THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Empowerment as Disempowering: Creating an Enabling Environment for the Needy

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Abstract:
The paper critiques the use of empowerment in development work. The evidence is supported from papers presented during the United Nations General Assembly conference in New York 2019 when the phrase empowerment was put to question. It was clear that agencies mean well when they use community empowerment. However, what they may not be aware of is how empowerment is treated within the wider cultural, social, and political dimensions. The one with power empowers or the one who pays the piper calls the tune. Once the one with power leaves the community goes back to where it was. The intended transformation did not take place for the recipients to know that any form of development is for them not for the one with 'power' of the resources or the expert. The paper makes a case to replace empowerment with the UNDP 1990 phrase of creating an enabling environment, where each and every person can pursue their full potential. Development is about people, exposed to millions of opportunities from which they can make choices they value most. The end result should be a people who have voices, can act, critique and come up with a collective communitarian development that is uplifting and transformative within the political, economic, social, cultural dimensions supported by technology, good governance and reflective science.

Keywords: Development dilemma, Empowerment, disempowerment, creating an enabling environment

1. Introduction

At the launch of the human development programme (HDR) in 1990 by the UNDP, Mahbub Ul Haq and Amartya Sen argued that development is not an end in itself but about people, opportunities and choices they make to reach fullness of life. The emphasis was placed on creating an enabling environment where each and every person can pursue their full potential to achieve wellbeing (UNDP,1990). Since then governance scholars and pro-community-based agencies have continued to debate whether empowerment or creating an enabling environment for all to reach their full potential, should be the main focus.

This question has made the conceptualization and application of empowerment as part of the community development programmes contentious. Empowerment is now synonymous with scientific and professional groups working in disadvantaged communities, with particular attention paid to women. For instance, during the 2019 UN General Assembly, while discussing SDG 16 most speakers associated their presentations with empowerment of marginalized persons across the globe (UNDP,2015). The Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) based in New York, had brought together civil society groups from the developing countries and developed nations to discuss sustainable development goal (SDG) 16. The SDG 16 gives a clear synopsis of social challenges humanity is faced with like lack of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, countries not providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Several reports were presented by representatives from Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, India, New York City itself, Washington DC and UN offices in Geneva.

Question after question reflected on empowerment during the open discussion. Do people who are disadvantaged in these countries need empowerment or should be enabled to access different opportunities before them to make the right choices? The categories mentioned were all types of migrants, refugees, minority groups, political prisoners, those marginalized by society like the youth, women, the LGBTs, those discriminated by religion and non-conformity to bad values.

The session concluded that all the mentioned categories demand a pursuance of a social justice that gives them opportunities to reach fulness of wellbeing. The pursuance of empowerment or the emphasis on creating an enabling environment for all to pursue their full potential requires a deeper critique. Was the over emphasis on empowerment creating new openings for the powerful to oppress the weak and the helpless? Did the well-intended programmes provide space for the disadvantaged persons, in a given society, to enjoy an enabling environment to attain their full potential? These broad questions assisted this research to develop a critical analysis on the complexity surrounding the conceptualization and application of empowerment, in the contemporary context. Three questions were developed to assist this research:

The first question relates to the conceptualization of empowerment, definitions by professionals and groups across the globe.

- A brief historical review of empowerment since 1960s to the present use, the different meanings.
- To explain why development agencies have been persuaded to use empowerment and not creating an enabling environment for all to pursue their full potential.
    The second question brings out three models which have applied empowerment:
- Gender empowerment
- Economic empowerment
- Community empowerment in the context of Chamber's PRA
    The third question looks at a more transformative approaches to meaning:
- Creating an enabling environment for all people to reach their full potential.
- The collective approaches to gender relations by psychologists in situations like domestic violence, job losses.
- Q what support structures and systems are in place for to guide women and men in current Covid-19 situations.

The theoretical framing was anchored within the development discourse and social pedagogy, supported by positive psychology in the context of wellbeing. There are many models which have been used before like gender empowerment (Mahjoub, 2016; Adjei,2015;Syed,2010;Kabeer, 2005), youth empowerment (Úcar Martínezet al.,2017), economic empowerment model like the Plan Colombia (Alvarez et al, 2019), lvarez & Guiot, 2018 and Brittain,2005). Transformative arguments on empowerment and enabling strategies came in handy. The contemporary society is confronted by a myriad of challenges. A downturn in economic fortunes, job losses, handling men's depression from work and domestic violence, post-employment support strategies, migrants and refugees, political prisoners, marginalized groups in a given country, in Africa, Latin America, USA, Europe and Asia. The justification is to give an academic critique to well-intended models, policies and human development programmes designed to have an impact on the whole society, but fail to develop an inclusive nature to social problems.

Secondly, there is need to change the narrative from empowerment to creating an enabling environment for all to pursue their full potential. While Úcar Martínezet al (2017) addressed youth empowerment, this research paper looked at use of empowerment in development studies and active life of communities. In the end, there was ambiguity on what the development agencies meant by youth empowerment. This research should help guide thinking on the proper use of empowerment, when actually the agency meant creating an enabling environment.

Thirdly, there is need to direct attention to a transformed sensitive society, where everyone can rediscover and unlock their hidden potential in moments of crisis like challenges faced by social distancing brought about by Covid19 pandemic, and having an impact on job losses. What about in post-conflict situations, what about in moments of poor economic outcomes? This transformative self-discovery of human weaknesses in handling situations that dehumanize certain people in a given society, will create an inward self-looking, how to handle situations of great social injustice to any gender, distribution of opportunities and allowing people make the right choices.

