• Psychosocial and Sociocultural Barriers to Development

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Development is a concern of everyone. It plays a crucial role in every country. It is considered a progressive and dynamic process. To a layman, development is closely associated with progress. It is equated with economic sufficiency or economic growth (Bartolome, 1997). Gross National Product (GNP) and per capita income are often convenient indicators of development. Economists are primarily concerned with such matters as savings and investment, income, productivity and balance payments. In politics, development is a process, which prepares people for participation in political affairs especially as citizens in a democracy. From the social and cultural points of view, development helps people to lead fuller and richer lives, less bound by traditions (Ronquillo et al, 1989).

Most nations today are development-oriented. The less developed countries which have been poor and stagnant for centuries are fighting psychosocial and sociocultural barriers such as poverty, racial discrimination, war (*ridu* and terroristic activities), famine, disease, ignorance and inequality. The aspiration for development is not only the desire for economic stability but also a quest for status, prestige, recognition and a place in the world.

According to Ronquillo et al (1989) national development refers to the total efforts of a nation to improve the well-being of its citizens. It is primarily concerned with bringing better health, adequate nutrition, equal participation in all educational institutions, comfortable living conditions and availability of numerous opportunities in both work and leisure, especially for the less fortunate segment of the society. National development focuses on all aspects of human existence, whether economic, political, legal, social and moral. It does not only expand knowledge and develop skills, but also attempts to change attitudes and values of the people. It has impact on social institutions, habits, beliefs, and values of the nation. The essence of national development lies in equity in the distribution of wealth and power. Developing countries are concerned with giving the poor greater access to wealth, which is usually controlled by a small powerful economic and maybe intellectual elite. In this regard, reforms are necessary, particularly

in terms of justice, human rights, and agrarian and natural resources (art. 1 sec. 9 of the Phil. Constitution).

Since time immemorial man has been confronted with psychosocial and sociocultural problems. His world is a highly imperfect one; he has to cope with a gamut of harsh conditions caused either naturally or socially. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, and tidal waves are common examples of the former, while human excesses, bombings, *ridu*, kidnappings, heinous crimes and abuses make up the latter.

According to Garcia (1994), humans have at least three ways of looking at problems (whether psychosocial or sociocultural) that beset them. Firstly, problems are just spices of life; without them life becomes a bore. Secondly, they make life miserable and difficult, so they are the causes of man's never-ending agonies and miseries. Thirdly, most of them are beyond solution – that is why the only thing man can do is to accept them as part of his everyday reality. Based on the foregoing perceptions, individual human beings respond to problems differently.

In a survey conducted by Bartolome (2000), titled, "Psychosocial and Sociocultural Barriers to Development," fifty six (56) students on the Mindanao State University Marawi Campus (9 graduate, 47 undergraduate; 10 males, 46 females; 32 Christians, 24 Muslims with ages ranging from 16-31 years old with a mean age of 19.82) were asked the following questions:

1. What are some psychosocial barriers to development? Sociocultural barriers?
2. What can the government do to minimize/remove these psychosocial barriers? Sociocultural barriers?
3. How can society contribute to the solution?

Data were gathered through a survey questionnaire supplemented by interviews. These were then subjected to content analysis. Results are summarized in this article.

On Psychosocial and Sociocultural Barriers to Development

According to a 28-year-old female Cebuano math teacher, the following are psychosocial barriers: (a) fear of change – e.g., when we are comfortable with the situation we are in, we are afraid of changes, even if these changes promise development or betterment of our lives. We doubt; (b) insecurities and inferiorities – most people have this concept of "*hindi natin kaya*" (we are not capable); (c) sensitivity to criticisms and other's opinions.

Other barriers include negative mental attitude, an overly conservative culture and financial insecurities. Poverty, graft and corruption and crab mentality are all perceived to work against the forces of development.

Says a 20-year-old Maranao female:

> Poverty, because people fail to acquire/obtain necessary income to sustain minimum level of living. Graft and corruption, because instead of money going to things that benefit everyone, it goes into the pockets

> of government officials. Crab mentality, because instead of helping a person develop or improve himself/herself, [others] tend to pull him down, so no development occurs.

Inferiority complex is perceived to result from lack of education. Reluctance to participate in government programs, laziness among the Filipino majority are also perceived to have become barriers to social progress: "Graft and corruption, *bahala na* attitude, lack of industry or hard work, gambling (e.g. masiao, "last 2,3", jai-alai), high rate of murder/killings homicides, crab and colonial mentality, *baon sa utang*, selfishness – all result in a poor quality of life insists a 19 year-old female BS Psychology major.

Poverty (as lack of income to support educational expenses) – fear to try, lack of self-confidence (insecurity about trying all available opportunities, fear of committing mistakes/to take risks) coupled with pessimism, graft and corruption, individual acts of dishonesty (some are motivated by their own personal selfish interests/greed)—these all are perceived to hamper the process of development. "Graft and corruption in the government, in which money from taxes are channeled to private pockets, thus providing more power and opportunities to those already powerful," is regarded by a 19 year-old female Bicolano as contributors against development.

