COMMUNITY BASED TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

MIGHT BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

Bangladesh has made some progress in poverty reduction and social development in recent decades despite limited state capacity, low social expenditure, and a wide range of governance problems in the public sector. However, poverty still persists in Bangladesh; and to break the cycle of poverty, the intervention programmes need to be made sustainable. Community based transformative educational services can be provided to poor people along with appropriate opportunities that can motivate them to convert their core capacities into capabilities, which are prerequisite for functioning properly in a society. Community based approach might offer such an avenue as opportunities lie among communities where they can exercise their modified attitude. A new window might be opened in existing poverty reduction interventions; to reconceptualise formal, nonformal and informal education; to offer transformative educational services about health, safety, livelihood patterns; and all these might result in enhanced wellbeing and minimised leakage of income due to accidental costs to overcome illbeing.

KEYWORDS: Bangladesh, Community, Poverty, Transformative Educational Services

INTRODUCTION

In spite of stable economic growth, poverty has been a chronic problem in Bangladesh since its independence in 1971. Poverty reduction interventions of the government and local and international development partners have been significant sources of assistance to the poor people to fight against poverty. Still poverty appears to be an eternal challenge with changing facets that demands addressing philosophy and politics of poverty reduction initiatives. It is often perceived that there is a positive correlation among economic growth, poverty reduction, and independence of a country. This might be because of the stereotyped ideas about how these interplay and one of the reasons for this stereotyped approach could be political agenda of newly independent countries. While discussing development milieu in 1960s and 1970s in terms of third-world development, Jolly (2012) mentioned that many of the newly independent countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East generally promoted economic development with higher emphasis in their political agendas and this consequently created such a traditional notion in development thinking. However, referring China, Sen (1996) strongly argued that its success in market economy resulted in because of its solid foundations of earlier social changes. Sen advocated that to achieve similar success, a country should ensure parallel social changes in education, health care and land reforms. He further emphasised China's achievements in elementary schooling in support of its success. According to Ghani (2010), South Asian countries including Bangladesh are doing well in terms of economic growth rate but yet have high poverty rates, poor human development, and substantial gender disparities. In his opinion, poverty rates have not fallen fast enough to reduce total number of poor people. High population growth rate among the poor segments of

population is also playing a role in determining rate of poverty. Mosley (2012) asserted that it is now realized that poverty reduction will not happen simply if economy is growing and only having right policies is not enough to reduce poverty. To ensure wellbeing by reducing poverty and inequality, people should be able to acquire different types of effective human capabilities; and economic growth alone cannot ensure all these.

Poverty reduction interventions, mainly the microcredit programmes, undoubtedly made Bangladesh familiar to global development studies among academics, researchers, and donor organizations. So, along with 'famine' and 'flood'; 'poverty' also became an icon for Bangladesh. Ironically 'poverty' has become the unique selling proposition (USP) for the country. There might be embedded notions of politics to gain from out of poverty. So arises the uncomfortable question: whether politics of maintaining this enduring poverty is ethical considering context of poor people.

Community based approach is becoming a popular choice among governments, non-government organizations (NGOs) and development partners for their development initiatives. Similar approach can also be found in the 18th and 19th centuries in the US and UK that was adopted to combat poverty and to improve individual well-being through education and information dissemination; although due to the top-down nature of those interventions most of such initiative did not succeed (Abbott, 1996). Poverty reduction programmes have now started emphasizing the fact that poor people should not be passive recipients but active participants (Sen, 1999). For instance, in India thousands of grassroots organizations are involving and mobilizing local people around issues of community development (Pandey, 1991). It is suggested that implementation of sustainable development should be based on local-level solutions derived from community initiatives; though its practical implementation frequently falls short of expectations (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999). Community based transformative educational services for health, agriculture, disaster management, awareness building, finance, business, trade and market can be offered to the poor people of developing countries to create wellbeing. This type of education results in a deep structural shift of consciousness in the areas of thoughts, feelings and action that change a person's way of being in the world (O'Sullivan, 2002). Sen's Capability Approach is also compatible with this concept as it promotes to consider education without institutional limits so that it might intervene political policy, community networks, and entrenched hierarchies to help produce the conditions which allow all citizens' greater agency freedom to achieve valued ways of being and doing (Hart, 2009). Successful implementation of this type of transformative education depends on careful considerations of intra-community and inter-community dynamics and the extent of homogeneity and heterogeneity of the members of communities.