2. Research Methodology

The first stage involved conducting a documentary analysis and defining key words related to empowerment. The search paid attention to 'empowerment indicators'. The papers presented at the 2019 UN General Assembly, with particular attention paid to SDG 16, brought clarity to the question on who needs empowerment. They identified all humanity regardless where they came from: men, women, youth, migrants, those suffering persecution because of religion and negative political ideologies, race, colour, LGBTs, and those affected by climate change in the Amazon, Africa and the rest of the world.

The second stage was to review key documents on use of empowerment, meaning and interpretation in 1990s, 2000 to 2020. 1990 UN led human development programmes set the stage to review how to mainstream gender in development programmes.

However, the historical background to this study took a global approach to how different studies, international conferences and development agencies have used empowerment to mean many things. We discuss why it was necessary to use empowerment as a core concept in lifting those marginalized to positions of power, authority and control.

The research used the Tangaza University OPAC bibliographical search engines for the most important collections and databases. Mendeley reference manager and JSTOR provided the main online bibliographical documentation work. The online search engines connected with United Nations, UNDP, US Congress Library, Sage Publications, Taylor & Francis Online Journals, SAGE Journals, Taylor & Francis, SpringerLink, Wiley Online Library, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Emerald Journals (Emerald Group Publishing), Oxford Journals (Oxford University Press), Academic Law Reviews (LexisNexis), PMC (PubMed Central), Cambridge Journals (Cambridge University Press), Ingenta Connect, IEEE Conference Publications, SciELO Brazil (Scientific Electronic Library Online), NDLTD Union Catalog and Springer Link Open Access. A systematic search was also carried out using Other reference materials came from the Latin America study initiatives like: *OEconomia*, journal of peasant studies *Documento CEDE and others. The* Google Scholar and Google Books guided in accessing current empirical data.

After making an extensive review of these materials, there was a careful selection of those documents that deal specifically with empowerment in general and why scholars are coming out to challenge what is presented as empowerment. It meant that papers, documents dealing with health, medicine or other perspectives outside the remits of this research were rejected.

The compilation and analysis focused only that information which was relevant to the aims of the research. The headings that guided the literature selection and review were as follows:
The meaning and conceptualization of empowerment
- A brief historical review of empowerment since 1960s to the present use, the different meanings.
- To explain why development agencies have been persuaded to use empowerment and not creating an enabling environment for all to pursue their full potential.
The three models which have applied empowerment:
- Gender empowerment
- Economic empowerment
- Community empowerment in the context of Chamber's PRA
The transformative approaches: creating an enabling environment for all people.

3. Locating the Problem on the Meaning of Empowerment

On the occasion of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Journalists and Writers Foundation organized the UNGA Conference 2019 entitled- Transforming Our World: 'Inclusive Social Development for All' in partnership with 36 Global Partners from 24 countries from all around the world. The Journalist and Writers Foundation (JWF) that organized the side conference which addressed SDG 16 (2019 UNGA, JWF Conference proceedings)[1]. The UNGA Conference created a platform for stakeholders to discuss inclusive social development, youth empowerment and protection of social, economic, cultural rights in order to provide policy recommendations on how to achieve the SDGs with 169 targets globally without 'Leaving No One Behind'. Three panels were formed to capture much of the many dimensions within this SDG 16. The SDG 16 discusses advances in ending violence, promoting the rule of law, strengthening institutions and increasing access to justice are uneven and continue to deprive millions of their security, rights and opportunities and undermine the delivery of public services and broader economic development. Attacks on civil society are also holding back development progress. Renewed efforts are essential to move towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (UNGA, 2019). Panel 1: discussed the role of inclusive social development policies and practices that help the United Nations achieve the Global Goals 2030. Panel 2: Advancing Youth through Social and Economic Empowerment. Panel3: addressed the protection of Social, Economic and Cultural Rights.

Panel one and participants brought out important points on social inclusion and inequalities that play significant role in sustainable development and peace globally. The panelists were Tushar A. Gandhi, President & Founder, Gandhi Foundation, India. He emphasized the role of the culture of peace in social cohesion and inclusiveness. Flavia Fuentes, the legal manager, North America, Thomson Reuters Foundation, USA. The paper highlighted the importance of rule of law and democracy to reduce inequalities and implement social development policies. Dr. Han Entinger, Professor and Author, University Rotterdam, Netherlands, presented key findings on social integration policies that promote access to basic public services. Silvia Alejandra Perazzo, the President, ANU-AR, Argentina, dwelt on civil society participation to facilitate social development. Examples reflected on how institutions of justice can take the frontline in guiding the civil society, the government and people on good courses that transform lives of humanity. For Moneeza Burney, the writer at Dawn Newspaper, Falak Sufi Scholar 2018, Pakistan, the importance of the role played by the youth in creating inclusive social societies was very important. To reach this level required a concerted effort from the education institutions, the government and culture one belongs to. Breaking ideologies that hinder progress in this direction was key factor. (UNGA, 2019; JWF UNGA, 2019).

The conclusions by three panels were summed up as follows: That when humanity observes principles of diversity, the culture of peace, mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect are important ingredients in building peaceful, inclusive, and resilient communities. This was in line with what the United Nations has underlined as the significance of active participation in decision-making, equal opportunities for all in education and employment, and access to public services for all citizens and none citizens, as part of the UN Agenda 2030. The promotion of these rights and responsibilities increases social and economic development whereas denial of these rights leads to conflicts and violence. This responsibility is for all humanity to observe.

Therefore, countries where issues of human rights were not well observed required new strategies of engaging the people and the powers that be (JWF UNGA, 2019). The discussion on SDG 16 provided a good background for reviewing what most agencies mean when their discussions tend to use empowerment but also creating an enabling environment. While empowerment is attractive, it also became clear that the powerful tend to use empowerment to oppress those less fortunate by closing their eyes from seeing the direction they should follow in situations of injustice in their midst. So how did empowerment come into the development agenda and what did it really mean for both agency and beneficiaries of the proposed services?

