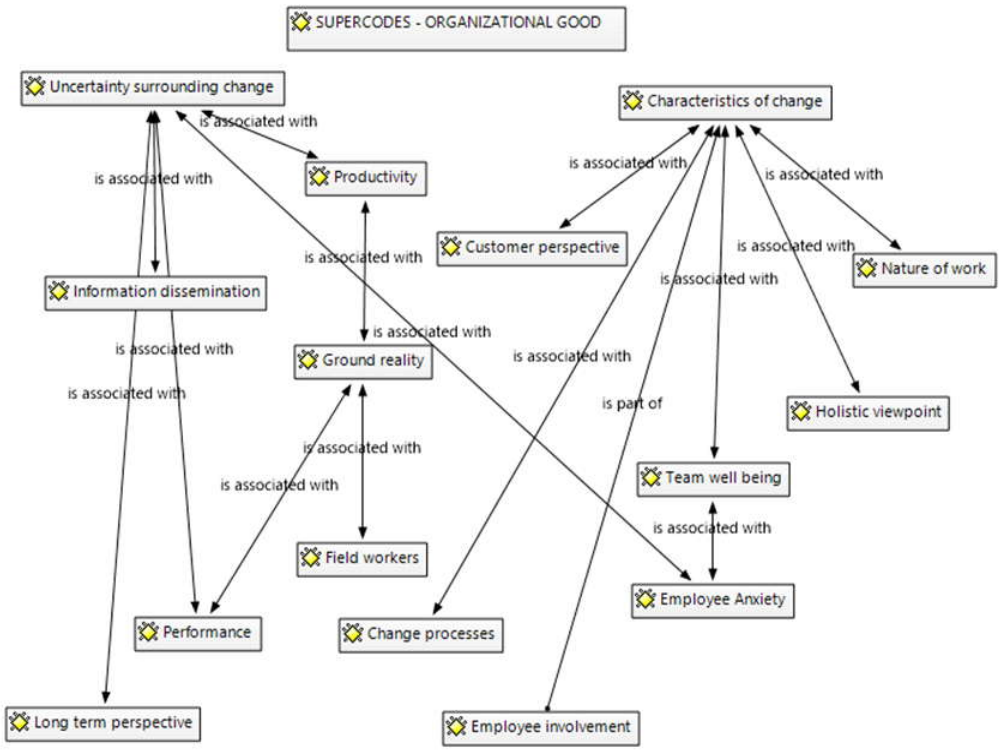
show that there are problems here, issues that have not been addressed."

The second scenario envisaged by the participants was that they would face severe consequences because of their viewpoint, but they saw it as an inevitable part of larger context in which they were situated. This was partly due to strong belief systems and sense of what they perceived to be right or wrong.

Organizational Good

Another dominant theme that emerged from the interviews was the concept of resistance as something that was perceived to be helpful for the organization. There was a belief that the change is not going to be as beneficial for the organization as proposed by the change agents and in fact, may harm the organization if not implemented appropriately. The underlying patterns between various codes revealed two significant aspects related to this belief (fig. 2). The first one was the concern for organizational well-being, and second one was the concern for organizational team members, which translated into a quasi- leadership role undertaken by those speaking up against the change. The reactions were based primarily on the uncertainty surrounding change and the manner in which it would affect the organization in the long run.

Fig.2 Atlas.ti Network view for Super-codes on Findings for Organizational Good



Organizational Well-being

The uncertainty or lack of information surrounding the nature of change and implementation tactics emerged as a major issue for the participants. One of the frequent concerns was the dearth of information surrounding change, leading to high levels of anxiety regarding the implications. One of the participants, for instance, explained how he found the timeline problematic because the consequences of the change were not clear to him: "We are changing the entire supply chain system but the timeline shared by HR does not indicate if there will be trial run or what will happen if the system crashes or whether clients are in the loop. There's all this talk and no actual information. We are a small unit so our relationship with vendors will take a beating if there are glitches,"(Participant # 29)

Several participants also seemed to be concerned about the difference between top management assumptions and field-level realities, thus implying that the proposed changes could fail because of misconceptions regarding what was happening out there in the field. Citing one such issue, a senior safety manager (Participant # 1) elaborated on what he perceived to be ill-thought policy change regarding travel claims and entitlements which would negatively impact the sales force: "This is a case of change seeming to be logical or appropriate in the corporate office when a bunch of top people discuss it but it will not work in reality. There will be unnecessary bottlenecks that negatively affect my men's performance."