This paper provides an assessment of ways to break the cycle of poverty in Bangladesh through community based transformative educational services. Here, the term education is not constrained in formal pedagogical one rather transcends the conventional meaning and implies the education for life, proper functioning in a society and well-being. An exploratory research was conducted for this assessment to clarify ambiguous situations or to discover potential opportunities (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, and Griffin, 2010). In this paper, findings of desk-based research are analyzed, documented, and integrated with author's opinions and with references to relevant literature.

THEORETICAL KNOTS

Education is defined as a process of becoming an educated person. Generally it is perceived that education has three different modes naming formal, nonformal and informal education. However, Checchi (2006) advocated for two dimensions of education: in one dimension it is perceived as creation of minimal capabilities to allow functioning

following the thoughts of the Nobel laureate Amartya Kumar Sen and in the other as an investment in human capital, following the theories of another Nobel laureate Gary Becker. Formal education is highly institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured. Hart (2013) emphasized that education strategy should aim to raise aspirations in order to enhance participation, quality and result. She (2013) claimed that within sociology there are competing ideas about the role of education. Consensus theorists such as functionalists may argue that role of schools is primarily to sort and prepare young people to support society by taking on roles commensurate with their ability and skills, whereas conflict theorists such as Marxists or feminists may argue that filtering and shifting that take place during schooling processes, work to oppress and disadvantage some individuals while unfairly advantaging others. To expand the roles of education she has drawn on the perspectives of two pioneers in education and human flourishing. First, was Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, who established a school in 1901 in Shantiniketan in India, proposed that the object of education was to give an individual the unity of truth with spiritual, intellectual and physical elements, and emphasized on harmony, sympathy and educational experience of body and soul. Second, was Alexander Sutherland Neill, who established Summerhill School in England in 1921 and provided another interesting perspective on the role of education by allowing students to be free to choose whether or not they attend lessons and when they are not in lessons they can be involved in whatever activity they find interesting. Nussbaum (2002) also criticised the process of formal education, mentioning it as an imperfect proxy for education.

Nonformal education is also organized and systematic but is provided outside the framework of formal education system. Generally, it targets some selected subgroups in population like adults, professionals and children. Instances of most common nonformal education include agricultural extension and farmer training programmes, adult literacy programmes, and various community programmes of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning, cooperatives, and the like (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974). However, informal education is unorganised and unsystematic. It is a lifelong process that assists acquiring and developing knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment – at home, at work, at play; from attitudes of family and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books; and/or by listening to radio or viewing films and/or television (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974). Emphasising urge for re-conceptualisation, Hart (2009:397) mentioned: "... education can take place in the community, family, informal learning environments, outdoor centres, religious institutions and so on. ... How can we create freedom within the curriculum for children to have time to reflect and time to discuss the ways of being and doing that are of importance to them. Researchers need to bear in mind that ideas are likely to change over time with age and maturity alongside the development of other skills such as reasoning, literacy, the growth of confidence and so on". Daniels, Lauder and Porter (2009) further addressed some issues including role of culture in understanding pedagogy; role of global influences, especially economic, cultural, and social, in shaping understanding of education; and the ways learners negotiate transition between different phases of education.

Level of education and poverty status are often correlated negatively. For instance, Connell (1994:129) stated: "Education was brought into the welfare picture through the correlation between lower levels of education on the one side, and higher rates of unemployment and lower wages on the other. The idea of a self-sustaining "cycle of poverty" emerged, where low aspirations and poor support for children led to low educational achievement, which in turn led to labour market failure and poverty in the next generation". Thus, poor people are often trapped in poverty due to a poor and inadequate education. Again, gender division of labour in poor households also affects access to education for boys and girls (Fennell,

2008; Lloyd, Grant, and Ritchie, 2008). Nevertheless, marginalisation is stated to be about failure to get a sufficient level of education, generally on the grounds of some aspects of poverty that are mentioned as boundary for poor people for what they need incentives to cross that (Unterhalter, Yates, Makinda and North, 2012). Those who can get formal and/or informal education might get out of poverty trap given that appropriate opportunities existed and have been availed. While discussing about what is holding poor regions back from overcoming poverty, Ghani (2010:9) identified that "A divergence in poverty rates would suggest that lagging regions are trapped in poverty. A divergence in social outcomes would suggest there are social traps. … People can be trapped in poverty, when poverty itself becomes a constraint to growth. This occurs in regions that display characteristics of high conflict, low savings or investment rates, dismal education … .These traps can become a vicious cycle".