4. Historical Overview of Empowerment

This part of the discussion takes the reader to the origin of empowerment as part of the broader human rights agenda, with particular attention paid to women.
1946 is an important period when the international community set the stage to review on the status of women and gender equality within economic and social development. The end of the war (1945) raised many questions on human rights. The

United Nations established the Commission on Human Rights in 1946. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was created in 1946 as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946 (ECOSOC.,2014). Since then, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The CSW plays the instrumental role of promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world. It shapes the global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

There are empirical studies by Ester Boserup (1970) on the role of women in economic development across Africa (Boserup et al.,2013; Nair,1971). Then Maria Nzomo (Ayub & Nzomo,2019; Nzomo,2013) and Wangari Maathai (Maathai,2018)lead specific studies on Kenya. Their combined efforts, and other women scholars in Kenya, laid the ground for a review on women and empowerment in leadership, politics and environmental protection.

The review of the 1972 Mexico consultative meeting by the Commission to the Status of Women (CSW) opened the door for a close relationship between non-governmental organizations with those in consultative status like the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Mexico consultative meeting also set the stage for future conferences on the status of women. The first UN led international conferences on status of women starting with the 1975 the Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action, the 1980 Copenhagen Programme of Action, the 1985 Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies and the 1995 Declaration and Platform for Action, all made a big impression on global experiences women in every continent, country and culture.

In 1996, ECOSOC, in resolution 1996/6, expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities (ECOSOC.,2014; UN,1996; Directive, 96/61/EC Council.,1996). Since 1996, the Commission has continued to review the progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The commission has continued to review key global policy documents on gender equality, the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (Beijing+5), that gave a critique on emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women. Member States had agreed on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic, and social fields.

The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up. Empowerment has continued to dominate research and international conferences (ECOSOC,2014). The influence of the ECOSOC on the UN continues to be felt even today[2]. For instance, the 2020 UN General Assembly Conference theme: Five Years of Action Towards the SDGs has put empowerment as an evaluative indicator of its achievements in the past five years. The goal of the 2020 UN General Assembly theme was to assess the progress made in working towards achieving the SDGS in the last five years, in line with the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Particular attention has been paid to empowerment of women over the past years as one way of measuring the success of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (UNGA, 2020).

A review of most conferences between 2015 and 2020 shows how empowerment has dominated the UN conferences. In every report that there is a strong emphasis on creating better opportunities for all people, especially the advancement of women. For example, the resolutions from 2013, 2016, and 2018 had given the platform for the review of themes for 2015–2020. The different resolutions have captured empowerment as a key variable for analysis. The 2015 session reviewed the progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after and opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda (UNGA, 2020).

The 2016 priority theme was: Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development. A review theme came to be: The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (Jauk,2013). The 2017 priority theme was: Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. The 2018 priority theme was: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. In 2019: Priority theme: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Looking at these reports new questions have emerged that require a thorough review. We can see the role of CSW in championing the status of women and searching for best practices which can empower women within the development discourse from 1946 to the new millennium. It leaves a couple of questions to grapple with on who should carry forward this empowerment agenda.

It is here that we can identify two striking fault lines within thinking on gender and development practices. The first is the pushback against and problematic positioning of the universal (Western) concepts within international development projects, aid and funding by experiences and voices from the global South, as well addressed by Fletcher (2019).

5. Empowerment, Meaning and Concept

Purewal (2019), Moeller (2018), Forti (2019), Patricia Cookson (2018) and McLaughlin (2016) give a conclusive critique of empowerment as a term widely used and often considered to be a self-evident good. At the same time their

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[2]ECOSOC. (2014). Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. In Item 10 (c) of the provisional agenda: Coordination, programme and other questions.

studies show that empowerment, if not well presented can work in such a way as to further disempower those already marginalized. 'Empowerment' has become embedded in the contemporary social, economic and political life of people. McLaughlin (2016) confronts the question of social status, with particular attention paid to social policy, social work, health and social care discourse, by asking who defines and who deserves empowerment. The critique gives numerous examples, with particular attention paid to the fact that empowerment has superseded the notion of political subjects exercising power autonomously. For instance, McLaughlin and Aitken head analysed the Walthamstow Constituency, of United Kingdom, led by a Labour MP, Ms. Creasy. Both ask the question, whether taking part in such a micro issue of helping eight members of her constituency buy cookers collectively was the role of the MP or should have been left to a more organic community group? In other words, doing things for constituents without creating an enabling environment for the local people to realise their own full potential could it qualify as empowerment (McLaughlin,2016; Aitkenhead,2012).

6. Empowerment and Power Relations

Studies show that empowerment continues to be widely used in the field of social sciences and as part of practices employed by many international organizations. Bacqué & Biewener (2013), Boluijt & de Graaf (2010) and Zambrano (2007) observed that empowerment is an attractive and powerful concept and that, for precisely these reasons, it has been used internationally as a tool in the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment. Nevertheless, and despite the term's popularity (Pick et al., 2007; Somerville, 1998), it is still unclear exactly what it refers to and what it specifically entails. Most researchers have not reached a consensus on the right meaning (Fundación Cibervoluntarios, 2011; Wagaman, 2011), and that definitions are often very different and abstract (Pick et al., 2007).

Jo Rowland (1995), examined the various meanings given to the concept of empowerment, and the many ways in which power can be expressed, in personal relationships and in wider social interactions. Rowland examined two development projects in Honduras which were both concerned mainly with women, comparing their different approaches, and assessing the extent to which the women involved were empowered as a result of their experiences. Empowerment is not possible for women without major changes in social attitudes and dominant cultural stereotypes.