Observes one respondent from Iligan:

> Most of our capitalists are foreigners, not Filipino citizens. Like national Steel Corporation that is now owned by foreign investors. Now they declare bankruptcy. . . which resulted in unemployment.

Nepotism in our contemporary setting is regarded also as an interference to development. Nepotism is viewed as the act of high public officials of hiring and "placing" their own relatives in government, rather than allowing open competition in the recruitment/selection of employees for certain positions.

The problem of peace and order, likewise, hinders the process of development. In a recent study (Bartolome, 1999), it was revealed that peace is perceived to be a necessary precondition to development, e.g., if there is no peace, no optimum development takes place. Besides, people are not willing to invest their time, financial resources and efforts in carrying out business ventures when confronted with possibilities of high risks/failure.

Negative traits, attitudes and practices also obstruct the process of development. Examples of these are the "crab mentality," "mañana habit," "*pagkamainggitin*," and the "we can't do it" mentality.

According to a 24-year-old female NGO child counselor:

> Our value system has become a major obstacle to development, e.g., *utang-na-loob* and close family ties. These two values when practiced in extreme by our political leaders, development implementers [and] law enforcers will hamper development. Because of these values, our political leaders resort to graft and corruption. The value of honesty is starting to disappear and this adversely affects development.

> Our attitudes such as *ningas kugon, mañana* habit, wait-and-see attitude, crab mentality likewise adversely affect development. In *ningas kugon*, we are usually good in starting out things but like many government projects [it takes] long to finish and conks out. This is also related to the *mañana* habit where we keep on postponing/delaying things. Among law enforcers and implementers this habit of procrastination works against successful implementation/completion of a project.
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> Also, many of us do not cooperate with development activities/projects initiated by the government or non-government agencies unless we could reap benefits or experience good effects. In Bisaya, it involves people who *"modawat lang ug limpyo."*
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> Crab mentality is also very common among Filipinos. This may be an effect of insecurities or jealousy. When someone is on top of us, we tend to pull him down. When a neighbor puts up a sari-sari store, we also put up one in the same neighborhood, even if it is just opposite the street or block where we are located.

"Lack of unity and cooperation (*parang walang paki-alam sa iba*), selfishness, greed, *kanya-kanyang* mentality [and] high pride are all obstacles to development," claims a 17-year-old female Ilongga. "Superstitious beliefs, competition, corruption, social problems likewise interfere with progress."

On a personal level, inspired by Erickson's theory of psychosocial development, one psychology major indicates that some critical personal and social issues that could restrain human development are trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame or doubt, initiative vs. guilt, industry vs. inferiority, generativity vs. self-absorption, integrity vs. despair. It is believed that unsuccessful resolution of these crises will disrupt normal human development.

Another 18-year-old female respondent observes that the following situations impede development:

> . . .problems (financial, social, emotional, spiritual problems) incest, child abuse, sexual harassment, prostitution, drug abuse, drug addiction, drug dependence, murder, kidnapping, carnapping, bombing, terroristic activities, graft and corruption, lack of self-discipline, early traumatic experiences. . .

Two female Maranao respondents also noted the following psychological barriers to development, namely, unreasonable role expectations, poor/unhealthy home and family relationships, marital crises, negativistic attitudes, pessimistic behaviors and double standards or morality.

A 17-year-old male Maranao observes and reports:

> *Siesta*: Filipinos are used to taking naps shortly after eating lunch. It has become their habit already to the extent that works or jobs are "jeopardized." Delivery of goods and services are delayed. This habit of Filipinos constitutes a barrier to the improvement of their lifestyle.

> Since success and development are usually equated with industry, patience and resourcefulness, *siesta* as a practice should be minimized or controlled.

Some respondents believe that non-observance of traditions like Ramadhan (as part of liberalism) has become obstacles to development, including social norms, superstitious beliefs, family feuds (*ridu)*, lack of unity and cooperation, colonial mentality, crab mentality, nepotism, fatalism or "*bahala na*" attitude, "*okey lang, sigue lang*" attitude, "*ningas kugon*" and "*bukas na*" attitude or *mañana* habit. Lack of peace and order, oppressive leadership style, miseducation, lack of discipline, differences in religious/cultural beliefs, values, norms of behaviors pose additional barriers.

Craving for imported things/goods. Filipinos cannot do away with colonial mentality: their lack of appreciation for our own products aggravates the situation. The result is that, our money is being drained out of the country by foreign investors bringing in imported goods. Our social status symbols are usually based on the premise that those who can afford possess more luxurious items imported from abroad. These ills of society or sociocultural barriers should be identified and massive vigilance on the part of the government who observe the economic conditions of the country should be exercised.

