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Hegemony of Women

Women's Empowerment

Highlights

A New Perspective

Challenges and Prospects

Discovering Thoughts, Inventing Future

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Hegemony of Women: A Myth or Pragmatic Reality

By Dr. Sribas Goswami
Serampore College, India

Abstract - Analysis of the status of women in self help group depends on an understanding of gender relations in a specific context. Examining gender relations as power relations makes clear that these are sustained by the institutions within which gender relations occur. For women in rural area, absence of power results in the lack of access to and control over resources, coercive gender division of labour, devaluation of their work, and a lack of control over their own labour and mobility. Here the study tries to show the real position of women working in Self Help Groups in surrounding places of Raniganj coal field. An attempt has been made to see the access and control over private assets and resources, access to public resources, control over their labour and income, control over their bodies control over physical mobility. The entry of women into political spaces has the potential to reorder gender power relations in the public arena. Women's access to knowledge, information and skills have to be made central not just to promote their 'participation in development, but so that they become tools to challenge subordination. Moreover, sustainable changes require women's entry not only to formal economic spaces but also community-level spaces, which means eliminating obstacles that impede their effective participation. In order to make the rural women more effective in decision making process unnecessary interference in their matter need to be minimized. Empowerment of women, requiring conditions that enable women to exercise their autonomy; it also envisages a process of self-empowerment, in which women begin to re-examine their lives critically and collectively. While the former involves the facilitation of women's access to and control over resources, the latter emphasizes women's agency in seeking greater access and control. There is a need to support of capacity building initiatives by highlighting women entrepreneurs' successes and profiling role models. All SHG's require facilitating linkages between government departments as purchasers and women entrepreneurs.

Keywords : *hegemony entrepreneurship, empowerment, self-help group, micro finance, decision making, poverty alleviation, entrepreneurship.*

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Hegemony of Women: A Myth or Pragmatic Reality

Dr. Sribas Goswami

Abstract - Analysis of the status of women in self help group depends on an understanding of gender relations in a specific context. Examining gender relations as power relations makes clear that these are sustained by the institutions within which gender relations occur. For women in rural area, absence of power results in the lack of access to and control over resources, coercive gender division of labour, devaluation of their work, and a lack of control over their own labour and mobility. Here the study tries to show the real position of women working in Self Help Groups in surrounding places of Raniganj coal field. An attempt has been made to see the access and control over private assets and resources, access to public resources, control over their labour and income, control over their bodies control over physical mobility. The entry of women into political spaces has the potential to reorder gender power relations in the public arena. Women's access to knowledge, information and skills have to be made central not just to promote their 'participation in development, but so that they become tools to challenge subordination. Moreover, sustainable changes require women's entry not only to formal economic spaces but also community-level spaces, which means eliminating obstacles that impede their effective participation. In order to make the rural women more effective in decision making process unnecessary interference in their matter need to be minimized. Empowerment of women, requiring conditions that enable women to exercise their autonomy; it also envisages a process of self-empowerment, in which women begin to re-examine their lives critically and collectively. While the former involves the facilitation of women's access to and control over resources, the latter emphasizes women's agency in seeking greater access and control. There is a need to support of capacity building initiatives by highlighting women entrepreneurs' successes and profiling role models. All SHG's require facilitating linkages between government departments as purchasers and women entrepreneurs.

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I. Introduction

Women being half the world populations contribute enormously in economic development of any nation, yet unequal access to control on resources by men and women are serious hampering the process of gender equalization in nearly every part of the country.The situation in rural areas is worst where women, in large numbers, participate in economic activities in informal and unorganized sector. Present paper is an attempt to reveal the actual situation of women as entrepreneurs in the form of self-help group in surrounding villages of Raniganj where the coalmines are domain industries. Most of the areas find it extremely difficult to inculcate entrepreneurial qualities and skills among women to develop them as entrepreneurs. Socio-cultural values and attitudes are some of the factors attached with women entrepreneurs that create hindrances in promoting entrepreneurial inclinations among them. In many places, women are dependent upon others for these basic human requirements. By actively promoting economic empowerment of women, governments not only support economic growth, but intellectual and social progress. Economic empowerment of women changes the balance of power because it allows half the world's population to contemplate higher goals than basic survival. In most SGHs there is little attempt to link micro-finance with wider social and political activity. This paper puts forward how self-help groups have received extensive recognition as a strategy for economic empowerment of women.

In Raniganj surroundings we have several categories of Women entrepreneurs. Like women in organized & unorganized sector, women in traditional & modern industries, women in suburban & rural areas, women in large scale and small scale industries, single women and joint venture. But for present context only the SGHs leaders are taken as entrepreneurs.