The next area of interest was how to address empowerment and the acquisition of power in order to accede or contribute to desired change (Ganle et al.,2015; Pratto,2016; Ali& Hatta,2012;Boje & Rosile,2001; Le Bossé & Dufort, 2002). The earlier research work by Jo Rowland (1997,1995) leads the critique on empowerment as disempowerment. There is evidence from her research findings in Honduras to show why empowerment brought about is empowerment rather than giving people enabling opportunities and choices for making their lives better. Rowland engages Social Power Theories: Pluralist, Power-Elite & Marxist Models by contextualizing power and arguments of Michel Foucault (1926–1984). Foucault was a French historian and philosopher, highly regarded by structuralist and post-structuralist movements. According to Foucault, power is based on knowledge and makes use of knowledge. On the other hand, power reproduces knowledge by shaping it in accordance with its anonymous intentions. Powercan re-create its own fields of exercise through knowledge. Pluralism is a theory that centers on the idea of how power is distributed. This argument made Rowland to conclude that in a pluralist society, power is distributed and spread out among many groups. Power is dispersed and fragmented within groups. Groups tend to provide a more effective means of representation. The larger the group the more influence it will have over policies affecting them. The emergence of governance movements picks on this pluralist model to argue on key principles of good governance where people fully participate in all decisions made, ask for transparency and accountability among its leaders (in government and NGO world), and calls for everyone to take responsibility for actions exhibited in private and public (Bevir,2013).

This is the reason why some authors characterize empowerment as an active, continuous process (Betancor, 2011; Tremblay & Gutberlet, 2010; Tromp, 2007) and also as an outcome of what the community desires for (Luttrell et al., 2009; Travis & Bowman, 2011). Some hold that it is a process occurring at individual, organizational and community levels (Agudo & Albornà, 2011; Checkoway, 1997; Jennings et al., 2008; Lawrence Jacobson, 2006; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009; Russell, Muraco, Subramaniam, & Laub, 2009; Zimmerman, 2000) and, furthermore, that it can be applied to different fields (psychological, educational, political, economic, social, cultural, etc.) (Luttrell et al., 2009). This means it is possible to identify different types of empowerment. It is also worth noting that the most common focus of empowerment studies is from the field of psychology (Russell et al., 2009).

Most studies found had the following discussion on power and how acquisition of power is conceptualized. The findings of Úcar Martínezet al., 2017 laid the foundation for exploring different ways of acquiring power as follows:
Awareness on how to build on people's own capabilities and opportunities (Whatley,2011; Breton, 2008; Fundación Cibervoluntarios, 2011; Tremblay & Gutberlet, 2010; Zambrano, 2007).

Believing in one's own power in order to meet proposed aims (Tripathi et al,2015; Mazzola et al,2013; Russell et al., 2009; Liu& Fang,2006). Increasing personal, interpersonal and political power (Michau et al, 2015; Travis & Bowman, 2012). Feeling competent and self-confident (Mishkin, 2019; Deci & Ryan,2012; Fundación Cibervoluntarios, 2011; Alkire 2007; Pick et al., 2007). Gaining access to the decision-making process and structures. Who makes decisions for who (Mohajer & Earnest, 2009; Zambrano, 2007).

Having power and control over resources (Eggleston, 2017; Han et al, 2017; Stanton-Salazar, 2010). Being able to make independent decisions (Mohajer & Earnest, 2009). Widening the scope of freedom of choice and action (Ricaurte et al., 2013).

The individuals in a given community holding intrinsic and extrinsic power. The question that came out of the review was how oneself exercised power and power over resources (Betancor, 2011; Musitu & Buelga, 2004). Our opinion

is that Betancor's wording (2011) most clearly presents the two main dimensions or areas of action implied in the concept of empowerment. The first refers to personal capacities and the means by which they can be acquired, developed or put into practice. This is directly related to people's life paths and their corresponding learning and training processes; this can be said to be a personal, training or learning dimension.

The second refers to the person's environment and the possibilities and opportunities for action that this offers or denies them. It is not just about having access to resources, but also about gaining some kind of control over them. This point has been well articulated by (Kishor, 1999; Za Sathar & Kazi, 1997, p. 297).

The understanding of how to develop poor countries and bring about the desired change filled up policy papers. The failures of the UN modernization agenda in the 1960s and 1970s prompted scholars like Alvarez et al, 2019; lvarez & Guiot, 2018; Brittain,2005; Escobar 1995 to ask why.

The development model not only missed out on key foundations for real transformation, but the intended beneficiaries were getting poorer and there was a rise in abuse of basic human rights.

7. Development Experts and Economic Empowerment

The most discussed model of economic empowerment of any country is what is called plan Colombia. It reveals how development experts can mislead the well-intended development plan. That lack of local participation is bad for any economic stimulus and ending poverty.

Escobar (1995) had set the stage on how development agencies and experts were influenced by outcomes of President Harry Truman's 1949 speech to the UN General Assembly. The Second World War had left the developed world shattered. European states that had formerly been colonial powers were left fiscally desperate. With this economic backdrop, the world looked at the United States, the only major Western power to come out of the war economically stronger than when it entered, as their main saviour from the destruction caused by the war. The United States employed its economic supremacy as a non-military tactic through programs such as the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

The January 20,1949, inaugural address, is considered the jumping-off point by international development agencies in the post-war World. An ideological divide of capitalism against communism was now the new frontier for development. The mantra, that you are for us or against us, seems to have been well knitted then for all allies to wear (Winterhalt,2018). It then led to misinterpretation of Truman's speech differently. It created a schism between the enlightened nations and those societies, as Truman put it, still engulfed in darkness. Development was to be managed by experts to allow such societies to catch up with the developed world. To test out this model, the World Bank sent a delegation to Colombia, led by Lauchlin Currie, under the infamous banner Plan Colombia Campaign (1949).