Illiteracy, ignorance (lack of education, miseducation), restrictive strong family ties, favoritism, indolence, overly liberal hospitality, ultra conservatism, unemployment, lack of peace and order, drug addiction and certain cultural traditions pose threats to development, according to some respondents. Even the lack of a sense of belongingness, frustrated ambitions, death of loved ones, being social outcasts, rejection by parents, family, school, community are additional threats to progress or the improved quality of life.

A 17-year-old female Maranao explains:

> Poor economy is one example of [the] psychosocial barrier to development because we all know that our country is suffering from economic crises. . . most factories (plantations) have to retrench their workers thus resulting in unemployment. This is the reason why people are forced to do bad things or commit crimes just to have money to feed their family.

Some respondents cited the following threats to development:

Broken families, incomplete or inadequate families, early difficult/traumatic childhood experience, drug addiction, alcoholism, drug dependence, lack of unity, negative attitude, illiteracy/ignorance, colonial mentality, poverty, crime and other social problems. "Barriers include lack of technology, poverty, negative political factors, lack of peace and order, population explosion with scarce resources," maintains an 18-year-old Maranao female.

Na amai dun in Maranao (ningas kugon, bahala na attitude, *mamaya na* habit and laziness) interferes with development. "Some sociocultural barriers relate to cultural breaks and social animosity: Examples are superstitious beliefs, social resistance, the intrusion of foreign capital and bringing multi national companies to the country which may have negative impact on Filipino culture."

According to a Maranao male and female respondents, respectively:

> We belong to a multi-racial country and I would say that it is one example of sociocultural barrier to development. For instance, polygamy. In Islam it is legal to have more than one wife, unlike Christianity [in which] it is illegal.
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> Here in Marawi, one sociocultural barrier is family size. Some people do not believe/want family planning. They want many, many children. As I've observed, improvement in *mabagal* because of the overpopulation. Another sociocultural barrier is being dependent on parents even if [one is] already married or [has his own] family. Some Filipinos follow this sociocultural practice even if they know that this is not good.
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> Each of us (even if single) must learn how to stand on our own feet so that in times of trials, obstacles, barriers or problems, we can solve them our own way," opines a 17-year-old female Kamayo, a Roman Catholic.

According to the respondents, because the Philippines comprises of many cultures, many differences or limitations became apparent. Tribal/racial discrimination or regionalism naturally sets in, compounded with the *bahala na* mentality. Having *barkadas* with bad attitudes, dishonesty, drug addiction, drug abuse, etc. makes one's situation become doubly problematic.

Likewise traumatic/tragic experiences such as being raped by one's own kin or an outside aggressor are horrible heart-breaking experiences. Sometimes the victim becomes anti-social, feels socially rejected, humiliated, feels dirty or she might even commit suicide. Negative/pessimistic thinking, hopelessness, lack of self-confidence, self-respect could lead to possible future complications in adjustment, thus resulting in neurosis or psychosis.

Genetic defects that result in mental retardation as in autism or Down's Syndrome, as well as sexual perversions secondary to genetic aberrations, have also been regarded as psychosocial barriers to development. Examples of these are the sex maniacs and nymphomaniacs and baby defects in both physical anatomy and the mind.

According to a 20-year-old Maranao female:

> *Maratabat* (pride) and even religion itself can become potential sources of sociocultural conflicts – conflicts such as political rivalry or racial conflicts. Tradition, religious belief, outright criticism that prick one's *maratabat*, crab mentality, graft and corruption, and the *mañana* habit all serve to hinder progress or development. Sociocultural taboos, religious beliefs that are especially antagonistic to modern sociocultural norms, and low family income may result in poverty and nepotism, which usually work against a more enriching/fulfilling way of life.

Listen to what this Maranao male has to say regarding psychosocial and sociocultural barriers to development:

1. *Fiesta.* The psychological effects on people who do not celebrate the fiesta could be being known as an impoverished family that cannot afford to spend, making them subject to ridicule, gossip and shame.

   The social effects may be negative or positive. On the positive side, the socializing makes one more friendly and creates personal contacts with others, resulting in good relationships. On the negative side, families are forced to spend too much that family provisions for weeks are spent in one or two days, draining resources and creating difficulty and higher debts.

2. *Siesta.* Filipinos are used to taking naps after eating lunch. It has become their habit to the extent that works or jobs are affected. Delivery of goods and services are delayed. . . Siesta as a practice should be minimized if not controlled.

3. Close family ties – The over protectiveness of the head of the family over children. It could result in overdependence. Children and grandchildren rely on their parents and grandparents for financial support and material things. Family suffers financially and economically. The community and the nation as a whole suffer, thus development is very much adversely affected.