The Government of India had formally influenced by the Platform of Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995, identified the eradication of the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women emphasizing the importance of strengthening women's access to credit and capital on appropriate terms equal to those of men requiring special attention and action by the international community, governments and civil society. To alleviate poverty the major efforts taken in India was to launch Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) by the socio-economic development of rural people, especially, of women, those who are deprived from the benefit of the mainstream of society. Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana Scheme (SGSY), the amended and merged version of the erstwhile Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Integrated Rural Development program (IRDP) and Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment

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(TRYSEM) etc. was launched in April 1999, emphasizing the development of the rural people who belonged to below poverty line. Main goal of this programme was to make group oriented entrepreneurial income generating activities through the formation of Self Help Groups (SHG). It is a holistic credit-cum-subsidy program, covering all aspects of self-employment to alleviate poverty.

India has won global recognition for innovation of the idea of micro-credit under SGSY. SGSY is being implemented through the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) with active involvement of Panchayeti Raj Institution, banks and NGOs. It is financed on 75:25 cost sharing basis between the centre and states. Since the inception of the programme 22.52 lakh, SHGs have been formed covering 66.97 lakh Swarojgaris. During 2006-2007 the Central allocation for the scheme was 1200 crore which was an increased amount of Rs. 200 crore of the budget years, 2005-2006. Emphasis has been laid on different components such as capacity building of the poor, training on skill development; credit disbursing, marketing and infrastructure. The subsidy allowed under SGSY is 30% of the total project cost, subject to the ceiling of Rs. 7500. For SHGs subsidy would be 50% of the project cost subject to a ceiling of Rs. 1.25 lakh per capita subsidy Rs. 10,000, whichever is less. The SGSY has a special focus on the vulnerable groups among the rural poor. Women account for at least 40% swarojgaris. The SGSY seeks to promote multiple credits rather than a onetime credit injection. (Source: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 2008).

Poverty is multi-dimensional. It is a violation of human rights to education, health and nutrition, adequate housing, a safe and healthy living environment, social security, employment and development. So, it covers all ranges of socio-economic aspects. Poverty hits hardest mainly at the female as half of humankind. In the world, 70% women are belonging to extensive poverty (Source: Human Development Report for Asia and International Labour Organisation, 2000). Woman living at rural areas of a developing country are poor, more vulnerable, having no land, less educated, in non-availability of gainful employment, in poorer knowledge, and in poorer health and nutrition. Discrimination in education is the beginner of the vicious spiral of poverty. Due to less education they don't get any employment opportunity, which accelerates poverty in cash economy. To overcome poverty, making credit available to low-income women is one of the most effective ways of raising their standard of living and increasing their opportunities for advancement. But with little income or collateral, these poor people are seldom able to obtain loans from banks and other formal financial institutions. Easy access to credit by women has been a major constraint. Micro credit through SHG gives them a platform to climb out of poverty. It is a solution to help them by extending their horizon and offers them social recognition and empowerment which is essential for the well being of their families, and in turn, their communities. Also, women across cultures and take primary responsibility for nourishing children; they are the children's first and most important teachers. Knowledge given to women is likely to pass on to future generations, multiplying opportunities for their children and grandchildren.

Underlying philosophy of providing Credit under SGSY through the self help group approach is to help the poor women in these ways: -

- Providing easy access to credit without any collateral security,
- providing independent sources of income at homely atmosphere through engagement in micro entrepreneurial activities utilizing the credit,
- providing substitute of informal credit,
- assisting them to meet emergency needs and demands,
- encouraging to take risk of loan and other socio-economic activities by the group support,
- reducing economic dependency of the women and thus enhance autonomy,
- by the exposure to new sets of ideas, values and social supports through market linkages, trainings, seminars and meetings,
- making these women more assertive of their rights by increasing their knowledge and awareness level,
- providing control over material resources - should raise women's prestige and status in the eyes of community and thereby promote participation in decision making in every sphere of survival,
- encouraging them to take leading role in political and other community activities,
- empowering them economically, politically and socially in order to alleviate poverty.

The credit is only accessible for rural women through the formation of Self Help Group under the programme of SGSY. Self-Help Group (SHG) is a small voluntary association of poor people, preferably from the same socio-economic background. They come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help and mutual co-operation. The SHG promotes small savings among its members. The savings are kept in a bank. This common fund is in the name of the SHG. Usually, the number of members in one SHG does not exceed more than twenty. The uniqueness of these groups lies in the fact that to a large extent they are self-supporting, self-governing organizations free from bureaucratization and politicization.

Credit through formation and promotion of SHG under SGSY is an effective intervention strategy for poverty alleviation at healthy, choosy and homely environment which is easily accessible to the rural poor

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women, reduces transaction cost and where repayment are designed to fit cash flow for the borrowers.

II. Objectives

This study was persuaded with the following objectives:

1. To understand development of necessary skills on gender dimension of the enterprise.
2. To understand the process of mainstreaming gender in SHGs across all levels and tools and techniques they could employ and practice.
3. To focus on Participatory training techniques to provide inputs on training needs assessment, modules, experience sharing, exchange of model and best practices.
4. To know the problems and constraints of women entrepreneurs in a self help group.

