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Empowering youth lasting change; SEED SCALE a process to youth engagement and sustainable development

Shahid Mallick¹, Dr. M. Mazibar Rahman²

¹Department of Sociology and Social Work, Gono Bishwabidyalay, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh, ²Prof. Dept. of Statistics, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Shahidtree@gamil.com¹, mazibju@yahoo.com²

Abstract. For sustainable development and meaningful changes in society, the use of human energy is a must. In the question of the use of human energy one-third of human energy is untapped or not addressed properly and this constitutes the youth. However, to utilize these very human energies there is a need for policy, education, training, participation, equitable access to resources, and process of empowerment. And for the optimum utilization of youth energy, the diversity & complexity of the issue need to be understood from a holistic perspective. The main objective of this paper is to look for ways and means of youth empowerment and community development. The methods used in this research are descriptive surveys, observation, personal interviews, and focus group discussions (FGD).

Keywords. Renewable energy, Seed-Scale, Community development, youth, sustainable development

Introduction:

Empowerment and development are two interrelated issues. It can be said that sustainable development is a mere dream or in fragility unless the said community is empowered. While talking about social change or development, what inevitably comes to mind is what development means? In general, development relates to diverse socio-economic changes and the process does not relate to any particular set of objectives and particular group equally. There is no rule of thumb, that is, every society will follow the same rule to grow. However, the issue of youth and their participation in community development/change cannot be negligible in any stage of social change and youth are the ever-growing and sustainable resource for social change? They have the ability to transcend society beyond what might be imagined.

Globally, one-third population is young and in some developing countries, these numbers are even higher and in emerging and developing economics 53.1% of populations are youth and children. In Bangladesh 30 percent of the total population are youth and 4.4 million or 10 % of them are unemployed, which seems to be more than double the general unemployment rate of the working population in the country (1,7,33). This is often referred to as the 'youth bulge' and represents both a challenge and an opportunity for development, the young workforce who can drive economic development and play a significant role in the social change of their communities and society.

In questions of development, it is difficult to determine which country or community is more developed or underdeveloped, rather, it's somewhat easier to say which countries are economically rich or poor. Such as per capita income in America is 51749 USD while in Cuba, it is only 6,051, and the health expenditures of America and Cuba are 4,500 and 186 USD per person respectively, whereas the life expectancy of America and Cuba are 77 and 76.9 years respectively (36). The indicators of wealth usually counted resources like economic, financial, capital and natural resources. It never counts the most important and ever-growing resource 'human energy and human development is the end and economic growth a means. (28, 34).

There are some 64 million unemployed young around the world and the unemployment rate varies from country to country i.e. the jobless youth in Greece is 39.22%; in Spain, it is 33.23% and 8.37% in the United States. According to World Vision International the total number of unemployed youth in Bangladesh 4.4 million and according to statistics of ILO the percentage of youth unemployment in Bangladesh is 11.92 (13,26,34). Self-esteem and creativity are an important aspect of the individual human being. People of all age groups have some role in society and the youth as well. Usually, youth are denying from mainstream social activities and thus extend their dependence on other i.e. family and damages the self-esteem and creativity of them. Important to note that the long-term unemployment develops the feeling of alienation, unwanted and fearfulness among the youth, which later leads to a feeling of uselessness and worthlessness of them in the society. (18,21)

For a sustainable and meaningful change in society, the issue of participation becomes a focal point in any discourse of development. While the different schools of development thoughts are 1. 'Development', as a short to the medium-term outcome of desirable targets, 2. 'Development' as a long term process of structural societal transformation, 3. 'Development' as a dominant 'discourse' of western modernity and 4. 'Development', is a process and every society, developed or underdeveloped are changing or developing, and human energy is the prime resource for society is called Seed-Scale development (2,29). However, in all development discourses focus is on socio-cultural development, environmental development, and economic growth and so on. Ideally, participation and empowerment must go hand in hand, and without empowerment, sustainability is merely impossible. Empowerment is not something to be induced. Rather it has to be acquired through a process of liberation and iteration. And in general, one success leads to another success.