A 19-year-old female psychology major reports the following psychosocial and sociocultural barriers:
Graft and corruption
Financial problems
Overpopulation
Incest cases, rape, murder & other heinous crimes
Unemployment or underemployment
Drug addiction/drug abuse, alcoholism
Broken families, inadequate families, disruptive, discordant families
Improper waste disposal
Superstitious beliefs
Prejudices, stereotypes, racial/ethnic discriminations

A 17-year-old female Cebuano Roman Catholic Psychology major singles out mental retardation as an obstacle to human and social development. She explains:

> "Sociocultural" means "of or pertaining to society and culture in combination." Mental retardation of this type usually involving IQs above 50 is called cultural – familial or sociocultural-retardation when it occurs in people who have at least one retarded parent. Example is Down's syndrome, which is cause by a failure of the mother's 21st chromosome pair to separate.
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> Other physiological causes of retardation are environmental, not genetic. Example is, pregnant women who contract rubella, scarlet fever, syphilis or even mumps may give birth to infants who suffer from brain damage as a result. Also, assault or injury to the brain or nervous system before or after birth may result in mental retardation. Such damage may be caused by x-rays, inappropriate drugs, severe

pressure on the infant's head during birth, oxygen shortage during or after birth and even by severe maternal malnutrition.

Still another female respondent believes that inferiority complex, insecurity, lack of financial and emotional support, crab mentality, close family ties (which breeds nepotism, favoritism) attitude of *palakasan* (e.g., having a strong backer to a position) *pakikisama* (sometimes good but mostly bad) religion, tradition. . . pose threats to development or negative perceptions about fellow Filipinos as exemplified by stereotypes, biases and resistance to change by unpragmatic people constitute major barriers to development. For example, psychological resistance to technology by the Manobos and other indigenous groups in some instances limit/restrain their contact with the more advanced civilized world because of their negative perceptions about peers who have gone to school, so believes a 20-year-old male Maranao respondent.

One 18-year-old female Cuyuno thinks that the following are psychosocial barriers: greed, self-centeredness, envy, crab mentality, lack of initiative, close-mindedness. Sociocultural barriers are the traditions, language that differs among tribes, regionalism, *kanya-kanyang* mentality, nepotism or favoritism and others.

Another psychology major observes that the following constitute psychosocial barriers to progress: pathogenic family structures, disruptive or incomplete family as a result of death, divorce or separation, excessive drinking and criminal activities. Sociocultural barriers (also cited in Coleman, Butcher & Carson, 1980) are problems of war and violence, group prejudices and racial discrimination, economic and employment problems, rapid technological and social change, including worldwide shortage of the basic resources. According to this respondent, "in our country, the most common problems are the economic and employment problems. Unemployment has placed a burden on a sizeable segment of our population bringing with it financial hardships and self-devaluation."

A Kamayo from Bislig, Surigao confides:

> The main psychosocial barrier to development is poverty. Every time my parents argue on money matters, I feel all the troubles. Sometimes I decide to work just to help sustain our family instead of developing myself through acquiring an education. These financial problems really deprive me from joining social activities. How can I lift my self-esteem when I am inferior in reality? Yes, joining organizations involves money. I would rather stay alone than keep on murmuring about the payments for any activities such as: fieldtrips, and other contributions so as to be in. I am financially dependent on my parents and having no money hinders my development.
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> Filipinos have this attitude of crab mentality. People around me see my fortune as a disgrace. Sometimes, I turn down some opportunities that are within reach because of ugly comments of people around. Another sociocultural barrier is the various crimes happening nowadays. I cannot move freely wherever I go at any time for fear I might be the next victim. Not only myself but the whole system/community is destabilized by crimes.

One female respondent sees betrothal or parentally-arranged marriage as a sociocultural barrier. According to her, this kind of practice discourages/impeded autonomy, independence, freedom of self-expression or decision-making among children or prospective couples.

The *comadre-compadre* system, *utang na loob*, close family ties and *pakikisama* can hinder national development, too. "Even if a person does not qualify for a certain position of he/she happens to be a close friend or relative of the employer, then he/she could be accepted in the job" observes a Psychology major. "How can a nation succeed with this kind of cultural practice?" she asks.

A 20-year-old female from Surigao talks about psychosocial and sociocultural barriers to development, claiming:

> Some psychological barriers to development are anti-social behaviors that one possesses. These include egocentricism, thinking [only] of oneself (or self-love), corruption, crab mentality, drug and alcohol addiction, the way people look at someone, being judgmental, etc. Some psychosocial barriers are also interrelated to sociocultural behaviors. We find out how we can affect others and how we are affected by them but all of these are influenced by the environment. Another psychosocial barrier to development is th4e attitude of people towards the so-called "*chismis*," gossiping and talking about/against someone as well as collective forms of behaviors although these fall under sociocultural behaviors.
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> Some sociocultural barriers to development are superstitious beliefs, crimes, ethnic discrimination, illiteracy, poverty, maladaptive behaviors, different form of rationalism like *palabas, pakitang-tao, pagyayabang* mentalities like *bahala na, utang na loob*, (debt of gratitude), *amor propio* (self-esteem), *hiya* (shame), witchcraft, *maratabat* (pride), attitude towards euthanasia (mercy killing), abortion, fiestas, holidays. We are also faced with different religious beliefs, ethnocentricism, cultural relativism, xenocentricism, *sabong*, and institutions that lend money in the form of loans – loan sharks, five-six, etc.