III. Method of Study

This research paper is mainly based on primary data, which has been collected from 5 main samples (head of each group) on the basis of interview schedule from 5 different villages namely Bansra, Ikra, Topsi, Searsole and Bijpur in Burdwan District of West Bengal, India during 2013. Every member of the groups are taken as samples. Purposive sampling has been used to choose the samples. However secondary sources are also used for data collection.

a) Constrains of Women Entrepreneurs in Shgs in These Villages

- Dual role to play at workplace & at home place.
- Subordinate to men.
- Just that her being women.
- Non-awareness of facilities provided by government.
- Competition with large-scale units.
- Problems related to marketing.
- Exploitative conditions – middlemen eating away the profit.

b) Following Factors Identified in Different Villages of Women to Take-Up Employments

From the field situation it is realized that major reasons to take-up jobs by the women are sudden fall in family income, permanent inadequacy in income of the family, their desire to evaluate their talent, to utilize their free time or education, need and perception of their Liberation and Equity etc, to gain recognition, importance and social status and lastly to get economic independence.

In the surrounding villages of Raniganj coalfield many self-help groups have formed. They are engaged in several productive jobs. Here five groups are taken for data collection from five villages.

c) Nature of Job Performed by the Members of Five Different Shgs

- Fishnet weaving and fishing.
- Wood craft
- Bamboo craft
- Mat making
- Sewing (Cloth stitching) and embroidery.

In the eighties, the emphasis shifted to enabling women to become active agents of their empowerment. The vision of development broadened to include physical, moral, intellectual and cultural growth of every individual. This necessitated, as well as, established the vital link between the development of society and the advancement of women. These are two inseparable sides of a coin. However instead of homogeneity, there are multiplicity of strategies for change, which are specific to the needs of women, belonging to different sections of a given society, region or nation. Basic to this concept is the creation of individual as well as collective self-reliance. It is felt mere economic empowerment would be insufficient, unless accompanied by the social power of agency over the spending of that money and over other facets of one's life. The self-help groups are fruitful in this regard. The capacity to earn one's livelihood and the resultant self-confidence was necessarily the first step in the ladder to empowerment. The grassroots movements initiated by women in India in the latter half of the 20th century were economic, social, political or cultural in their content, depending on the section of society to which the women belonged and their specific needs. In true sense in early time of independence the women in this area used to perform their routine indoor jobs but now they have started working for their upliftment however biased they are. By forming SHGs many poor women are getting economical support. Few of them contribute a major part of their family expenses, as their husbands don't work regularly. This paper puts forward how micro finance has received extensive recognition as a strategy for economic empowerment of women. This paper also seeks to examine the impact of Micro finance with respect to poverty alleviation and socioeconomic empowerment of rural women in general and surrounding villages of Raniganj coalfield in specific. An effort is also made to suggest the ways to increase women empowerment through entrepreneurship. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people to gain control over their own lives communities and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. Empowerment occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, spheres and at various levels, such as individual, group and community and challenges our assumptions about status quo, asymmetrical power relationship and social dynamics. Hegemony of woman as an entrepreneur puts the spotlight on decision-making and freedom of

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potential thinking, which are essential elements to sustainable development of entrepreneurship in self-help groups.

The self-help groups in this area are not very much familiar with the people. Due to alternative sources of income the existence of self-help group is very rare in these areas. All five groups taken as sample are consisting of 10 to 12 members including their leader. Women entrepreneurs who are working with self help groups have taken positive steps however small it is towards women empowerment. The general awareness level is not standard among the women entrepreneurs and need adequate training for their development of skills to get better output. From the study it is clear that the women from all five villages belong to destitute class and economically lagging from the mainstream of society. They are compelled by their familial situation for giving financial support to their family. On the other hand government's attitude is not remarkable and not much attentive for women empowerment. In these groups one head women use to exercise the power over other and theses leaders enjoy comparatively better privilege than others. The major decisions are being taken by the male from behind the curtain. Chief Lady of every group collects very small amount from each member to keep the money in bank and take loan according to their requirement out of their savings. Banks use to provide inadequate loan to open a trade to these groups. The character of work belonged to the traditional model of woman's work. This was a double-edged sword since it reinforced the traditional role of women working from their home, with kitchen as the center of operations. Public acceptance of social groups products is lower than branded produce flooding in the market. In the opinion of leaders of SHGs many-branded produce not qualitatively superior, some are duplicated. Social group members feel that they maintain reasonable prices. They think of poor consumer and keep very low margins. Despite their sincerity there is low acceptance in local market and people not enthusiastic while purchasing SHGs produce.