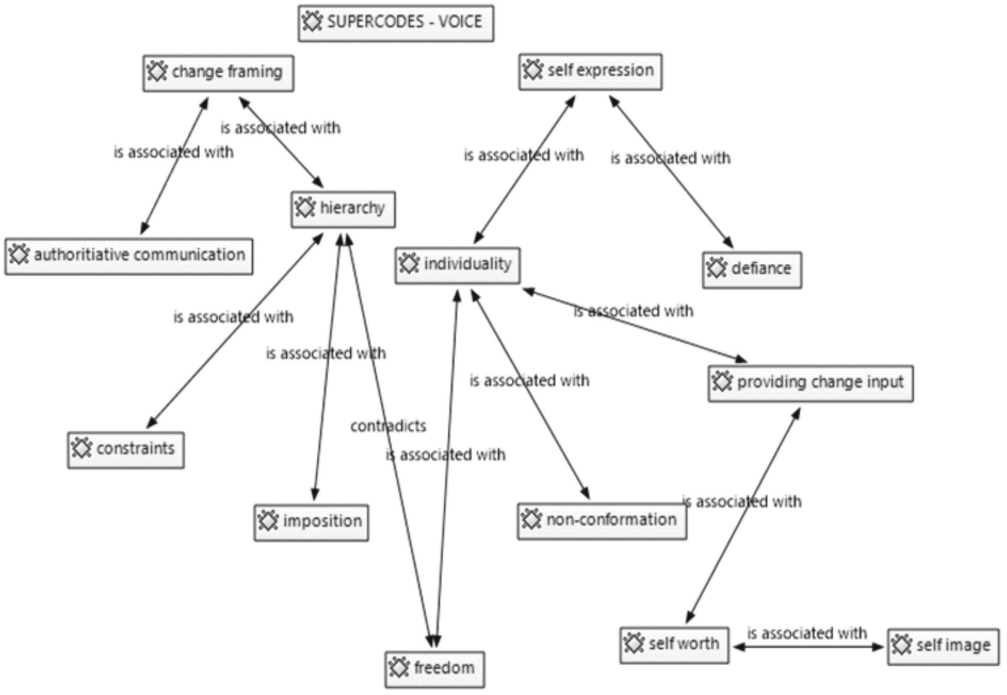
Team's Well-being

Closely associated with the idea of organizational well-being is the notion of team or peer well-being. Several participants echoed not only the view of organization being unaware of ground realities (mentioned in the earlier quote), but were also of the belief that the change was not well-thought. This was attributed to the assumption that the organization has not taken input from the ground-level and therefore certain aspects of change are going to create problems for their team or themselves as well as peers. Further, interviews revealed that participants' actions were often motivated by their concern for their team well-being along with their conviction that the change would directly affect the team performance levels and career growth. At times, this was translated into a sense of responsibility toward the team and the response to change was articulated as characteristics befitting a team leader. "Changes in parameters of appraisal affect all of us. They are trying to get us to run in circles but if we don't speak up now, we can only blame ourselves later. My team expects me to provide this feedback and frankly as their supervisor I think their expectations are valid" (Participant # 49). In some cases, the impending changes related to the nature of work and lack of clarity regarding the way in which the change would play out, affected anxiety levels of organizational members. The responses to the rising anxiety levels ranged from demands for more information to demand for modification in change policies.