A basic psychosocial barrier is that of unestablished self-identity accompanied by unsettled conflicts. Inability to recognize one's self-identity would eventually cause confusion concerning what role one is going to play in society. And because one certainly does nót know one's preferences in life, one experiences conflicts within, which hinder better performance, therefore hampering development.

Some respondents think that sociocultural barriers to development comprise those old traditional beliefs such as superstitions still observed by some today, especially in the rural areas. These beliefs cause one to refrain from changing and trying something new and something different for one's life and one's society as a whole. Another barrier is the practice of heresy ("*hilot*" or "*arbularyo*") in healing in which, instead of promoting health, may only lead to its decline because of lack of proper health measures. Health is one of the major factors in development and if it is not obstructed, so is

development. Consequently, if these cultural traditions and beliefs are not changed, it is difficult to achieve progress since it is always accompanied by change.

Discrimination, loss of respect to one's belief, culture and principles. Example: wealthy people often win in elections because they have plenty of money. Therefore plenty of voters would vote for them compared to those whose only strength is their will to help. But since nowadays most people prefer money rather than principle, the choice is money!

Corruption: people in top positions steal money from the masses through government funds and spend them for their own sake and convenience. Notice the plushy mansions being constructed here and there. People wonder where all these money are coming from.

Laziness is the characteristic of being slow moving, e.g., poor physical activities. For instance, police authorities prefer to sit and play cards, drink instead of checking/performing their assigned jobs. As a result, criminality increases. Instead of the government spending more time on economic problems, these employees devote more time on gambling, playing, drinking (less important things).

The *mañana* habit is a habit/characteristic of setting things aside to be done tomorrow in spite of available free time. This incurs great losses in terms of productivity output from government offices.

Crab mentality is another Filipino trait in which the intention is to put down others. For instance, a mayor who lost in an election feels bad about it and learning that his opponent has very successful project, finds steps to destroy the project – another barrier to community development.

Colonial mentality, a Filipino characteristic/trait in which imported goods/items are preferred than local ones thus killing local industries. They prefer to buy goods made in USA, Hongkong, Japan, Saudi and the like. RP goods are second choice.

Regionalism or being regionalistic. It has been observed that a president or some other officials in government like mayor, congressman will tend to prioritize projects beneficial to his hometown, neglecting other regions needing more infrastructure development. This also leads to "*palakasan*" in favor of "*kababayan.*"

Ethnocentricism is the view/feeling that one's culture is the best or better than any other. This develops false pride or an overdose of *amor propio* or *maratabat* among Maranaos.

Nepotism is closely related to "*palakasan*". Nepotism as a practice should be discouraged but among Filipinos since blood is thicker than water, vacant positions in offices are usually, filled by/given to blood relatives or even ceremonial relatives (*ninang, inaanak, compadre* etc.) This has contributed to inefficiency or minimum productivity output since most the time the hired employee lacks the qualifications for the job. They are square pegs in round holes.

Argues one male respondent:

> I think one psychosocial barrier to development is the lack/scarcity of resources. Natural resources contribute a lot to the enhancement of social development. They provide food, shelter and other basic needs of men. Due to destruction made by people, they become major problems. We now live in poverty.
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> Technological resources: We know that computer machines and other technologies hasten the development of society. Without them, development will be slow. For those who have them, they become dependent and instead of interacting with people, they interact with machines. Technologies eventually dehumanize people and therefore become harmful.
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> Other sociocultural barriers are the media and foreign influences. Instead of providing accurate/objective information, media sometimes distorts it to the detriment of children. Foreign influences affect interaction among Filipinos. Media portrays movies of crimes and violence, which are harmful to the value formation of children.
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> All customs, traditions and ancient practices interfere with development. Too much devotion to religion also hampers development. Having so many religious produces conflicts too.

What can the government do to minimize/remove these barriers?

According to the respondents, the government has the power to minimize or remove these barriers. It has all the authority, the police power, to control society and implement laws. Unfortunately, some government officials get involved in some illegal activities (e.g. illegal logging, gambling, jueteng) thus running/destroying our natural and financial resources. Funds for projects are siphoned away from them. Some officials are also involved in prohibited drugs business and other forms of criminality. Thus, in a sense, government officials are also partly to blame for all social ills. They may be lawmakers but are law breakers. They also control the media and laws are not fully, faithfully implemented. Sometimes the media are inconsistent. They say "smoking is dangerous to your health" yet they advertise all brands of cigarettes on television/radio or print media.