During fieldwork it is observed that women are interfered in all deferent cases by their male surroundings. Even it was felt that leaders of these self-help groups were not sufficiently free to express their spontaneous opinions during interrogation. Another remarkable aspect is found that all women leaders belong to comparatively higher strata of the society than other members of the group. Education level is not up to the mark among the women entrepreneurs. It is common belief among the women entrepreneurs in this region that if they hold such type of position (Leader in SHG) it would benefit them in holding a social status. Women leaders confessed during interrogation that they are much closer to the Panchayet management. These groups are to some extant politically biased. From prima facie it seems that they formed these groups to get political mileage rather to get economical support. The empowerment of women may be multidimensional but fruit of development is getting very few of them. Especially the decision making process is largely controlled by male domains. In this regard the primary need is a spontaneous grassroots movement by women that, however small in its origin, is capable of self-sustaining and self-propelling growth. Moreover, it was important that these women belong to the disadvantaged section of the society, so that the driving force comes not from above, but from below.

Based on participatory principles to build up incremental knowledge of SHGs and enable women entrepreneurs to develop their strategies for change (Chen, 1996). Economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs are however defined in more than individualist terms to include issues such as property rights, changes intra-household relations and transformation of the macro-economic context as it is observed during fieldwork. Micro Finance is emerging as a powerful instrument for poverty alleviation in the new economy. In these villages, micro finance scene is dominated by Self Help Groups (SHGs) – Bank Linkage Programme, aimed at providing a cost effective mechanism for providing financial services to the "un reached poor". Based on the philosophy of peer pressure and group savings as collateral substitute, the SHGs have been successful not only in meeting peculiar needs of the rural poor women, but also in strengthening collective self-help capacities of the poor women at the local level, leading to their empowerment. Although in some contexts women entrepreneurs may be seeking to increase their influence within joint decision-making processes rather than independent control over income (Kabeer 1998), neither of these outcomes can be assumed. Women's perceptions of value and self-worth are not necessarily translated into actual well-being benefits or change in gender relations in the household (Sen 1990, Kandiyoti 1999). But in true sense the hegemony of women entrepreneurs of these SHGs doesn't actually exist.

With proper guidance, encouragement and financial support, the self-help groups can improve their situation in this region. If some training facility is provided for skill-based livelihoods related to wooden carpentry work, bamboo handicraft work, food processing, and paper work then that could help them to upgrade their skills and produce quality items. Cottage industries and handicrafts need encouragement at all levels. As they said that no formal training has been given yet to upgrade their skills. Government has to focus its attention adequately to improve the situation of rural women in this industrial belt. In fact Government is giving its attention to the industrial development of Raniganj and its surroundings but theses micro level SGHs are neglected in rural

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sector. Theoretical framework for the promotion of SHGs is adequately given but implementation doesn't seem to be successful in these areas. But through Micro-finance if such type of self-help groups is formed the rural industry can create a boom in economic development of women as well as the villages. Training should be provided to increase the quality of items produced such as incense sticks and also for attractive packaging. Regular training centers for SHGs are required to be built at the Block level.

The study shows that there are a huge variety of handiwork-related activities in different locations, which act as major sources of livelihoods for the poor and the disadvantaged households. Such types of handi-work relate to non-farm activities, off –farm activities and on-farm activities including agro-processing activities etc. With fall in agricultural returns/productivity and high risk the role played by handiwork as sources of gainful employment for the poor women and the disadvantaged is crucial and holds great promise as pathway out of poverty. Hence work shed –plus initiative is being recommended. SHGs should be linked up with other development programmes. There should be discussion amongst local people for starting more self-help groups and the cooperative should be made active. The SHG members suggested that the advertisement is urgently needed for convincing the authenticity of the produce. Advertisement is an expensive affair and there are no funds meant for this activity. If the government supports advertisement by wall writing/painting, television, radio, it will enhance the market. The emphasis obviously is on earning one's bread through daily work, all through one's life. Rather a hard decision, but given the circumstances of its origin, it reflects the philosophy as well as the hard-core reality of life of its members.

d) Process of accessing credit through group formation and promotion

Women from homogeneous class form the group in an integrative and cohesive manner. At first stage, they give the name of the group and elect one president, one secretary, and one treasurer from group members. All these groups in this block have been formed around 10 members. All are formed and promoted by local Gram Panchayet initiation. These SHGs are formed by the deposited amount of each member of Rs. 30 per month and loan is given from the group at 2% rate of interest. After 6 months group opens an account in the bank in the name of self and then time-to-time credit process through bank is going by maintenance of banking rules and regulations and by proper evaluation of group members' entrepreneurial economic performances. There is a bank linkage programme established to SHGs on commercial basis. These SHG members opened their accounts at different commercial banks. Members of SHGs are getting loans under the security of SHG. Each SHG get loan of Rs.25, 000 as first dose. But, the striking is that uniformity is not maintained by the bank to lend the amount of credit at the 2nd dose and the gap between the two doses. It is observed that the amount of credit varies from minimum Rs.60,000 to maximum Rs.1,00,000 as 2nd dose loan and the gap between the two installments of lending the credit is becoming one, two, three or four years. In recovery of loan, they get subsidy from District Rural Development Cell (DRDC) from minimum Rs. 5000 to maximum Rs. 15,000 according to the basis of their amount of loan and overall performances. Regarding their loan repayment status, results are appreciative by their regular interest payment. For successful promotion of the groups different training programmes are organized from Block Development Office (BDO), District Rural Development Cell (DRDC), NGOs and different welfare organizations. These groups get the opportunity to exhibit and advertise their products through different seminars, fairs. BDO and DRDC visit and evaluate the groups' performances periodically in order to help and encourage the successful performances of group members.