A thematic diagram of different development thoughts are given in .Fig.01

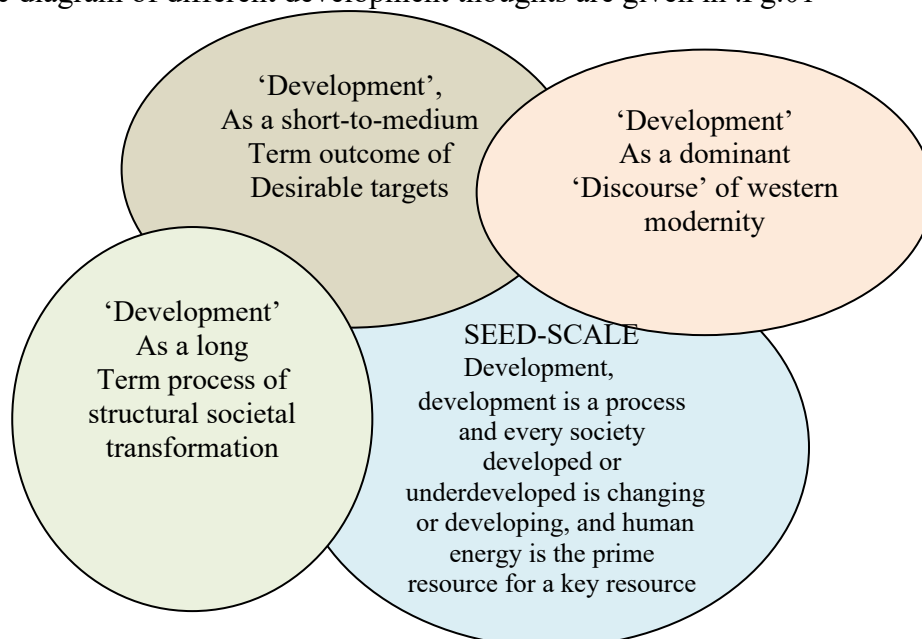


Figure: 01, Four development discourses

In any alien approach to development, there is very little chance to sustain, because of its missed link with the community where humans are the focus, thus their energy as well. And thus it is found that when any skim initiated everything (planning, expertise, and human resources) are proposed to be imported from outside (outside-in) and it's seems that Bottom-up/community and Top-down/government are always missing, and end with the word 'every body's work is virtually no one's work'.

The SEED-SCALE approach to development is self-evaluative, effective and its development/progress are self-measured, no expert from outside are required to measure or assess the change. The diversity of groups i.e. youth-adult and aged and their effective participation in community development and three-way i.e. (top down, bottom up and outside in) are the basis of SEED-SCALE.