Suggests one male respondent from Surigao:

> For me, the best thing that the government can do is to first ake action right in their very own offices before going out to the society – cleanse themselves first in other words. There should be some kind of monitoring and evaluation of performance of government officials – whether they are involved in some graft and corruption or illegal underground gambling syndicate/activities. Laws are already there. What is lacking is judicious implementation – Implementation first inside government offices, before outside community. Sanctions must be given to all violators regardless of positions.

Sociocultural barriers cannot be taken away/uprooted completely from society but the government should protect these sociocultural practices. The government should find ways and be receptive/open to new strategies for accelerating development. Providing quality education in the rural or remote places in the countryside will surely help a lot. Infrastructure projects must also be seen in places/provinces away from cities.

Our cultural/ethnic minorities feel inferior and are "ignored" by the government. These groups are neglected, exploited and sometimes taken advantage of by majority. They should be given priority in terms of basic government projects/services (e.g. light/electricity, water, health services, education etc.). As the saying goes. . . "those who have less in life, should have more in law."

Religion is a powerful tool/instrument in controlling morality. Instead of being regionalistic, faith in God and other virtues should be strengthened/developed/encouraged. The government cannot impose its own religion upon the people but it can protect them from evil destruction of properties and ensure respect for human rights and dignity.

The government must have sound programs and strategies, which are culturally acceptable and desirable. It must toe the line and find ways to accelerate development without killing human integrity. It must listen to the people, conduct massive campaigns about sound new programs and elicit teamwork.

If the government could provide the basic needs for every countryman and remove the greed and negative attitudes, then perhaps integration through education among tribes can be possible. It is through education that we can better understand/learn about each other's culture and develop/establish harmonious relationships with one another. According to Leonardo de la Cruz 91983) "education is perhaps the best avenue for the quest for better quality of life... in general the higher and the better quality of schooling, the better chances to earn more and thus the likelihood of enjoying better quality of life."

Argues one female psychology respondent:

> The people behind the power should discipline themselves first in order for the constituents to gain trust and confidence. They should not act or play deaf not to hear the pleas, cries and woes of the people, blind not to see the starving faces and dying environment and mute to stay silent.

The government should have a kind heart and listen to conscience (super-ego) as the psychologist Freud would put it. They should not do anything that would make people lose their hope or nurse vengeance and hatred in their hearts. They should fulfill their promises to the people and render unconditional services. They should be models for every citizen to emulate.

Unity or solidarity must be cultivated even among those who are mentally retarded or cripple. Everyone must be given a chance to live a happy, useful and satisfying life.

Government should provide quality education and livelihood projects for all. People must also support government projects and be law-abiding. They should be motivated to cooperate with government initiatives to hasten development process.

Poverty could be eradicated if the government would provide sufficient jobs, funds, livelihood projects, employment opportunities to the poor. (See also Bartolome, 1999).

An 18-year-old Kamayo female opines:

> About the crab mentality" attitude, it's difficult and can never be changes unless every individual shows concern. Crimes are not impossible to solve. Out country has provided all the laws for the benefit of the nation. I think there is no problem if anyone commits a crime. Why not arrest him or put him in prison? So easy. However, some policemen are cowards of these big time devils. Or, maybe they also are involved. There must be strict implementation of laws...

According to the respondents, religious retreats, sports and other related activities may help to develop self-identity and hidden talents. Stick to job qualification standards when hiring personnel for government positions. For instance, officials should not accept personnel whose qualifications do not fit the job requirements... as simple as that. And never accept relatives, friends without the desired qualifications; in short, no compadre-comadre system. But as long as these are practiced, we cheat the people most especially God.

The government must find solutions especially for pathogenic families who, separated for lack of financial resources, education, emotional, immaturity, become the breeding ground/nest for criminals or juvenile delinquents. They can also find means to control price hike of gasoline and other much-needed commodities even within the government system.

The government is of the people, for the people and by the people. This implies only one thing: that the government and the people are one but, of course, there should always be leaders. Government leaders should be responsible in putting up laws that will punish violators/criminals. Government must also take the lead in the implementation of projects such as sports centers, gymnasia to divert the youth's attention from drug addiction.

According to one female respondent, "poverty is not completely a hindrance to development but of course partially contributes to underdevelopment. What the government should do is to fight against poverty by giving a chance to the poor to start/continue their lives no matter how small the capital investments may be."

One Maranao male freshman cautions/suggests:

> The government should watch its expenditures...
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> It should do away with luxurious and imported goods. It should set good examples to people such as being honest, simple, truthful and supportive to investors who invented things to help the country such as using water instead of gasoline... Declare a close door trade of imported goods and support local industries and manufacturers.