Poverty is often looked at in a narrow manner and researched on a specific theoretical dimension or on a particular set of people. However, there exist different concepts of poverty, as well as diverse approaches to its measurement. Poverty is not simply absence of financial resources. According to Sen's Capability Approach, poverty is a state of people when they lack the capability to function appropriately or when in fact they lack the opportunity to attain acceptable levels of functioning (Sen, 1995). Chambers (1995) also addressed poverty referring the context of multi-dimensionality of deprivations and ill-beings as: income poverty, social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonality, powerlessness, and humiliation. So, to minimize deprivation and to create wellbeing, we need to address all these dimensions. In different communities, poor people's priority may vary; hence it requires adaptive focusing to the dimensions of poverty. And definitely poor people's priority(s) should be considered rather than emphasizing on what policy planners and development partners believe suitable to act upon. Although these thoughts might have merit in themselves but history, specifically around issues of microcredit and poverty reduction programmes, have probably never been given a critical second thought regarding whether the poor people really thought they would need microcredit or it was the decision from 'the others' and whether something else should have been done that would empower the poor people to think out what they actually need, to become empowered to cycle out from poverty in a sustainable manner.

Weber (2002) also expressed similar concerns but regarding the impositions of global policies in local settings. "An exposition of the global political economy of microcredit and poverty reduction elucidates how the 'poverty reduction' agenda is implicated in strategies of global governance. Microcredit, although implemented at the level of local communities, is a policy initiated not at the national (or even local) level but at the level of global institutions" (Weber, 2002:146). A similar notion can be conceived by Khondker's (2006:105) statement given in a different discussion on nationalism in Bangladesh. "The very pendular nature of things gives us the possibility of a tolerant polity characterized by democracy and human rights; it also presents the threat of a turn to right, to intolerance and new orthodoxies. The swing of the pendulum is no longer dictated by the forces within the nation but beyond the national borders of Bangladesh by the happenings in the region as well as the global forces". Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash also emphasised changing Rene Dubois's popular statement 'Think globally, act locally', to 'Think and act locally' (Peet and Hartwick, 1999).

Conceptually poverty can be viewed in absolute and relative terms; while it can also be approached from either objective or subjective perspective (Lok-Dessallien, 1999). Sen (1985) explained 'absolute' perspective of poverty in the following manner. "The characteristic feature of "absoluteness" is neither constancy over time, invariance between different societies, nor concentration merely on food and nutrition. It is an approach of judging a person's deprivation in absolute terms (in the case of a poverty study, in terms of certain specified minimum absolute levels), rather than in purely

relative terms vis-à-vis the levels enjoyed by others in the society" (Sen, 1985:673).

Traditionally poor people of Bangladesh are land poor. They tend to have limited access to land, have low levels of education, and are highly concentrated in low paying, physically demanding, and socially unattractive occupations as casual wage labourers. In this country, Daily Calorie Intake (DCI) and Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) approaches are generally used to define poverty situations. According to DCI approach a person is categorised as poor if his or her daily calorie intake is lower than 2122 kilo calorie (BBS, 2010), whereas according to CBN approach a poverty line is defined as minimum level of household income that is adequate to purchase goods and services to meet basic needs of the household; and the national poverty line is about BDT843 (UNICEF, 2009). However, Sobhan (2010) viewed poverty as a structural injustice and a process that keeps a part of population excluded from equitable opportunities for development and decision making in society. He claimed that source of poverty is rooted in social structure. On the other hand, Janvry, Gordillo, Platteau and Sadoulet (2002) addressed poverty emphasizing the context of access to land and public actions about land policy reforms. Mosley (2012:143) mentioned: "Countries whose rural development strategy embraced a donor-supported or Bank-supported land reform process in the 1970s included Brazil, Peru, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Kenya, in all cases as an element in integrated programmes of rural development – building on the insight of the Asian green revolutions that poverty reduction requires action to remove market failure across a range of input markets, but broadening the sphere of intervention into health and education, which was a major focus of redistribution with growth".