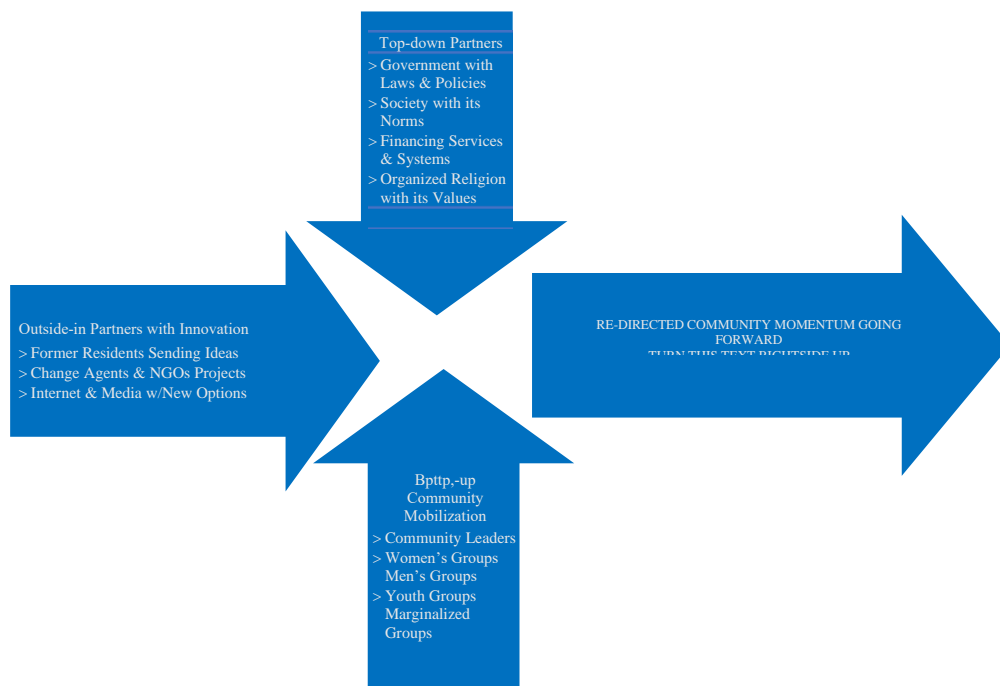


Figure: 02, three-way partnership (adopted from Seed-Scale, with the permission of Taylor. Daniel C.2008)

The very basic values of SEED-SCALE is that, every community, whether it is developed or developing, are changing, grasping the change of its focus on the community's success and what works better (29), and fundamental difference of SEED-SCALE development of and traditional development are as follows

Table 01, Basic difference between SEED-SCALE and Traditional development approach

Issues	SEED-SCALE	Traditional Development
Key Resource	Human Energy	Financing

Planning Mindset	Evolutionary Growth	Construction Engineering
Planning Process	Agenda=>Plan=>Budget	Budget=>Agenda=>Plan
Who Does the Work	Three-way Partnership	Professionals
Implementation Structure	Local Institutions	Consultants/Project Units
Ultimate Accountability	Community	Donor
Approach	Build on Successes	Fix Problems/Answer Needs
Criteria for Decisions	Evidence	Power, Opinions & Habits
Major Desired Outcome	Behavior Change	Measurable Results
Criteria for Evaluation	Strengthening 4 Principles	Budget Compliance
Learning Mode	Iterative, Experimental	Get it right the first time
Management Mode	Mentoring	Control
Commitment Horizon	Depends on Utility of Partnership	Depends on Donor's Budget Cycle

Source: Future generations university (www.fgu.edu)

Further, youths are the ever-changing and most potential element in the community, Bangladesh is trying its best for utilization of huge youth's energy and initiate various programs or activities but very few success is documented in the community and demand re-evaluation of its activities with the one-third population in the country who are youth.

Training and education: Training and education is a lifelong process and generally accepted means for community empowerment. However, the issue-based and segmented, and group-oriented training is one of the main components of any empowerment. The government and many other private institutions and organizations in Bangladesh are actively involved in youth empowerment and to develop active citizens for the nation. Such as, under the umbrella of the ministry of youth and sports, the department of youth development (DYD) and many other public and private agencies in Bangladesh are providing various types of training for customized and disciplined force. According to the (DYD) as of today, they have trained 441890 youths in 40 different categories. However, the lack of data of the actual number of trained youth and some others are causes that create obstacles in formulating a pragmatic policy of a country and to initiate a development program that may sustain for a long.

Participation and Engagement:

Young makes the trail and no doubt youths like to participate or act, as their inquisitive soul always searches or explores what's new (22,35) but there has to be a trial in which they can follow (build from success)? Again opportunity is a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something. In Bangladesh as many as 30% of populations are young. However, their opportunity to participate in the country's development work is not such wide and well defined (3,31) Data in the table.1 shows the engagement and participation of youth in community development.

Table: 1 Participation and Engagement of youth in community development and social change

Area/Sector	No of responses	Percentage
Birth registration and preparation of national / voter ID etc.	12	12.24
Economic and agricultural survey	13	13.26
Election Monitoring and volunteer support	9	9.18
Vaccination and distribution of vitamin capsule	14	14.29
Family planning awareness-raising	14	14.29
Population survey	8	8.16
Mass and adult education	15	15.31
Natural disaster/environment and climate change awareness and to participate in other catastrophes like the collapse of a building	9	9.18
Other	4	4.08

Self-Employment and Innovation:

Self-employment is a sort of innovation of the work sector or anyone can absorb him/herself with the existing work domain in a creative way. Self-employment is key to development and reduces dependence in society. For motivated and self-employment, there is also a need for a series of motivational activities and infrastructural and entrepreneurial supports. In the question of empowerment self-motivation hence to self-employment is a step ahead for youth empowerment (11,30,31). In regards to the question youth empowerment, employability, community services, and others. The responses of the self-employment and innovation are in table 02.