A review of this 1949 World Bank mission headed by Lauchlin Currie Colombia by Alvarez et al, (2019), lvarez & Guiot, (2018) and Brittain, (2005), helped shed light on what was understood as economic empowerment. Albert Hirschman followed became involved in the Plan Colombia, as an expert on policy issues about developing Colombia. The evaluation many years later revealed how power and control can come from outside forces to advance their own policies at the expense of those seen as beneficiaries from the desired development. The Lauchlin Currie led delegation to Colombia recommended a comprehensive review of underdevelopment circles through the widening of domestic and international markets and reform of macroeconomic policy-making (Alvarez et al, 2019; lvarez & Guiot, 2018). The key factor was that Lauchlin Currie and the Plan Colombia delegation assumed development could be managed from a top down approach (Brittain,2005). Different scholars who followed this type of economic empowerment development policy show why it failed. For instance, Brittain (2005) analysed the period spanning forty years and concluded the following:

'Colombia has been in the grips of a continuous struggle for over 40 years, thus making the Andean nation home to one of the longest running civil conflicts within the Western Hemisphere. Examined here is the way in which the development theory elaborated by the economist Lauchlin Currie has licensed this conflict, combining as it does an advocacy both of 'free market' policies and of the 'dampening' of rural opposition to their implementation throughout Colombia. In this combination, it is argued, lies the uniqueness – and perhaps the notoriety-of his monetarist framework'.

Brittain (2005) makes the point that if Colombia has been in civil war for more than forty years, then the trigger was bad ideology and poor development policies inflicted on the country by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), during 1949 and into the 1950s.

Alvarez, Guiot and Hurtado (2017) in their own review of the visit by Hirschman and Currie to Colombia as experts. First, they contend that this mission was commissioned by IBRD during 1949 and into the 1950s. They then give warning to other experts that personality clash rather than what the local community desires, can ruin a good project. For instance, Lauchlin Currie and Hirschman, both experts of development, although shared the same goal of contributing to the formulation of economic policies with a developmental purpose.

These are the three prevailing interpretations about their differences. The first interpretation, found in Sandilands (2015) and Caballero (2008), underlines theoretical differences between Currie and Hirschman. The second, developed by Alacevich (2009; 2016), offers a sociological explanation building on Merton's view of a 'battle of egos' that was engaged and heightened with their joint work in Colombia. The third can be found in Adelman (2013) and Escobar (1995), who associate Currie with technocratic development (White House support), and Easterly (2014), taking this a step further, associates Hirschman (World Bank insider) with *free development*.

The conclusion of this period has been well summarized by Alacevich (2016), that the enthusiasm raised by President Truman to bring development to communities assumed backward and, in the dark, ended up bringing about

misery and extreme suffering of the local communities. The reason behind it was the clash in ideologies by experts like Currie and Hirschman and the desires of the local communities forgotten (Winterhalt,2018; Reston,2017; Escobar,1995).

8. Capability and Multidimensional Approaches

The capability and multidimensional approaches have opened up possibilities of exploring community empowerment and human development. Since 2007 Amartya Sen, through research conducted by Oxford poverty and human development initiative (OPHI), have continued to interrogate community level capabilities and empowerment. Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) had proposed a list of internationally comparable indicators of individual agency and empowerment to inform research and policy from a wider lens of economic and human development. The list of indicators included: control over personal decisions; domain-specific autonomy; household decision-making; and the ability to change aspects in one's life at the individual and communal levels. The role of the agency in directing the capacity that people have to act on their surroundings, as a tool in increasing their levels of empowerment was questioned (Obayelu and Chime (2020; Ibrahim and Alkire 2007; Fortunati, 2014; Hennink et al., 2012; Luttrell et al., 2009; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009; Pick et al., 2007; Russell et al., 2009; Tremblay & Gutberlet, 2010).

For example, this research compared two similar arguments raised by Obayelu and Chime (2020), Ibrahim and Alkire (2007). Obayelu and Chime (2020) observed that in Africa, most of the population lives in rural areas. While investigating empowerment of women and factors influencing their empowerment as a strategy for overcoming poverty, they found more indicators in addition to what Ibrahim and Alkire came up with. Their findings revealed that women's voice was stifled in households where men were culturally the dominant force. Decision making on how to save and spend money, freedom to plan and organize the home, were among some of the indicators that the cultural dimensions in rural Africa require serious scrutiny before anything else. The other new challenge Obayelu and Chime (2020) saw was the role played by agency in the empowerment agenda. The aim of agencies in Nigeria was to enable women in the war on poverty, the research found a larger percentage of rural women were being disempowered by agencies than men. The agency had the highest relative contribution to women's disempowerment because of one sided approach to household poverty. When agencies (NGOs, CBOs, FBOs) want to design gender-responsive interventions programs and implementation, they failed to consider these challenges women face within certain cultures, and households. It is important to consider the Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) proposal of building capabilities at individual and communal levels for an inclusive holistic communal empowerment programme. In this regard, we analyse what combine Obayelu and Chime (2020) found out about women having no say on household matters and most decisions left to men as head of the household, then both men and women require a cultural education on their complementarity role within the wider capability agenda Other variables like the acquisition of capabilities came out of studies from (Salim& Geetha,2013;Bhattacharya &Banerjee, 2012;Qiu,2008; Nussbaum,2008;Wagaman,2011; World Bank, 2006,p. 2985).