Considering the multidimensional perspective of poverty, multidimensional poverty index (MPI) is developed to address poverty situation in terms of three broad dimensions – education, health, and standard of living. Each dimension is assumed to impact poverty situation equally and those are measured in terms of ten indicators. According to MPI, 57.8% of total population of Bangladesh are in poverty (Alkire, Roche, Santos and Seth, 2011). However, according to World Bank, 49.65% of total population are poor as per the $1.25 a day income poverty line and it is 81.3% as per the $2.00 a day poverty line (World Bank, 2011 and UNDP, 2011). The irony is, the country is also referred to as an example where both trend and degree of poverty are miscalculated (McLeod, 2007). Nevertheless, the MPI approach might be suitable for Bangladesh given that instead of equal emphasis (weight) on education, health, and standard of living, a proportionately weighted approach could be followed where the weights would reflect contextual realities in terms of factors that influence a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being, as addressed by Sen's Capability Approach.

Many poor people of Bangladesh are often excluded from poverty reduction programmes because of ineffective targeting, abuse of political affiliation, lack of social capital in terms of social relations, and sometimes due to poverty dynamics and resulting conflicts in adopting different values that are attached to different levels of poverty. Exclusion is often the result of institutional decision, but sometimes self-exclusion, as poor people often feel ashamed of approaching such programmes or find it rather too daunting to face, appears as another reason as well (Khondkar, 1998). This relates to Sen's statement: "The same applies to capability failures of other kinds, e.g., the more "social" ones, such as being ashamed to appear in public because of the poverty of one's clothing" (Sen, 1985:670). An uncomfortable reality is that, someone is in such a torn and shattered clothing that he or she cannot come out of the house to avail an opportunity of philanthropic clothing distribution. Unfortunately sometimes this appears as striking news in the media of Bangladesh. Even more miserable stories are not rare when poor people die due to stampedes in such philanthropic clothing distribution occasions during Eid, the biggest religious festival of the Muslim.

Transformative services focus on creating uplifting changes in well-being situation of both individuals and communities by improving quality of life (Anderson, Ostrom and Bitner, 2010). This transformation can be twofold: not that individuals only need to take active roles but organizations should also change their models and approaches to create new affiliations with people (Sangiorgi, 2011). Anderson, Ostrom and Bitner (2010) identified some aspects of transformative services: it is consumer centric, experiential, and co-created; service takers are often vulnerable, lacking control, and agency; they are often disadvantaged as they lack expertise and knowledge required to be a part of the system; and the service is pervasive and embedded in a social ecology that affects both individual and community wellbeing.

However, wellbeing is a subjective phenomenon and it is better to avoid typecasting people as because usually happiness, sadness, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, contentment, discontentment, fulfilment feelings, and feelings of deprivation are quite different among people and even highly time variant for a single individual as well. Another critical issue in poverty concept is the trend of adaptation among poor people and linking this to wellbeing, Clark (2012:2) mentioned: "adaptation is typically linked with aspirations, subjective wellbeing and value (or preference) formation". In this context, Barr and Clark (2012) further related it with education and health and opined that: "With respect to income and education we conclude that individuals in low-income countries may adapt partially to low incomes and minimal educational attainments, although for many, including those below the dollar-a-day poverty line, there remains a gap between their aspirations and their realities. And with respect to health, while we cannot rule out the possibility that individuals adapt to declines in their own health over time, we see evidence of a tendency for individuals to appreciate the importance of good health more when witnessing the effects of ill health on the lives of those around them" (Barr and Clark, 2012:131).

The World Development Report 2000/01 (2001) identified three priority areas that need to be addressed for poverty reduction: increasing opportunity, enhancing empowerment, and improving security. Facilitating education in grass root level might work as a bridge to all three. Significance of education in this regard is evident as information and knowledge are treated as critical components of poverty reduction strategies (Harris, 2002). This concept is institutionalized by UNESCO (2005) where it has been spending money and effort for its Community Learning Centre Programme that promotes learning through grassroots facilities and activities. Researchers (Hanlon, Barrientos, and Hulme, 2010; Hulme and Mosley, 1996) sometimes advise just to give money to poor people. This is indeed a priority remedy but to provide a sustainable way to graduate from poverty, it needs not only money but awareness, skill, opportunity, and social capital so that poor people can assist themselves to make good use of that money. It is also found that financing poor people who lack education and/or skill may fail to create a virtuous circle (Khondkar and Hulme, 2000). Therefore, a comprehensive approach towards education might enable individuals develop capabilities utilising their agency traits that might create comfort zones for poverty reduction endeavours. "… the need to see the capability of making use of–and profiting from-untargeted public services as an important parameter that affects the consequences of public policy. That capability depends on a variety of considerations, but public education is certainly among the determining variables. It is, for example, arguable that one reason for the extensive and effective use of public health facilities in the state of Kerala in India … is the high rate of literacy of the Kerala population (including women). Thus, a more comprehensive education policy can make the use of untargeted public services that much more effective in fighting poverty. Once again, the need to see the people involved, as agents rather than as patients is central" (Sen, 1995:10).