e) Building of Economic Enterprise

Women in economic entrepreneurial efforts utilizing the credit are vital factors in developing their indigenous inherent productive capacity. They are involved at production of domestic goods like animal husbandry, making spices, paper bags, cloths and garments, agriculture, small business of vegetables, grocery, fast food etc. They have started their efforts at their homely atmosphere linking with easy to handle low cost appropriate technology application, utilizing of low cost natural resources and raw materials available in their local environment with an assured linkages to obtain a justifiable price for their products. Besides it is advantageous for them that they get help and support in production from other family members without wages which decrease their production cost.

f) Getting Additional Employment

In rural areas women don't get opportunity to educate them properly due to early marriage, social constraints, willingness to prepare them for household services and overall poverty. So, they remain at far away from employment opportunities. But the credit through SHG formation and promotion provides the platform of social recognition. They now are participating at different village level awareness and welfare campaign like, literacy, polio awareness, other health awareness for pregnant mother and new born child, sanitary distribution, making cleanliness in feeding and other services at household etc., promoting by State, Central Govt. and other national and international voluntary agencies by some consolidated remuneration. The SHG approach offers to involve at earning activities like mid day meal cooking at schools, motivating women to form

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SHG and other awareness generating programmes initiated by panchayet and other voluntary agencies.

g) Self Dependency

Traditionally women were not any kind of asset owner. Their assets were mediated by parents, husband, children and other related members. They have to perform services for the nurturing, care and betterment of family members. So they have no material assets. But the credit facility gives them opportunity to make some property and assets in their own name and right to handling of all economic affairs related to credit oriented business activities. So, they now claim that these material assets are their own creation and always want to improve their own creations by earning activities. So they now self dependent due to their personal income in cash economy. They have not to be dependent on other family members to meet own needs and desires.

h) Removing from exploitation of Informal Sources of Credit

Women, lacking in social position and legal rights and traditionally earning less than men, are particularly vulnerable. A lack of collateral and an ability to borrow only small amounts at a time render women ineligible for loans from major national and private banks. In desperation to get out of poverty and to get little opportunity they turn to village "Mahajans" (unofficial money lenders), who offer loans at exorbitant interest rates. Even if they receive such loans, people with low levels of literacy, skills, and knowledge run a high risk of failing at their business and defaulting on their loans. They often lose the collateral they provided, which might be, for example, any utensils of precious metal, the jewelry etc. pushing them deeper into poverty. In this context, micro-credit has allowed women to overcome these obstacles and improve their lives.

i) Linkage with the Banking Institution

Traditionally women are far away from any banking transaction due to lack of any assets and awareness of themselves. As soon as the SHG is formed and a couple of group meetings are held, an SHG must open a Savings Bank account with the nearest Commercial or Regional Rural Bank or a Cooperative Bank. This is essential to keep the thrift and other sums of money of the SHG safely and also to improve the transparency levels of SHG's transactions. Opening of SB account, in fact, is the beginning of relationship between the bank and the SHG. Because the credit process with the group is only maintained through bank under SGSY. They make all transactions to the bank collectively in the name of the group. Later individual women have started to open an account in self name in the goal of saving money. This opportunity inculcates the saving habits and makes knowledge about monetary transaction among them.

j) Linkage With the Markets

Markets were mostly taboo area of women. They don't have any market experience individually. In any market linkages men were their passive partners, because it was recognized that women are kept aside from any public transaction due to age old identity of women as protective entity. But now their engagements in business activities make themselves of targeting their business more profitable, so they have to establish the link with the markets to gain knowledge about recent products and price. This linkage improves their bargaining power in transaction of price and exchanging of products. It also provides more exposure and mobility by communicating with persons of different nature, character and opinions, sharing their ideas, opinions, constraints and problems. This interaction in turn diminishes poverty of knowledge among women.

k) Participating at Different Village and Community Services

Women members in the group participate actively in different village and community services escaping from the private domain of the home. They directly have participated at literacy campaign, standing against violence faced by any women in the family, distribution of sanitary in the rural family and giving a lesson about the maintenance of health and hygiene, the companionship to provide health services of pregnant mother and new born child by govt. health centers, solving households' internal conflict and clash among members in family, forming Mahila Samiti for their open discussion on any matters, standing at Panchayet election, creating awareness among women in order to receive proper rights and privileges from the society, ifferent community and village level meetings etc.

l) Networking

The networking is vital in women poverty alleviation process as it provides the windows for facilitating access the data and information about the ongoing activities related to market, technology implementation and procurement of raw materials, service providers, price fixing and sustainability of all the other related activities enhancing their efforts in achieving profits in production. Hence networking within the group of women is very important in taking risk of developing women collective and individual enterprises and also provides the relief from mental agony, sorrow by common sharings. Also networking with outside the group members like panchayet members, bank officials, block and district officials make them knowledge about group's successful dynamics and the surrounding socio-economic reality.