Table 02: Self-employment and Innovations

Area of Responses	No of response	Percentage
Poultry farming	15	6.0
Dairy farm	17	6.8
Capture Fish Culture	19	7.6
Mushroom cultivation	10	4.0
Tailoring and small garments	18	7.2
Handicraft	19	7.6
Indigenous cottage industry	27	10.8
Computer, Mobile Servicing, and IT sectors	24	9.6
General agricultural farming	22	8.8
Other Small Business (SME)	38	15.2

Area of Responses	No of response	Percentage
Voluntary work/Community development organization (NGO)	8	3.2
Others	33	13.2

Skill development and Training:

Training improved the skills and training is one's line of career or specialty that helps one to improve their particular skills. It's important to provide quality work, community service, keeping up with technology and staying ahead of one's competition. The other part of the training is to activate new ideas and thoughts. Providing training for youth, help them, not only to get a job or to perform well in their work domain, but it also improves their knowledge and skills for further jobs requirement. Training motivates youth to involve in greater development activities in the community. A glimpse of present and future training needs for youth's quality engagement shown in table 03.

Table 03: Sectors and Area for training and skill in

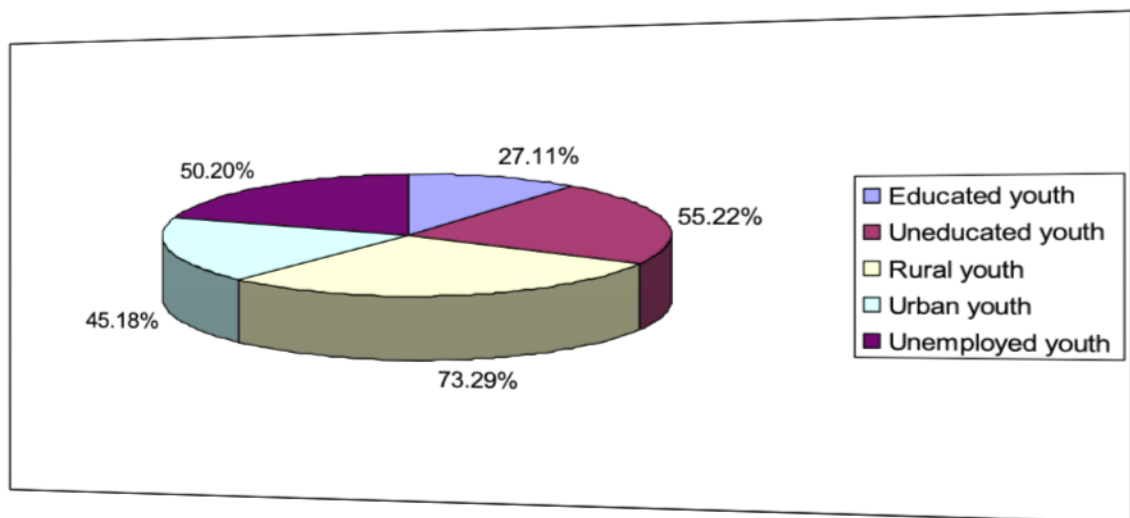
Area of Training	No of responses	Percentage
Computing and related programs	61	24.4
Management and tourism	39	15.6
Driving (customize with Europe, America, and another developed country)	32	12.8
Mobile/cell phone repaired and servicing	27	10.8
Electronics and IT program	24	9.6
Automobile Servicing	20	8.0
Welding and construction	19	7.6
Nursing	11	4.4
Others	17	6.8

Social exclusion and rural-urban differences in opportunity:

The characteristic feature of youth capability is that they (youth) can create and regenerate but in the flagship of gender, the opportunity of participation depends on rural-urban differences. Other than the general exclusion of youth in development activities and policy planning, there are groups of young people who are more disadvantaged i.e. young women, rural youth, ethnic minorities, lower caste, and youth with disabilities and the migrant youth in the country.