Listen to this response/observations made by a 19-year-old female respondent:

The government had already imposed sanctions for those who use drugs but not alcohol. Although some laws were already passed in the Senate about graft and corruption, still it's not effective because of the influence of those who have position and power. The government may find difficulty in removing anti-social behaviors because it's the nature of the individual himself that acts in a certain manner as to which is not acceptable by the society but the government may still try to resolve this by passing a law that will force someone to act in kind way by restricting himself to do undesirable traits because it is punishable by law.

In order to minimize these sociocultural barriers, the government should lessen holidays, provide educational institutions for the less privileged to wipe out illiteracy or may be the government should make a law to force everyone to go to public schools. It should put up additional establishments in business, and industry to eradicate poverty and provide jobs for those who are unemployed. Religion has its greatest share in "blocking" development in some way because of its beliefs, often associated with superstitious beliefs.

"*Maratabat* among the Muslims has also partly played a key role in blocking development. Why? It's because Muslims value their *maratabat* in such a way that they can not think of something good for the community for fear/pride of being judged negatively by people. Look at Marawi City, its very dirty because people dwelling in it would not want to clean even the part that belongs to their sanctuary. Why? Because of *maratabat*. Or maybe also laziness," admits one respondent.

The government should also impose laws regarding euthanasia and abortion. Although there are already laws passed by the senate regarding these, these must be effected as soon as possible including those related to loans.

The government should be very strict and just in implementing and/or applying the laws. It should treat people equally, e.g., give penalty to those who commit crimes, violence, unlawful activities whether rich or poor. It should act as good role model to gain respect/support of their citizens, endeavor to provide peace and security in the area, provide job opportunities, increase in salaries, appoint only officials who are honest, responsible, energetic/active and have true sincere love for country and people, not those who have wealth, weapon and prestige who will corrupt the masses. It sould also endeavor to educate the young for good and just future leadership.

New government programs should not only be limited to feasible areas but should penetrate the "*kinatumyan sa mga kabaryuhan*" because these are the ones who need to be informed and educated.

The government can offer free education to indigent citizens and create more programs, which will promote/enhance cooperation of everyone.

"Information campaign can be done through different media. Some people (whether we admit it or not) do not, cannot and/or would not go to school but they watch

TV, read newspapers, listen to radio... so I think the government can have their information drive or advertisement here. Also, the government should be more open to opinions and criticisms," says a 28-year-old Cebuano math teacher.

To attain development, there must be a total change of attitude. The least that the government can do is (a) conduct seminars or information drives which could at least modify these attitudes, (b) sponsor livelihood or out-of-school youth programs to uplift the socio-economic status of the masses (poor); (c) conduct trainings and workshops that would help people to become self-reliant," suggests a Barrio Sikap math teacher.

Using media to advertise some words of encouragement like the Jolibee ad which says: "*Kaya mo yan kid!*" or the one we see in almost every part of Iligan which says: "*Yes, Iligan can!*" – words like these can uplift our morale.

The government should first and foremost solve the peace and order situation of the locality as well as stop graft and corruption. Vigilant implementation of our laws and re-education/reshaping the minds of our people will also help.

"Perhaps the government should stop privatization of government corporation/agencies because this can cause unemployment," hinted a 24-year-old female psychometrician.

Government officials should perform their roles, duties, obligations and responsibility to the people. They should help solve peace and order situation (through non-violence) in the Philippines particularly on Mindanao. They should stop the "all-out-war" policy immediately because it is causing so much damage, destruction of lives and property. If all government officials will impose and create programs laws/rules that will punish the guilty by fines and punishment, these psychosocial or sociocultural barriers may be reduced. But this will be useless if government is inconsistent. Government should always encourage hard work and impose discipline.

Cooperatives, organizations with objectives/purposes directed to the poor and marginalized people, especially illiterate folks in the rural areas, can also be part of the solution. Self-control, discipline, honesty among government leaders and officials must be inculcated/internalized. Encouragement from the scriptures may also help. Integration and appreciation of various cultural practices should be encouraged to promote social awareness.

The government must prepare an intervention program to orient parents on how to care for their offsprings with emphasis on psychological aspects of development. DECS must incorporate/require more than three units of psychology courses in various collegiate curricula to give parents-to-be/parents a pretty good grounding on sound childrearing and human development principles and practices.

Government officials must not be lawmakers only to become lawbreakers. They must be good role models, learn to discipline themselves, stop graft and corruption, and not be involved in addiction or any illegal activities.

The government should stop illegal logging and drug addiction (*Aksyon agad*).

In the words of a Maranao female freshman:

The government can do much, perhaps more, than anybody, in drug addiction and alcoholism. First, stop drug dependence/addiction by identifying sources of illegal drugs and closing business establishments engaged in manufacture of prohibited drugs. Second, monitor the sales of alcohol and medicines. Third, more self-awareness programs to help rehabilitate drug dependents and fourth intervention or therapy for drug addicts to help them adjust through community based programs.