POVERTY AND TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Unlike traditional poverty reduction programmes, this paper is trying to identify how poverty can be reduced in a sustainable way through instilling capabilities by means of transformative educational services so that poor people can function properly to create and maintain their own wellbeing, where a community based approach might facilitate this functioning by providing with opportunities. Initiatives can be taken with two objectives – to create wellbeing and to minimize ill-being. These services inherently should possess transformational qualities, instilling community value system that might result in facilitating inclusion of the excluded. Wellbeing might be created through providing services in the form of formal and informal education on health, agriculture, social well-being, disaster management, awareness building, finance, business and trade, market and other relevant areas poor people need to know about. This task involves accessing communities and providing them with knowledge, information, ideas, and stories to initiate learning and awareness on all those diverse but linked areas. While doing so, one needs to have empathy towards poor people and have utmost care to assess their practical requirements deeply. Participation might allow poor people to put forward their own diverse needs, to identify the skills and knowledge already available, to negotiate their priorities, and identify what they want from education (Riley, *et al.*, 1999).

As all poor people are in no perspective homogeneous, rather they are usually in most situations heterogeneous, therefore, they require adapted service provisions. For instance, in a typical household, there might be family members with different ages and at different life cycle stages. They might be involved in different activities, some might not be involved in any sort of work, and even there could be scopes for further diversified works. Each of the family members might have reached different levels of educational attainments, if at all, which necessitates varying level of such services. Overall, there is a necessity of having an understanding of the needs of each member of the family and communities at large. Depending on demographic factors like age, gender and occupation; level of poverty and its nature may vary among members of a single family which might be compared to the philosophy behind considering diverse set of conversion factors in Sen's Capability Approach. Thus, members of the same family might experience consequences of poverty in different ways. They might experience limited food supplies, lack access to clean drinking water, and face economic and social disparities in healthcare differently. Each of them therefore needs to be treated differently considering his or her state of knowledge and expertise during the service interactions. This is because transformation works differently for different individuals even though they might belong to same family or same community and this consideration is also supported by Sen's Capability Approach. Young and middle-aged people might benefit the most from educational tips about livelihood issues like agriculture, business, trade, finance, and market; awareness regarding overall family wellbeing and avoidance of ill-being. The elderly members might benefit from ideas about physical and mental health; tackling vulnerability and/or risks of diseases through food habits and exercise; and ways to contribute with their time, skills, and experiences to the family and to the community as well. A strong and effective tool might be, sharing their valuable experience in the form of storytelling which might contribute to learning about a better life for the other members of the community. This elderly group should also be made aware about safe health practices, medical, psychological, and spiritual issues.

These services might have strong mission and intention to supplement as well as complement formal and informal education and learning of the children of poor families. Existing child education programmes sometimes offer food for education but often these fail to involve all poor children as many of them have higher priority responsibility of earning money for their families. The proposed transformative educational services through multimodal interventions possess the

potential to reach these excluded children who can thus get essential education the other ways suitable for their difficult life patterns that can help minimise inefficiency of existing educational programmes. These children possess tender minds and thus fresh to implant positive focused ambition in them so that they can bring about explicit improvements in current wellbeing and future legacy as they are the next generation to be pulled out of poverty. This is also vital if chronic poverty is to be eradicated that transmits from generation to generation. While providing with educational services to the children and especially teenage group, special attention should be given on mental health, positive thinking, thinking big, overcoming frustration and depression so that they can come out from discrimination, inequality, and demeaning social context that can be argued as being significant reasons to cause global insecurity in the long run. For children and young people of underprivileged communities, special arrangements can be made to allow them to read educative newspapers, articles, and books at local tea stalls, press club (a public common meeting place), or community centres.