The lesson here is that you cannot target women for empowerment and leave out men. There is a tendency for men to disempower women in the final analysis. Perhaps what is right here is to create an enabling environment for both men and women to pursue their full potential. Empowerment and education are key indicators within the capability and multidimensional models used in appraising human development. While agreeing with Úcar Martínezet al,2017; Alkire,2007) from their findings, we can point out where authors had failed to articulate well the processes of empowerment with education and learning (Sraboni et al, 2014; Bacqué & Biewener, 2013; Bates, 2006; Bello, 2011; Fortunati, 2014; Lemmer, 2009; Mackinnon & Stephens, 2010; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009; Shirazi, 2011; Tremblay & Gutberlet, 2010).

They also fail to relate what they thought as empowerment with the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Jahdi et al, 2016; Hennink et al., 2012; Alese & Hassan, 2011; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009; Özmete, 2011). Another aspect of empowerment and education brings out knowledge in acquisition of resources. This has also come out as controversial interpretation because of the cultural dimensions, geographic location and religious ideologies (Alqahtani,2020;Florence Akiiki,2017; Washington, & Economides,2016; Vijayakumar,2013). The other questions that reflected on empowerment and education were about awareness. How do communities come to know that what they do on the other gender is bad? (Mahjoub,2016;Rawat,2014; Mackinnon &Stephens, 2010; Quiroga & Alonso, 2011; Zambrano, 2007). The Freirean philosophy on how communities can become their own protagonists was important source on awareness (Alexander,2019; Puroway,2016; Philip, & Zavala,2016; Breton,2008; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009; Wang, 2006; Wong, 2008). The diversification of economic help to women is an interesting area of empowerment. Creativity in economic empowerment of women has also raised new questions on rights and empowerment. In a neoliberal frame of thought, women being part of advertisements has raised strong concern on the perception of empowerment. The recent works of Purewal (2019), Fletcher (2019), Moeller (2018), Forti (2019), Patricia Cookson (2018) and McLaughlin (2016) bring the dilemma of lamping what looks genuine together with what society is fighting against.

For instance, Moeller (2018) give a comprehensive microscopic review of philanthropic brand Girl Effect by Nike, by questioning how corporations market, profit from, and reproduce the vulnerability of women and girls. This view offers an interesting contemporary neoliberal developmental understanding with varying degrees of cynicism through empirically informed critique. Where does one draw the line when young women see taking part in advertisements of this nature are good because they can make money out them. But when it comes to the details of their contracts of participation, they feel disadvantaged. This is what Moeller (2018) seems to question. If empowerment was the focus here, then exploitation is bound to thrive. But perhaps if girls in the industry of advertisement were enabled through education on personal, group, communal rights, they could come out knowledgeable about making decision to do this activity.

The next area of interest was how to address empowerment and the acquisition of power in order to accede or contribute to desired change (Ganle et al,2015; Pratto,2016; Ali& Hatta,2012; Boje& Rosile,2001; Le Bossé & Dufort, 2002). The earlier research work by Jo Rowland (1995) had laid the foundation of seeing that empowerment can easily lead to disempowerment.

Another aspect of empowerment in the community is well articulated by Robert Chambers (Mathison,2013; Narayanasamy,2008; Chambers, 2007). Chambersstands out as a leader in promoting community development and participation by local grassroots people. But what has come out of research in recent times has been on the people who actually participate when confronted by a number of distinct types of participation. The levels are individual, family level (among clans) communal, societal, political stages of life, which constitute a diverse approach to the medium for empowerment (Úcar Martínez et al,2017; Bacqué and Biewener (2013); Boluijt & de Graaf, 2010; Checkoway, 2011; Mackinnon & Stephens, 2010; Martínez, 2010; Stanton-Salazar, 2010; Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2010). Bacqué and Biewener (2013) gave a good analysis of the situation in Chicago, USA, within the urban renewal politics of USA in the 1990s, when the overriding policies over the concept of empowerment became firmly established.

9. Transformative Models for Enabling Communities

The critique on how different professions and agencies have conceptualized and presented empowerment has generated a new thinking. This is social transformation. In this philosophical thinking, we extract methodological processes which could help guide professionals and agencies to offer the right solutions to the intended people. It means that to open the eyes of the oppressed and oppressor, the marginalized people and their interlocutor, the service provider and the beneficiary, requires transformation which is geared towards people acquiring a skill, knowledge and working to stand on their own. Pierli and Selvam (2017) understood social transformation as a set of processes in which individuals and groups of people bring about large-scale social change with an aim of enhancing quality of life. In this sense, they also agree with Castles (2001) that social transformation is more than development.

Blythe et al (2018) are also aware that certain transformations could need up badly and hurt the very people intended for transformation. They agreed that the notion of transformation is gaining traction in contemporary sustainability debates. There is no limitation to theories that support transformations. There is the unlocking of exciting spaces to re-imagine and re-structure radically different futures. What remains as a question is the translation of term from just being an academic concept into an assemblage of normative policies and practices. Also, how this process might shape social, political, and environmental change. In their own research they came to identify latent risks associated with discourse that frames transformation as apolitical and/or inevitable. This is what, they agree on as the dark side of transformation. They also warn scientists, policymakers, and practitioners need to consider such change in more inherently plural and political ways. This is because the future may not be accurately predicted towards sustainable radical transformations. This applies to professionals and agencies that have always intended well while working with the poor, the marginalized and oppressed. What they really mean is a type of transformation that gives knowledge, skills and possibilities of the people themselves to stand up and address their own challenges. So social transformation in this regard demands for social processes, particularly those that bring about noteworthy changes driven by the people themselves. These processes could be political, economic, social, or religious. Transformation here presupposes a change with a positive value, always implying a forward thrusting movement towards the enhancement of quality of life (Pierli and Selvam,2017). Hence, while social transformation should refer to positive upward or forward thrusting processes, 'social change' could refer to both negative and positive processes as Blythe et al (2018) have acknowledged from their own research work. On the other hand, the sociological term, 'social mobility' simply refers to movement of individuals and groups in their social status, particularly in terms of class or caste hierarchy within the layers of stratification of society.