Expression of 'Voice'

The final theme emerging from interviews was that of response to change as a need for self-expression or making their voice salient. Analysis suggested that the way in which change was framed and announced made a significant impact on how change was perceived. Further, when organizations did not provide the employees an opportunity to clarify, make suggestions or provide input, it seemed to negatively impact employee self-worth. Several of the participants who were senior in terms of their designations or work experience within the organization experienced anguish at the way in which the change was being brought about (fig. 3). Two aspects dominated the theme of change resistance as need for self-expression and voice – first one was that of employee need for validation and their belief regarding loss of face which resulted due to the way in which change was planned as well as announced; second was the assertion that their voice was important and could not be drowned by the authoritative or hierarchical manner in which change was being implemented.

Fig.3 Atlas.ti Network View for Super-codes on Findings for Employee Voice



Authentication of Self-worth

As mentioned earlier in the article, the manner in which the change was communicated had a significant impact on change-readiness. First one was the medium or channel chosen to communicate change. Several participants were

of the belief that their position within the organization or the relationship they shared with the change implementers was such that receiving the information through a standard email or memo was patronizing and unbecoming in light of their stature. "It is a matter of great distress. For them to tell me in such a manner, without any prior consultation and then expect me to just accept it, it is simply not done." (Participant # 25).The resulting feeling of loss of pride also led some of the employees to react negatively and be defiant, even if the nature of change per se was not found to be problematic. "I guess what's being proposed is not that bad and we could work with it. But the fact is, decisions are being made in an ivory tower and their high handed attitude is putting us all down. We might as well be nothing. We need to be heard, we need to have some self-respect." (Participant # 8)

Change Framing

The framing of the message also made a significant impact on change-readiness of those interviewed. Several participants pointed out that change announcements and their framing affected how they anticipated the change to unfold. "The announcement of change was so one-sided; it just mentioned what was happening and how it was good for us. There was no mention of why this was happening, how it would unfold and what we should expect regarding our job roles. It was almost as if we should be following the top management blindly, with no individual thoughts of our own."(Participant # 3).The tone and the contents of change communication were perceived as patronizing and several participants expressed how they felt constrained by the environment surrounding change implementation. This, in turn, prompted them to express their discontent related to change, though deeper discussions during interviews revealed that dissonance was caused by framing of the change messages rather than the actual change itself.

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Discussion & Conclusion

Change presents an organization with new realities that employees need to accept and try to meaningfully interpret. Based on recent shifts in our understanding of resistance (e.g. Reissner, 2008), this study has moved away from employee actions of resistance and focused on employee interpretations of change. The initial finding of employee resistance due to ideological reasons can be linked to the notion of principled dissent. Principled dissent is the effort by employees to challenge the status quo on ethical grounds or principles (Kassing &Avtgis, 1999). Such resistance is driven by employee commitment and sincere interest in change outcomes and therefore HR professionals and other change implementers need to give such dissentersa serious consideration. Further, some of the participants in the study felt obligated to speak up against what

they perceived was problematic, even when they realized that it would not impact the outcome (resistance as symbolic) or would affect their career negatively (resistance as sacrifice). Engaging in dialogue with such employees for sense giving purposes can serve to enhance the change implementation process, especially if they are able to see the long term benefits of change and become key influencers within the organization.

Further, when employees react negatively to change due to their desire to help the organization (for organizational good), it calls for change agents to examine their initiatives more closely and prevent them from taking change-related assumptions for granted. By resisting a change, employees often try to bring to management's attention issues that need to be addressed for efficient functioning of the organization and provide feedback for smooth change implementation (Gilley, Godak& Gilley, 2009). Often large scale change implementation is an extremely complex task and it is not possible to plan for every minor contingency or every ground-level complication. Thus, employee objections may contain information that can be used to improve the change initiative. Taking input regarding ground-level information could serve the multiple purpose of allaying anxieties surrounding change, generating a more enthusiastic response to the change itself and getting the opportunity to iron out glitches that may have escaped the notice of top management officials.