An encouraging seen, which might work as evidence of the mentioned approach, is when common people are found reading newspapers glued over walls at common places in cities that usually target pedestrians. If such reading approach can be initiated targeting rural poor people then there could be a long term significant impact regarding awareness building that might encourage them having better control over their life through improving perception about themselves and their capabilities.

Poor women, especially the pregnant ones, and mothers could be made aware about their better personal health, community access to health services, stress management due to over burden from household activities, mental welfare, quality of their life, and happiness. This group might become the strongest coordinator of spreading transformative educational services as they can be the best co-creator of such services especially because of their direct impacts on children. They might become the most effective catalyst among members of the family and community in promoting such educational services. They not only have the power to enhance wellbeing of their own-self and family but also can significantly reduce happening of situations of ill-being, at least at household level. For instance, their simple awareness about health, hygiene, nutrition and food safety issues might allow them to escape ill-being and even reduce risk of loss of life of themselves as well as their children or other household members. Women can bring about uplifting changes in all spheres of livelihood patterns and can transfer that to next generation making the process sustainable. So, they should be provided with transferable skills with specific concentration, among other members of community to get multiplied collective outcomes of such services.

At the beginning, positing this concept might be challenging but if equal participation with full ownership of poor people and communities can be ensured, then eventually poor people themselves will be able to continue the process that might facilitate sustainability of this approach. It is, therefore, about making poor people believe that they have the capability within themselves, though not of same type, and they need to just trigger those to create the right force with right outcome of functioning. So, eventually poor people will have the required level of faith and trust on them to exercise their capabilities in fullest sense. However, to ensure that they can exercise their capabilities, notions of coherent community value system should persist. Individuals first need to understand and improve relationships among them as community members, so that they can share and benefit from the learning about significant life events, individually and collectively. In case of service scenarios, providers and service takers usually work as co-producers or co-creators (Zeithmal, Bitner and Gremler, 2009), but this concept is hardly followed in development interventions, even though these are involved in service offering activities. If poor people participate as co-producers in development initiatives, then reflecting their actual need

for assistance can be ensured which is difficult to properly address by researchers and/or development partners. To expand this approach to ensure participation of many to accommodate their needs, community based approach might be of greater significance. From this sort of community based educational services, poor people thus will get intangible benefits, mostly in the form of reduced opportunity costs to avail learning and to get knowledge (Oxaal, 1997) and in the form of resulting improved economical, social, mental, and/or physical wellbeing. Coombs and Ahmed (1974) also argued that in addition to formal education, nonformal education have potential for reducing poverty by increasing skills and productivity of farmers, artisans, craftsmen, entrepreneurs, and other economic actors. Thus, wellbeing can be improved through transformative services by ensuring co-creation of value (Ostrom, *et.al.,* 2010).

Human raw capacities are inbuilt features, like ability to see, feel, hear, and other likes that require no development of capabilities. These can be considered as inbuilt inputs in normal human beings and only those are generally addressed by most of the poverty reduction interventions. However, due to demonstration effect and involvement in those interventions, individuals experience some short lasting capabilities that can be addressed as soft capabilities because most of the times these exist till the intervention continues or sometimes a little while after the completion of intervention. These soft capabilities are mostly not powerful and enduring enough to get transformed into actionable capabilities that can motivate individuals to function. However, individuals generally function when there exist opportunities, in addition to motivation for functioning. Conventional interventions mostly simply offer cash, kinds, or services to poor people rather than instilling actionable capabilities with motivations and opportunities that ultimately can facilitate sustainability resulting in enhanced probability of cycling out from poverty traps.