In economic development and improving society, the state has always been the vanguard of any form and type of development. However, Evans (2012) the role played by the state in economic progress could often devolve into diatribes against intervention. In most cases the role played by the state in offering a new vision may end up in disaster. He used examples from South Korea and DRC formerly Zaire where state agencies, local entrepreneurs, and transnational corporations shaped the emergence of computer industries in Brazil, India, and Korea during the seventies and eighties. While in Zaire (DRC today), the state was predatory, ruthlessly extracting and providing nothing of value in return. However, South Korea, was developmental, promoting industrial transformation which can be seen today. He created categories of states which stand in between, driving transformation or being a hindrance to economic development. In this case Brazil and India, continue to stand in between, as helping and sometimes hindering.

Therefore, what Evans found out helps this research paper to bring to the reader that successes and failures of state involvement in the process of industrialization requires the state to understand its own limits, develop a realistic relationship to the global economy andconjure up a coherent internal organization which has close links to society. The failure of Plan Colombia to bring about the desired pro-poor economic fortunes is a case in mind.

Tangaza University College, Nairobi, continues to pursue within its wider research programmes, a continuous engagement transformation. The programmes in education, youth studies and positive psychology, social entrepreneurship, governance studies, behavioural change within cultures and other teaching programmes. The research programmes work towards reclaiming positive terms like creating an enabling environment and less on empowerment.

This research suggests a transformative approach to delivery of education from three perspectives. First, the self-reflective approach to education, second, getting rid of the notion that the teacher is the boss notion and students must copy paste what is taught. Third, bringing the Freireanpedagogy in social transformation requires a holistic review on how to make,

people in question, their own protagonists and self-propagating to what they see as the most significant change to their lives.

Self-reflective approach. Keshav (2010) on *Teaching students to become self-reflective practitioners*, shows that pedagogy techniques should be more than teaching students to develop, implement, and evaluate programs. This education-based case report summarizes the restructuring and content of a facilitation techniques course. The goal is to have students increase competency in self-reflective practice and gain experience in processing. The teaching method is achieved through facilitation presentations, role play, and a self-reflection paper in the form of a life story. Students usually become proficient in these aspects of programming, but do not gain the competence and confidence to run these programs as therapeutic groups, which requires the ability to process before, during, and following the group. Students need to become aware of potential issues around parallel processing when running groups. Keshav (2010) has led others in this frame thought to suggest that if this approach is enhanced it will help students to develop habits that will encourage self-reflective practice.

10. From Teacher Being the Boss to Participant

Le Ha (2014) introduced the concept of 'Learner-centered' and 'teacher as facilitator'. In order to bring about democratic participation, equality, and empowerment to learners and helping transform and liberate societies, there has to be an interrogation of influential concepts that have reshaped education over the past decades. The review of how education is presented, whether in community development projects, political emancipation or developing a social entrepreneurship programme. The concepts constructed in binary terms with 'teacher-centred' and 'teacher as authority' projecting the two ends as being mutually exclusive, require transformation.

These conclusions by Le Ha (2014) were drawn from data collected through interviews and scholarly works from teachers teaching Humanities and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in Asian and English-speaking Western universities. The core research question focused on the teacher positionings, mode, form of critique and criticality of learner-centred education. The findings pursued an encouraging line of thought. Can we have equality as the starting point in the relationship between the teacher and the student? The conclusion was that equality as the starting point was not embedded in how learner-centred education has largely been promoted in these contexts. The study also brought out the view that while concepts of equality and dissensus may empower those seen as marginalized and disadvantaged, these concepts fail to acknowledge the multiplicities and dynamics of positions of those presupposed to be 'powerful' and 'privileged'. In this case the teacher represents the project leader, the donor in question or the state. The three categories represent those who are powerful and wield power because of their positions in society and can influence how their desired goals should achieved through the subjects in need of help. This is where the use of empowerment tends to disempower those who are victims of an injustice, development need or seek recognition in a given predominant culture. Some examples that have critiqued this way of presenting development from Gillian Fletcher (2019) who examined the potentials for and limitations to transformative change through an analysis of international development frameworks in operation across different local contexts and programs. Sarah Forti (2019) highlighted how normative frameworks of gender equality are enacted through international development assistance (IDA) in the field. Purewal (2019) and Tara Patricia Cookson (2018) developed a critical analysis of the conditional cash transfer programs (CCTs) as an instrument of behavioral change and poverty alleviation. The four experts engage and interrogate in their own way how gender programs and policies are conceived in contemporary neoliberal developmental times. At times what is intended is lost in the practical engagement with those in need.

11. The Freirean Pedagogy in Social Transformation

Alexander (2019) agrees with Martin (2008) in the application of the Freirean pedagogy to explore the possibilities for fostering critical consciousness among American working-class students in the face of their severe educational alienation. Martin (2008) identified the special difficulty teachers had in creating awareness and understanding of oppression while working with highly alienated students, especially in America. The extensiveness and severity of educational alienation in the United States, especially among working class students revealed shortcomings to self-consciousness in the education delivery. Most teaching syllabus fell short of understanding Karl Marx's theory of alienation to illuminate the systemic entrenchment of the problem. The education syllabus could be enriched by examining Antonio Gramsci's theory regarding the porousness of subjugated consciousness, so that critical pedagogy could permeate even deeply embedded student alienation. If teaching was transformed to build on critical self-consciousness, there would be a high degree of students graduating and knowing how to guide society to social transformation.