As noted by Ramnarayan and Nilakant (2006), within the Indian context, organizational members are more likely to be active participants in change when they are able to contribute to the change process. In fact, management literature overwhelmingly suggests that employee involvement, specifically, employee participation in change processes, is the best way to reduce resistance.The need for employee participation was brought up by Coch and French (1948) in their classic study on change process, who argued that participation increases employee commitment and therefore reduces resistance. Since then, participation has been widely cited as being the best way to overcome resistance (Burke, 2002). According to Basinger and Peterson (2008), participation helps employees prepare cognitively for future adjustments, thus leading to better outcomes, whereas lack of participation can lead to resistance.

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The study found that within the Indian context, participation may be important not only to solicit employee feedback and prepare employees for impending change, but also because non-involvement of certain section of employees may lead to loss of face and status for them. In high context cultures such as India, change implementers need to take into consideration the relationship between change agent and the recipient. An impersonal, logical message with a sense of objectivity regarding change may work

in low-context cultures, but within the Indian context, the study found that the announcement of change and rationale for change is not seen as outside and apart from communicating parties - reasons by themselves are not persuasive, it is the context, the relationship and the way it is communicated that matters. Further, the choice of the medium for communication can carry a symbolic message that goes beyond the actual content of the message. These symbolic cues go beyond the objective features of the medium; they are interpretations based on shared meaning of a medium that has been developed over time. The medium for communication is based on continuum of 'richness' i.e. the ability to accommodate two-way communication and the extent to which the medium simulates actual presence of the communicators. Face to face communication is the richest medium followed by telephone, email and various forms of formal and informal written communication. Within the Indian context, where relationships are personalized within the workplace (Sinha, 2000), the symbolic meaning associated with the medium of communication during change announcements assumes vital importance.

Finally, members of collectivist cultures have been found to demonstrate higher commitment to work due to an ingrained sense of duty and responsibility and therefore the popular notion is that they are less likely to engage in overt resistance. At the same time, Chatterjee & Pearson (2000) have noted that this orientation is more salient at the family and kinship level, and does not always hold true within the organizational context. In keeping with this argument, this study found that in terms of change communication, ignoring employee's sense of individuality could have a negative impact on their willingness to accept change.The need for self-expression is an important finding, especially since researchers often make the assumption that authority and hierarchy within Indian organizations mitigates the employee need individual expression.

In conclusion, so far, the most common way of managing change resistance has been to 'resist' resistance. This paper moves away from this concept and posits that resistance may not always be detrimental to change if the HR managers engage meaningfully with those reacting negatively to change. As found by the study, in several cases, it was not the change per se that was problematic. Employee actions were often guided by their belief that the change would lead to organizational-level problems (erosion of values or performance issues) or team level problems (issues with employee well-being and sense of unfairness). Many of these perceptions resulted from lack of information regarding change and increase in anxiety or uncertainty surrounding change. While issues related to organizational and individual uncertainty or anxiety have been addressed in resistance-related research within the Western context, we need more studies to get a nuanced understanding of how these perceptions are shaped in Indian workplace.

Other reasons for negative responses included the manner in which the change

was announced or the lack of input solicitation during planning of change. The loss of face and self-doubt experienced by senior employees (in terms of designation or in terms of work experience) points to the need for more contextualized studies that can unpack how societal culture influences organizational members' reaction to change. In a similar vein, we need more studies to understand how change framing and choice of medium can lead to greater resistance, even if the change is not problematic. There is a definite need for greater focus on employee resistance in India so that we can generate contextually relevant knowledge regarding implementation of planned change. Finally we need to examine resistance through the local and emergent dimension, instead of taking the view that resistance needs to be curbed without understanding their causes or implications. As indicated by this study, there is much to be gained by understanding how and why employee resistance takes place.

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Appendix 1 General Telephone Script to Communicate with Potential Participants

I am a US-based researcher, visiting India for data collection related to change management. I managed to get your contact details from an HR professional from your organization when I recently attended a Change Management conclave in India. Do you have a minute to talk?