A conclusion that emerges from this account is that micro finance by forming SGHs can contribute to solving the problems of inadequate income of women and rural services as an integral part of poverty

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m) Meeting of Day-To-Day Household Needs and Demands

Income is the major determinant of the standard of living of the people. Now women have started to earn money after joining the SHGs. Hence women members of the groups are independent to meet their personal expenditures, and they contribute their income at their household budgets. Many women members independently involve in the economic activities like production of domestic goods, which have the necessity to meet required household day to day needs and demands. So their economic involvement meets required enterprise needs and also household needs. Their contribution to the family budgets make prestigious to themselves and family.

n) Fulfillment of Emergency Needs

Earlier, women meet their urgent needs by lending the credit from informal sources with exorbitant rate of interest. But, now access to credit through SHG gives relief from exploitation of these sources and makes saving habits through banking transaction among women. This habit protects them from sudden emergent emergency crises. Besides, the group support in this stage by providing credit at reasonable rate of interest. They may overcome easily these crises by the successful promotion of the group which works as survivor of themselves.

o) Increasing Awareness Level

Women participating in this group through collective activities are aware of their rights and privileges. Their mobility and networking make them aware about their socio-economic reality. They now claim their rights and privileges accorded to the Indian constitution. Most women have received housing facility from the Govt. scheme of Indira Awas Yojana. They interact and communicate different officials of block level and district level for getting maximum opportunity of SGSY and their own entrepreneurial efforts, from where they may know different welfare schemes for themselves and they provide maximum effort to capture these benefits without any male support. Therefore, group collectivity makes them confident. Their exposures do them more aware, prompt and dynamic to get proper rights and privileges from patriarchal system of the society. Their community service relate with education, health care make them aware about their family health and nutrition. They follow the entire immunization schedule for health protection and take adequate birth control technique to hold small family.

p) Building Capacity to Take Leadership

Women at group level activity must take the leading role to get proper benefit of SGSY. Members in the group elect president, treasurer, and secretary on rotation basis for smooth functioning of the group. So these elected members gain the power to motivate, influence, and promote the group members in maintaining solidarity, cohesion and friendship among themselves. Besides, they have to contact with other officials to maintain group functioning, disbursement of adequate credit, recovery of loan and gaining maximum subsidy. This ability of networking and leadership make them more confident and fearless to take leading role in broad level activities, like developing infrastructure in the village, protesting against any injustice faced by women, solving family violence, and filling nomination at *Panchayat* (Local self Government) election etc.

q) Empowerment of Women

In engaging at credit oriented business enterprise, women have socially, economically and politically empowered. Women are now more confident, assertive and aware of their rights. The women in the SHGs are also respected by the others in the family, because their independent earnings are contributing to household income, expenditure and savings. Therefore after joining in the SHGs, the family wealth has been increased. They are recognized by their performances at the community also. They are socially empowered by greater mobility, networking with others at meeting, opportunity to learn new customs and habits, opportunity for self development and family welfare, inspiring to take up business, fight against conservative attitudes and taboos, confidence to hold leadership positions. Their economic empowerment includes knowledge about borrowing funds from the bank, ability to go progressive borrowing, increased income, and sense of economic independence. They are also politically empowered to protest against injustice and capability to take leading role in community services etc. Their empowerment is expressed in their attitudes regarding education, health, nutrition, women in difficult circumstances, violence against women and rights to girl child etc.

r) Platform to Protest Against Violation of Human Rights

Women are now vociferous to gain their rights from the society. They now get the platform to protest against any type of violence faced by women. Their collectivity makes themselves more bold, prompt and active. They now protest against any type of discrimination, male superiority and domination faced by women traditionally.