Figure 1 demonstrates how conventional interventions, interventions with transformative educational window, and interventions with community based transformative educational window are linked to transformative capability and sustainability notions. Impacts of most of the conventional interventions generally involve core capacities of the target poor people and might develop some soft capabilities only. The induced drive in individuals from these interventions to gain capabilities might have opposing directions. It sometimes works in favour of achieving capabilities while at times against that. This is because the poor people think that they might get similar assistance in future that demotivates them from developing capabilities. The nature, the way of delivering assistance, and intrinsic intentions of the interventions are the critical factors in this regard. If the intervention is educational and has transformative potential, then there could be notions of positive drive in favour of achieving hard capabilities in addition to the soft ones, which might enable individuals to get motivated to cross the barriers of lack of opportunities. This might facilitate ensuring sustainability of the positive impacts created by the educational interventions; however lack of community involvement might limit the impacts from being enduring as education is a psycho-social process. Sen (1992, 1999, 2004a, 2004b, 2002) has also emphasised the importance of public participation in the process of developing capabilities for every situation and context. Thus, a community based transformative educational services might offer enduring positive impacts that might enable individuals gaining both soft and hard capabilities which might eventually direct them functioning properly in their societies in a sustainable manner.
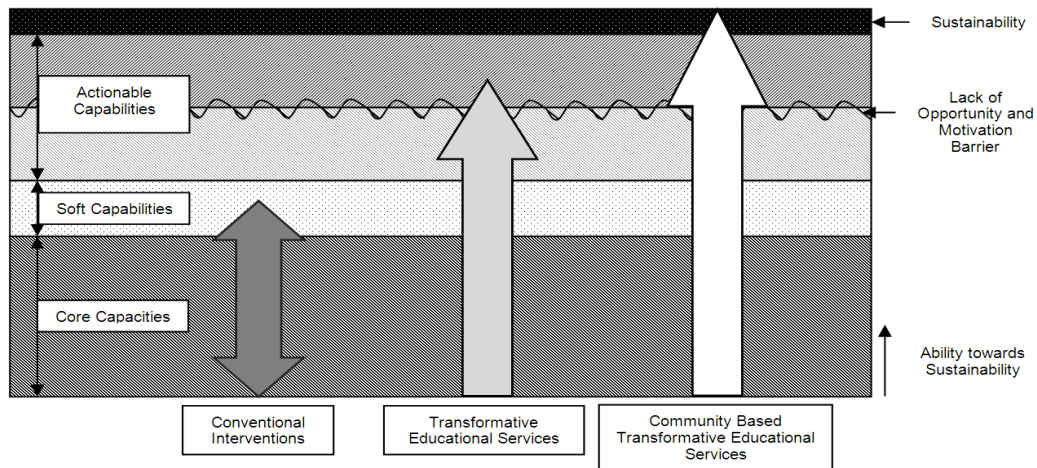
Source: Developed by Author

Figure 1: Community based Transformative Educational Services in Development Interventions

If the existing interventions could incorporate a new window that would offer educational services, aiming transformation in the minds of poor people to enable them help themselves with confidence in addition to existing benefits or services, and then individuals could have experienced changes in their minds and could think in different ways regarding their capabilities. It could have helped them creating new meaning of their own capacities and capabilities, rather than accepting stereotyped imposed meaning of those. This educational approach might enable individuals to cross barriers of lack of opportunity and motivation by means of their actionable capabilities. This consequence sometimes beget sustainability as well, though crossing the lack of opportunity barrier simply by means of motivation, is generally difficult for most of the poor people. If this educational initiative can be made community based, then there could exist notions of sustainability in addition to the triumph over lack of opportunity and motivation. This is because opportunities lie in community and coherent relationship among its members generally results in positive motivation.

A piloting of this new concept might take place as an immediate modification to the existing interventions where a new window might be opened to let poor people learn through transformative education about essential health and hygiene, livelihood issues, safety and wellbeing, and whatever is empirically found relevant that might result enhanced wellbeing and minimised leakage of income due to accidental costs. These transformative educational services can be provided at spots where existing services are provided; a common public place like market and/or tea stalls; cinema halls; educational institutions to access the future citizens; and even at household level to include the excluded at home. Audio visual clips, posters, leaflets, word of mouth, radio and television programmes, and news paper might be the probable media for these services where both single and multimodal approach might be considered for effective impacts. Institutions of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and existing NGOs, champions and/or celebrities, and local and national opinion leaders might play significant roles as actors in implementing this concept.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Focus should be given on the unserved and underserved poor and not to marginalize the already underprivileged poor people. Most of the time, poverty-reduction initiatives are provider-driven rather than poor-centric. Connell (1994) discussed in a larger realization that targeted programmes are unlikely to have a major impact unless they are part of a

broader agenda for social justice. A systematic bottleneck inside development partners and implementers is the requirement of long time to make interventions happen which might be a concern as some delicacies of poverty is a time variant issue that demands immediate addressing. For instance, almost all donors on an average take nine to twelve months just to decide who is going to start the development intervention and the implementers again need more time to initiate the process. This time lag, between executions of interventions designed for a reality of the past has become a systematic flaw of development interventions, inevitable result of which might be lack of effectiveness. This is because these service providers are usually far from being customer-driven. In this instance, poor people are the customers and therefore, they should be heard. After all, whose poverty we are talking about or acting upon?