Would you be comfortable talking to me about your experiences related to organizational change? Confidentiality will be paramount in this case and our discussion will not be shared with anyone in your organization. Anything you share will be used for research purposes only. Of course, at any given point of time if you feel uncomfortable, we can stop talking and I will destroy all documentation regarding our discussion.

My information is available on my university's website, and when we meet, I can also share with you the Dean's contact details, so that you can be assured of my credentials. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and I will show you the approval when we meet. The approval clearly states that you have the right to stop at any time and if you find the study problematic, you can address your complaints to the Board.

If you are comfortable, I would like to meet with you and discuss this further. Can we do so?

Appendix 2 Participant Information[1]

Number	Name	Sex	Age	Industry
1	Neeraj	Male	41	Manufacturing
2	Ratnadeep	Male	46	Manufacturing
3	Neera	Female	33	Manufacturing
4	Yash	Male	46	Manufacturing
5	Chetan	Male	40	Manufacturing
6	Janak	Male	45	Manufacturing
7	Kaushik	Male	52	Oil & Gas
8	Deepak	Male	48	Oil & Gas
9	Rajan	Male	41	Oil & Gas
10	Roopkumar	Male	55	Oil & Gas
11	Ashok	Male	39	Oil & Gas
12	Disha	Female	33	Oil & Gas
13	Preeta	Female	32	Pharmaceuticals
14	Shyam Sunder	Male	55	Pharmaceuticals
15	Vedika	Female	40	Pharmaceuticals
16	Inder	Male	48	Retail
17	Kamala	Female	42	Retail
18	Bhavya	Male	34	Steel
19	Gopalan	Male	48	Steel
20	Ishwar	Male	40	Steel
21	Hasit	Male	39	Steel
22	Zarna	Female	48	Telecommunications
23	Urvish	Male	43	Telecommunications
24	Teja	Male	35	Automobile
25	Sameer	Male	51	Banking
26	Utpal	Male	50	Banking

[1] Pseudonyms given to the participants for reasons of confidentiality

27	Brijesh	Male	38	Banking
28	Narayan	Male	33	Banking
29	Subhajit	Male	36	Broking Industry
30	Jasmine	Female	30	Construction
31	Hasmukh	Male	44	Construction
32	Mamita	Female	38	Construction
33	Navjot	Male	49	Construction
34	Subramaniam	Male	36	Fertilizers & Pesticides
35	Rupa	Female	35	Fertilizers & Pesticides
36	Shashank	Male	42	Fertilizers & Pesticides
37	Kapil	Male	38	FMCG
38	Jay	Male	47	FMCG
39	Geetha	Female	35	FMCG
40	Subodh	Male	40	FMCG
41	Amritlal	Male	33	Food processing
42	Santana	Female	28	Food Processing
43	Joseph	Male	49	Food Processing
44	Faraz	Male	36	Food Processing
45	Prasanth	Male	48	Food Processing
46	Anvesh	Male	31	Food Processing
47	Divya	Female	28	Health
48	Shrikant	Male	55	Insurance
49	Vishwas	Male	35	Insurance
50	Roshan	Male	53	Insurance
51	Arpita	Female	51	Insurance
52	Rupa	Female	44	Insurance
53	Ravikant	Male	37	IT Industry
54	Arup	Male	33	IT Industry

Appendix 3 Guiding Questions for In-Depth Interviews

Initial Guiding Questions	
1.	Can you tell me about the change that your organization implemented?
2.	When did you first hear about it?
3.	What is your role vis-à-vis this change?
4.	What was your reaction when you heard about the change?
5.	How did other members in your organization react to the change announcement?
6.	Did your reaction change over time, or did you continue feeling the same way?
7.	Why do you think this change was implemented?
8.	What do you think of those involved with implementing the change?
9.	If you had to provide input to those involved in the change, what would you tell them?
10.	Can you share some of your key experiences and key organizational events surrounding the change communication and change implementation?