To understand the social exclusion of youth in development, it is not enough just to look at one possible category of exclusion in isolation rather it is necessary to analyze how socio-cultural, political and economic factors function in the country. Moreover, the ability to read and write is a process of empowerment (important capability), however, the ratio of female to male literacy rates is often low in different parts of the world and there are differences in rural and urban areas in a country.

Gender inequalities in literacy rates (unequal, deprivation of this basic capability for women) are the reflection of women's low participation in development. Existing data and literatures show that the global female literacy rate is still below 50 percent and as many as 26 countries it's below even 30 percent, 20 percent for 16 and below 10 percent in at least five countries (25, 30,3132). In Bangladesh, 73% of youth of all categories belonging to the rural area, whilst their access to services is not available. The discriminative representations of youth, boys and girls, youths with a disability, youth from ethnic minority and lower class, migrant youth and also differences in rural and urban youth participation. Slower the country's development and blocked the empowerment process (5,6). Fig.01, bellow show the youth representation with



their characteristics

Figure: 03, Representation of youth population, Source: DYD 2016

Policy inadequacy, culture, and representation of female youths:

Inequality in participation turns into no or underdevelopment, policy, culture and their application and practices usually influence the end participations. The existing education and gender policy in the country which does not loop free (16,17), thus a section of peoples (in the banner of religions and vested community interest) pulling behind and thus slowing the execution. The government of Bangladesh does have youth policy, the ministry and a department for implementation along with some distinct policy. For example, 30% special quota for women, but their reflection in actual participation in their training program was not visualized. In this study reasons for the low representation of girls in the country's development activities and training program were asked, responses of the interviewee in the survey categories are presented in table 04.

Table 04: Reasons for the low participation of women

Response	Number of responses	Percentage
Fewer job opportunities for girls or gender bias in the employment sector	44	21.6
Lower education rate, lack of empowerment/socialization of women	41	20.1
Culture, family orientation, and social dogma	67	31.8

Response	Number of responses	Percentage
Gender discrimination	27	13.2
Unsafe workplace or sexual harassment	7	3.5
Religious superstitions	18	8.8

Data in the above table shows that socialization i.e. family orientation, religious superstitions, the safe workplace for women are some obstacles for women's greater participation in community change.

Discussions:

Empowerment is not something to induce rather it's to accrued and transmit through a conducive and healthy environment in a community. In other words, it's a process and series of activities of different institutions and stakeholders by which a section of people/groups or generations can be empowered. Change in the community is a continuous and ongoing process, youth seems to be a bearer of change that happen and continued. However, community service, participation, history, and a trail that motivates and guide youths to carry forward the success, while education and training support them as well (23). It is important to note that pieces of training are important but vocational education significantly reduces dropouts and improve quality of life (24)

There are many more new faces are joining with the group every day, the improvement of health and nutritional status in the community increases global average life expectancy and decrease of infant mortality rate adding value in this regards. According to the data of (5) world is now hosting the ever largest youth population in the history and belong to the age group of 25 and 90% of them are developing countries. Youths are opportunity and challenge and developing countries like Bangladesh have to take this huge advantage of human energy and utilize its there needs to be customization and education policy. Contrary, the youth of today is facing many challenges like violence and crime, extremism, unemployment all over the world. Further, equal opportunity to participate is to some extent denial due to country's inadequate policy i.e. students and youth of Bangladesh are demanded of quota reformation in government jobs and latter schools students in the city of Dhaka and other parts of the country protest for the killing of two students by reckless driving. ...further demanded road safety and justice, yield with so many personal harassments of many female and male youth along with o lawsuit against the protesters (8).