Opines an 18-year-old Maranao female:

The only way the government can solve these problems is to give to the people what is due them. People pay taxes so therefore these must be returned to them through easy-to-see employment, free quality education, food, clothing, and shelter most especially for the poor. They must stop dishonesty, if they want to fill the needs of the people. Also the government must convince investors to invest in the Philippines, utilize own resources and motivate people to change for good.

Provide activities, programs such as sports, education/ training , entertainment. Study the roots of the problems, e.g., of shabu. Identify the source. Raid the factory and punish the druglords and/or the criminals.

Inculcate/cultivate the right attitude and values. Demonstrate or be models of goodness, honesty, pure heartedness. Conduct work orientation for the public. Government officials must have a real heart for the people, and forget about their own selfish desires. Re-educate the people through seminars, workshops and the like. Build factories that provide jobs/employment to support financial needs of families. Emphasize scientific orientation against superstitious beliefs; strict enforcement of laws; good, harmonious relationships with one another.

Respect the right of others such as the right to self-expression. Promote cultural values, heritage, unity. Ways of governance must be made compatible with culture.

How can society contribute to the solution?

According to the respondents, society must have close coordination with the government in implementation of laws. It must lobby for the formulation of laws that are most beneficial/applicable to them. It must spearhead the implementation of laws.

Comments a 17-year-old female freshman:

Through education and teaching society to love, care, and respect the beliefs, culture and principles of others, we can attain peace. Society can form a nucleus of good people who will show their talents and sympathy to the problems of mankind. This will help stop violence and crimes.

Through cooperating with the government, by following the laws so that criminalities will be lessened. People should have faith and love

for God so that they may have fear against temptations like money, weapons and the like.

For the workers/employees in the country – instead of looking for a job abroad, it would be much better if they just stick it out here and offer/lend their helping hands to improve the economy of our country to enhance development. But first, development must start within ourselves to be able to contribute to others.

Society and government must work hand in hand to ensure a strong bonding between them. The integration of goal and mission together with will and work will bear fruit or success.

Start with a happy family so we can build the next generation. Check ourselves – our norms, values, beliefs, take initiative of doing good and this will contribute to effective solution to problems. Always be a part of the solution rather than a part of the problem.

Be self-reliant rather than too dependent on the government. Pay taxes promptly. Be vigilant of government's activities. Be self-motivated and do what you think is right for our country. Be industrious and truthful. Practice/observe good moral and spiritual values. Be a hero by being supportive, helpful, committed to the goal of development.

Confides an NGO child counselor:

For me, being aware and vigilant about development issues and being an active rather than passive recipient is the first step towards optimizing development. Empowering people within the society, mainstreaming them, giving them a chance to decide and plan for themselves would greatly help. I believe maximum development must originate/start from the people themselves. What I see in the present government is that development is merely superficial.

Support the government in all its endeavors, programs and laws but, of course, check first if these are for the good of the majority. Society must be vigilant. It must voice out/verify things which are anomalous (not quite right). Practice good moral and spiritual values. Cooperate, coordinate with the government. Develop/practice team work, solidarity, unity, belongingness, participate in government projects.

Pay taxes promptly. Be more understanding. Refrain from judging a person. Simply because he is poor does not mean that he has to be demoted/assigned to the lowest level of development hierarchy. As a social creature and being part of a big society we need each other for love, kindness, friendship... according to a 19-year-old female Baptist.

People must be open/receptive to the changes time brings. They just need to support/cooperate with the government in things (projects) they are trying to implement.

The family as a basic unit should be strengthened first; interactions among members must be improved; good harmonious relationships must be maintained. Obedience to the law but knowing our rights and responsibilities must be instilled in

citizens. "Do not think of what the government can do for you. Think of what you can do for your government," reminds a male psychology major.

Analyze the pros and cons of issues. The barangays, the NGOs and other LGUs and national government must strategize/protect/create local councils consisting of responsible residents. React, process, integrate development efforts.

Argues two female respondents:

> One most important thing is cooperation. Even if the government provides all the necessary solutions, if society does not cooperate nothing will happen. The right attitude coupled with initiative and commitment are very much needed to resolve or at least minimize these barriers. Leaders and followers must join hands to optimize development...
>
> We must voice out our cries for development because if we don't, we will remain stagnant forever, we will suffer, and end up dead and rotten... Let us unite with the government *samantalang maaga pa* (while still early) so that we can have peace, development or ultimate progress. We should be vigilant.

The society must conform to the law and cultivate/instill the spirit of patriotism among its citizens to develop love of country and love of people. Submit to the authority because God has given them the power to rule. If God gave them authority, we must respect the government and their authority as we also respect God. Support the government because in this world, our aim is to help one another for a better life and secure future ahead of us.

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