Poor people better be allowed to drive their lives themselves. They must have control over what has been there to change their course of life. When they are involved in any poverty reduction programme they should be participating in those programmes with a sense of ownership. Even if they do not have real control over the programmes, but at least they should have the control over getting those programmes implemented as that involves their lives in it.

These might result in more effective participation and better output as there would be accountability towards the programme and on their activities too. Poor people should be encouraged to rethink about life satisfaction, overall happiness and their perception about quality of life, that transformative educational services can help with and a community based approach can reinforce. To get rid of poverty, people therefore, need to overcome capability deprivation; which will result in capability that will allow people to function. This functioning is going to create scopes to minimize the state of income deprivation. Income will enable people to buy commodities and services providing utilities. Can this be an automatic process? Off course it cannot be, unless there is any miracle. It's a pity that such miracles are only found in age-old religious tales or in recent modern fictions.

From ages, economists and development experts realized the necessities to take planned poverty reduction initiatives. Most of those initiatives focus on providing poor people with aid, relief, and income-generating activities. These are usually externally induced or injected, and thus often very extrinsic rather than being intrinsic. Although, if we internalize Sen's Capability Approach and give emphasis on amalgamation of personal liberty, economic growth, and efficiency; we need to target not to just cure the disease (here poverty) but to induce immunity (here the capability of functioning). This immunity inducement can be possible through probably many ways. Proactive planning is necessary for this. However, it is felt that poor people should be given directions that will enable them to be capable of overcoming capability deprivation. Community based transformational educational services might be right inducement to generate this immunity. Question might be raised whether poor people are genetically poor. If not, then we do not need to undertake genetic modification or engineering. What we need is to inject the triggering power to make them empowered and then poor people themselves will have abundance with personal self vigour and capability. This spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in an individual that invariably invigorates functioning and this is important as even the best institutions can give a person no active aid (Smiles, 1863). This paper thus suggests injecting that triggering power in the form of transformative educational services to change the mindset of poor people so that they can bring actual transformation in them to improve their quality of life and become sustainably non-poor.

Policy interventions can play significant roles in reconceptualising formal education and promoting nonformal and informal education in a more effective manner that might facilitate transformation of human being into active human

resources through participation. Both GoB and NGOs might come forward with all their distinctive strengths to overshadow and minimise structural weaknesses. GoB might focus on long term approach by reconceptualising mainly the formal education along with informal ones, so that education might benefit individuals by empowering them to foster their wellbeing in addition to satisfy their philosophical aspirations to learn and gather knowledge. Government might revise the curriculum of primary and secondary education so that the revised curriculum accommodates all basic learning individuals need to foster their wellbeing. This will help instilling a belief in an individual that education is a power that can create positive impacts which can be realised in contextual reality. NGOs can also play roles at both complementary and supplementary levels, especially with their existing access and skilled manpower. Initially NGOs might implement this concept through opening a new window focusing education on the areas they are intervening for development. Policymakers need to consider that individual attainment of capabilities and skills varies and hence there should be opportunities for the development of capabilities and skills that match with that diversity. This approach might minimise the crowding out effect that cause exclusion in education.

"Such a transformative education involves emancipation from servitude, yes, but also from privilege and the blinders it places on us in relation to the rest of the world. It is felt at the personal, community, institutional, global, and planetary levels. In this sense, it is an integral education, or what some might call a holistic education. It is that web that holds together the many elements that constitute a transformative learning and teaching process. … The transition period is upon us, and there is an urgency to these changes that compel us. Transformative education holds the hope of the different kind of education to which Schumacher referred (1973). It is our work to do, our promise to fulfil, our legacy to leave" (O'Sullivan, 2008:xvi). Thus, to materialise effective way outs from poverty in reality, and to mainstream such approach, the concept of providing poor people with community based transformative educational services through all the dimensions of formal, nonformal and informal education might be the holistic approach required to help poor people cycle out from poverty in a sustainable manner.

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