In the developed country they have a well-defined education, training and employment policy to groom and engage/employ their youth/future generations in the country, such as 4H center in the USA and for the case of Singapore, students at beginners school asked to write two/three good works and the superhero in their live, vise-versa parents advise to guide/help kids to do that, the school also teach how to respect other culture and values (21) as such individual nations prepared their future generations.

Youth are the most valuable resource in the community and their importance in mainstream development is unquestionable. However, the youth are generally been excluded from the country's development policy and action program. Such as in Bangladesh, there is a separate Ministry for Youth and Sports and have a department for welfare and skill development of youth but their reflection is very low in the country's development activities (Table 01). The reasons for low participation of youth may be the country's policy discrepancy as young people referred to in policy documents only about their needs, not their strengths as potential partners or assets for a collaborative process. Further, concerning power, young people are lower power

group than an adult in a society. This power differentials and injustice impact both practice and policy (10,37).

Empowerment and participation of youth in community development/social change usually march together. Such as global 50% of populations are youth and their high concentration in a developing country. The age composition and the percentage of youth population differ from other countries. In Bangladesh 30% of its populations fall into youth groups, vise-versa their concentration in the civilian workforce is 38%. Over the period, Bangladesh's youths are losing their glorious past 1952 students' movement for language followed by a protest against autocratic decisions of the governments and liberation movement in 1969, 70, 71 and 1990s as well. Almost near about two decades, there is no students' body/union in any educational institutions in the country except for Gono Bishwabidaly (www.gonouniversity.edu.bd) where, there is elected student union is functional to grooms youth with leadership and democratic practice, other than Gono university the university of Dhaka make functional its students union on March 11, 2019. While there are 150 public and private universities in the country (www.thedailystar.net). The political monoculture (dominant by the student's wings of the ruling party) in educational campus develop a culture of oppressions on the students of different opinions and thoughts. In the absence of coexistence of different thoughts a large section of youths of different institutions and communities becoming political workers of different political parties in their respective locality (2,10). Further, educational institutions are those, where youth can learn leadership and empowered themselves (4,15)

To be active citizens and take leadership of the society in the future, customize business leadership training is not enough, it can be helped to develop skilled and some extent disciplined workforce for the society as Michel Foucault (1975) mentioned so-called discipline is nothing but to create individual space for their own to function well and better economic performance and mostly applicable for factory and military but not active citizens. For true participation education system should be more liberalize and youth has to be exercises of their will, opinion, and demonstration practice. For sustainable development or durable change in the society, empowerment is a prerequisite, again access to opportunity and resources are important for innovation and self-empowerment, the culture of social support is also required (10,19). However, to grow empowerment requires a framework that optimizes the self-assembly of behaviors (28). Energies are always and already in society, the framework needs to direct them, youths are like the stem/trunk of a society. To do so effectively, the framework needs to be perceived as beneficial by those participating, so that it draws in involvement rather than appearing restrictive or confronting. In such scenarios where empowerment is the objective, the draw is rising quality of life all participating, rather than offering incentives for confronting outside directives. The reason to participate is thus fundamentally different than in controlled-based program that seeks goals determine from afar and empowerment grows through the self-assembly of human energy (SEED-SCALE). Other aspects related to empowerment are political, cultural and spiritual, it is observed from the community that customized education and training help to develop skilled workers for others. It's not empowered individual as such that she/he has the feeling of ownership or part of something that they valued (9,12,15,16)