IV. Conclusion

A conclusion that emerges from this account is that micro finance by forming SGHs can contribute to solving the problems of inadequate income of women and rural services as an integral part of poverty alleviation programmes. Very little attention has been given to empowerment questions or ways in which both empowerment and sustainability aims may be

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accommodated. Due to alternative sources of income the existence of self-help group is very rare in these areas. Women entrepreneurs who are working with self help groups have taken positive steps however small they are towards women empowerment. The general awareness level is not standard among the women entrepreneurs and need training for their development to get better output. In many SGHs and contexts it is only in a minority of cases that women can develop lucrative activities of their own through credit and savings alone. Lack of capital, lack of knowledge of the market, high interest rates etc are the main problems among the women workers. Access to credit has made a lasting impact on the lives of the women particularly on women in the rural areas. Their quality of life has improved a lot. There is an increase in their income, savings and consumption expenditure. It enables the poor women to save, improve their confidence and household security. Consumption credit leads to increased level of food security and enhanced access to health and education. Production credit enables the entrepreneurial women to undertake income generation activities. Credit oriented income, livelihood activities enable women to have access to income, enhanced decision making on health, education and consumption within the family. SHGs have also given women a greater role in household decision-making. This shows an improvement in their standard of living. The women have gained self-reliance. They got an opportunity to improve their hidden talents after joining the SHGs. They can speak freely in front of large groups of people. They got recognition in the family and society.

By controlling the resources they can gradually establish the real hegemony in the process of production.

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Women's Empowerment: Concept and Beyond

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Abstract- Long before the word `empowerment' became popular, women were speaking about gaining control over their lives, and participating in making the decisions that affect them in home and community, in government and international development policies. But problem is, very few have clear conception on empowerment. This is very easy to say but difficult to understand what is empowerment? This article takes an initiative to clarify the concept based on several scholar's views. And finally, make a conclusion with alternative analysis of women's empowerment.

Keywords: *empowerment, women, power, gender, selfreliance, decision-making, control over.*

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Women's Empowerment: Concept and Beyond

Md. Aminur Rahman

Abstract - Long before the word `empowerment' became popular, women were speaking about gaining control over their lives, and participating in making the decisions that affect them in home and community, in government and international development policies. But problem is, very few have clear conception on empowerment. This is very easy to say but difficult to understand what is empowerment? This article takes an initiative to clarify the concept based on several scholar's views. And finally, make a conclusion with alternative analysis of women's empowerment.

Keywords : empowerment, women, power, gender, self-reliance, decision-making, control over.

I. Introduction

The rise of gender sensitivity is one of the distinguishing features of our times. It has taken hold human imagination like never before. For all practical purposes, the concern of gender equity has graduated to the level of a policy objectives (Sharma : 2000). Two perspectives have emerged in the contemporary discourse on the modalities of gender equity; women's development and women's empowerment. It is Easter Boserup's (1970) pioneering work, Women's Role in Economic Development that paved way to the rise of women's development perspective. According to Sharma (2000;21), the development strategy, however, has come under severe interrogation not only for its failure to deliver its promise but also for working against the interest of womankind. Consequently, the decade of 90s has witnessed the rise of women's empowerment perspective which shot into prominence at Beijing Conference.

As our experience, Paulo Freire (1996) in his book Padagogy of the Oppressed has discussed `empowerment' in a formal way for the first time in 1970s. And after him, many scholars discussed it as human potential especially for women empowerment. Caroline Moser (1993), at first, discussed it as redistribution of power. But as a concept, `empowerment' is widely used, but seldom defined. The often-uncritical use of the term "empowerment" in development thinking and practice disguises a problematic concept. There is a room for greater clarity about the concept and its application. Confusion arises with the concept empowerment because the root concept 'power' is itself disputed.Power has been the subject of debate in social science. Some definitions focus, with varying degree of subtlety, on the availability of one person to get another person or group to do something against their will. Such power is located in decision-making processes, conflict, and force, and could be described as zero-sum; or the 'power to create such relationship as love, respect friendship, legitimacy and so on. To try to come closer to an understanding of empowerment we need to look at the actual meaning of the term that has been variously used by writers and researchers, in a variety of context' (Rowland, 1997). And let me attempt to discuss few concepts here on empowerment to understand the concept.

Rawland's (1997) view : According to Rawland, in order to understand the process of empowerment, there is a need to be aware that power can take many different forms. Rawland explains :

a. *Power over:* Controlling power, this may be responded to with compliance, resistance (which weakens processes of victimization) or manipulation.
b. *Power to:* Generative or productive power (sometimes incorporating or manifesting as forms of resistance or manipulation) which creates new possibilities and actions without domination.
c. *Power with:* 'a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together'.
d. *Power from within:* 'the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and makes true human. Its basis is self-acceptance and self-respect, which extend, in turn, to respect for and acceptance of others as equals.

Rawland have considered some of the different manifestations of power, we can return to the question of what is meant by empowerment. Using the conventional definition, of "power over" empowerment means bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it. This puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision-making and, in the economic sphere, on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in economic decision-making. Individuals are empowered when they are able to maximize the opportunities available to them without constraints.

Within the generative, 'power to' and "power with" interpretation of power, empowerment is concern with the processes by which people become aware of their own interests how those relate to the interest of others in order both to participate from a position of a greater strength in decision-making and actually to influence such decisions.