The Freirean pedagogy has found itself in social entrepreneurship. Gries & Naudé (2010) have gone further to use endogenous growth model to illuminate the role of entrepreneurial start-up firms in structural economic transformation. They followed the Lewis-model distinction between a traditional and modern sector and underpin this distinction with micro-foundations. We specify mature and start-up entrepreneurs and make a distinction between survivalist self-employment activities in the traditional sector and opportunity-driven entrepreneurship in the modern. The model shows how opportunity-driven entrepreneurship can drive structural transformation in both the modern and traditional sectors through innovation and the provision of intermediate inputs and services (which permits greater specialization in manufacturing) and by increasing employment and productivity. This calls for a move away from the traditional methods of teaching students first then after completing school they get employed, then start-ups. America & Le Grange (2019) have addressed this problem by…proposing a curriculum that decolonizes education. The decolonisation of education debate has come up in South Africa in recent years. Clarification and understanding of the complex concepts such as

Africanisation, Eurocentrism, Westernisation, colonialism, coloniality, decolonialism and decoloniality also surfaced (see Jansen 2017; Le Grange 2016; Le Grange 2018; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Venter 2018; Mbembe 2015; CHE 2017). While acknowledging that decolonisation is a complex and multi-layered process, it is seen as a necessity to helping new graduates learn to be self-employed early enough (see Jansen 2017; Le Grange 2016; Le Grange 2018; Venter 2018; Mbembe 2015; CHE 2017).

However, there is a silence in current discourses when it comes to teacher education (Sayed, Motala & Hoffman 2017) and specifically Economics Teaching and Business Studies Teaching (EBST), since the focus of the decolonisation debate has been on higher education in general. Teacher education is a field that functions at the interface of higher education and schooling and therefore the complexity and context of the school system (in)directly impact on teacher education programmes. Mbembe (2015:17) argues that most of the implications for decolonising higher education have to do with content and the extent of what is to be taught (curriculum reform). But this does not mean that decolonising knowledge is simply about de-Westernisation or to reject Western epistemic contributions to the world (Mignolo 2011:82), or to reverse technological advancement, or simply turn back the clock and revert to old ways of doing (Le Grange 2016). Rather, it is about developing a 'perspective which can allow us to see ourselves clearly, but always in relationship with ourselves and to other selves in the universe, non-humans included' (Mbembe,2015:24). The question is how the EBST curriculum, as part of an initial teacher education programme, can be decolonised.

This last part of the paper discussed social transformation as a positive upward, forward thrusting processes. It means while most development agencies and professionals are discussing empowerment, they actually mean studying the environment holistically and giving enabling support to those found to be marginalized and in perpetual oppression. We have found some key elements that require a serious scrutiny before any serious engagement with the oppressed groups starts. For instance, education system, how the curriculum is developed to make students stand on their own. How this knowledge is transferred to the wider society so that when faced with new challenges that require social justice, one can find the community feeling ready to handle the situation by themselves.

What the research work embarked on was to show that most professionals and agencies have the best of intentions in any setting up community empowerment project. But in most cases, they conducting 'social change', which tends to result into negative processes (Blythe et al,2018). So, what has emerged from literature is 'social mobility' by moving individuals and groups in their social status within the layers of stratification of society they belong to.
We have seen that social transformation then brings on board what was initially empowerment and creates an enabling environment by making necessary reforms within the teaching fraternity and policies in syllabus.

12. Conclusions

The presentations by the civil society engaged by Writers Foundation (JWF) based in New York, helped to lay the path for a serious review of how to use empowerment while discussing SDG 16. It was then important to review respective conferences before 2015 and after 2015 there have been resolutions had been about improving quality of life.

It is from the deliberations that scholars present grappled with empowerment in its contemporary usage. The language being used in literature, agencies and professionals appeared to be the problem when presenting empowerment. Key questions were raised especially, what Willette (2014) and Jo Rowland (1995) had observed. The empowerment debate was lost in the person who empowers the other. But for how long do you empower people to become self-propagating. So, what seems to have been the meaning is that empowerment in certain contexts was the same as helping people to realise their full potential and acting on their own.

The paper has also made clarification that reports from research might have created the impression over the last thirty years, that empowerment meant getting the best opportunities for women, with less attention paid to the other gender, men. After observing the power relations, the male dominance in these societies, the strong clan heads, strong village ruler and how politicians then perhaps it was justified that women were the victims. However, this assertion was overruled by psychologists from across the globe who saw a rise in violence during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was obvious that women became victims of the lockdown but the culprits were men. It was suggested that people who really needed help were men. They have to be part of the gender empowerment discussions to address why they turn their anger to their spouses at home.

The transformation required is for professionals and development agencies toguarantee that their development interventions enable people by exposing them to as many opportunities as possible to make the right choices. Ul Haq and Sen (1990) argued that no one can guarantee human happiness, and the choices people make are their own concern. But the process of development should at least create a conducive environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. This very true. The turning point comes with transforming the education policies and syllabus to systematically change attitudes and mindsets on how the marginalized can achieve their own full potential without making reference to a powerful master (Christens,2012).

Human development thus concerns more than the formation of human capabilities, such as improved health or knowledge. It also concerns the use of these capabilities, be it for work, leisure or political and cultural activities. And if the scales of human development fail to balance the formation and use of human capabilities, much human potential will be frustrated (Suich,2012; Gaventa,2004; Narayan et al,2000; UNDP,1990) Úcar Martínez et al (2017), have highlighted the complex nature of 'empowerment', its ambiguity and ubiquitous application. The empowerment is lacking in clarity and meaning when most professionals and groups apply it to suit their own different situational experiences.

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