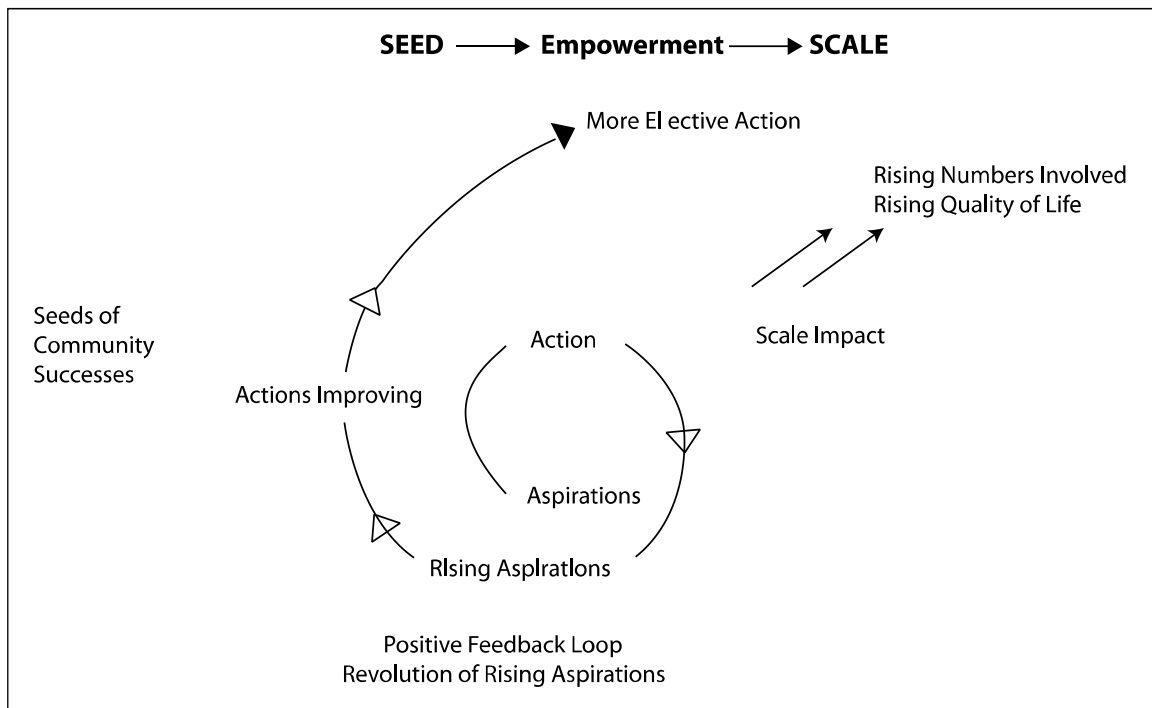


Figure: 04, Sustainability and aspiration goes up (adopted from Seed-Scale, with the permission of Taylor. Daniel C.2008)

Conclusion:

Community change as its policy, law, customs and practices are change over time. Sustainable development backed by its culture and behavior change. Community change is continues process. However, for meaningful and sustainable community change it's important to identify the importance of renewable energy i.e. human energy and youths are the most valuable ones. Global 1/3 populations are youth means in each society 33% of human energies are youth and mostly disorganized or poorly planned. According to UN youth have the power to reshape the world; this is universal but every society will not change in the same way. It's all about the policy, practice and behavior change of each and particular society and community empowerment.

The conventional concept of empowerment is mostly related to production and governance which Foucault (1977) mentioned as a battery of power. Vise-versa for youth empowerment and meaningful participation it's important to the radicalization of the whole systems and entitlement is important for emancipation and youth empowerment. The youth of today is nevertheless compared with the youth of 20 years back. It is in the age of information communication and technology (ICT) youths are more connected and informed in some way. According to the World Assembly of Youth. ICT creates both opportunities and challenges for all but youths are at top of all. No doubt it reduces distance but creates economic disparity, rural-urban differences and difference between boys and girls, develop cultural lag. Contrary for sustainable social change fresh and new ideas are important.

Even though 'empowerment' has a different meaning in economic and political view but there is no question of empowerment of youth for sustainable social change and this existing system has to be altered (9,12,20,27). The increase of life expectancy, educational rate or per capita income indicates some economic progress of a society but do not indicates community empowerment? The data accuracy is important for effective decision making and behavior change (28.35)

The available research and data show that empowering youth means transforming community toward positive trends but very little initiatives were visible at the local-global level to positively utilize universal human energies. Local data (table-1, 2, 3) shows that customize training is not favourable to empowerment rather it facilitates some trade-based skilled human resources in the community. For meaningful participation of the youths and sustainable community change three-way partnership i.e. top down, bottom up and outside in approach is important instruments for your empowerment and community get new shape in the hand of youth!

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