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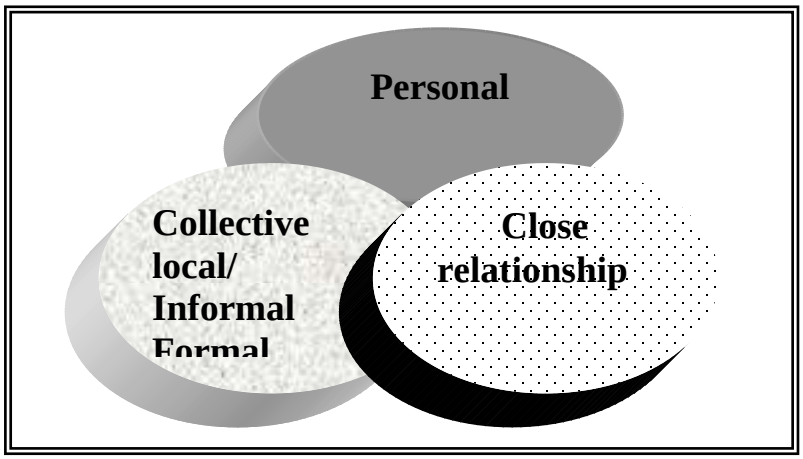
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From a feminist perspective, interpreting 'power over' entails understanding the dynamics of oppression and internalized oppressing. Empowerment is thus more than participation in decision-making; it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions. As feminist and other social theorist have shown, societies ascribe a particular set of abilities to social categories of people. Empowerment must involve undoing negative social construction, so that people come to see themselves as having the capacity and the right to act and influence decisions [Rowland, (1997).

According to Rawland, empowerment to be operating within three dimensions:

a. *Personal :* development a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the defects of internalized oppression.
b. *Rational :* developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it.
c. *Collective :* This includes involvement in political structures, but might also cover collective action based co-operation rather than competition.

II. The Three Dimensions of Empowerment



(Rowlands, Jo (1997) Questioning Empowerment, Oxford: Oxfam.)

Naila Kabeer's (1989) interpretation : Kabeer interprets it as a redial transformation of power relations between women and men 'so that women have greater power over their own lives and men have less power over women's lives'. Kabeer (1994) has provided another dynamic account of empowerment. She regards empowerment as a concept with theoretical and practical potential that merits being more than an empty slogan.

She found it necessary to deconstruct the notion of power in order to consider empowerment. She explained: 'the multi-dimensional nature of power suggest that empowerment strategies for women must build on 'the power within' as a necessary adjunct to improving their ability to control resources, to determine agendas and make decisions. Power from within needs 'experiential recognition and analysis' of issues to do with women's own subordination and how it is maintained. 'Such power cannot be given; it has to be self-generated (Kabeer: 1994). She emphasizes the importance of such elements as self-respect, and the sense of agency. Careful analysis and insightful reflections are necessary preconditions for creation of new form of consciousness. This idea is based on Paulo Freire's conception of `critical consciousness' where the process of empowerment is bound up with an educational process (Naz :2006).

In addition, Kabeer (1994) belief's that `self esteem and feeling of being as active agent' are the fundamental principles of empowerment and she expends her thought by saying that `empowerment should be considered aspect of perceiving oneself as an active agent capable of making decisions' (Naz;2006).

Thus, it is not simply an act of decision making but encompasses more. Kabeer does not ignore the value of collective action but considers it useful in achieving social as well as political empowerment. In her opinion, the empowerment process should have its effect in policy changes at the state and market institutions level that ultimately mould and limit women's live(Naz :2006).

John Friedman's (1992) view : Friedman's (1992: 32-34) theory of `alternative development' is derived from the concept of empowerment that arises from indigenous, political and social cultures of society. According to Friedman, There are three kinds of power, social, political and psychological. Social power consists in processing knowledge, information and skills. Political power is a mechanism that influences policy changes both at the micro and macro level. It's the result of the power of voice and collective action.

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Finally, psychological power is expressed as an individual sense of potency demonstrated in self-confidence behaviour, self-reliance and increased self-esteem. Friedman explains empowerment as social power, which can be translated into political power. Social networking enhances their position and power, which consequently expedites and strengthens the process of psychological, social and political empowerment.

According to kate Young (1993), empowerment enables women`to take control of their own lives, set their own agenda, organize to help each other and make demands on the state for support and on the society itself for change'.

As Young, empowerment is a complete change of the processes and structures responsible for women's inferior status in the society. It is based on a `transformatory potential' related to the `need to transform women's position in such a way that the advancement will be sustained. Finally, she summarizes the concept of empowerment from individual to wider political perspectives and she puts sufficient importance to collective action, as it is a sure means to individual empowerment.

In true sense, this term is discussed as feminist perspective, and Marilee Karl (1995) says, 'The word 'Empowerment' captures this sense of gaining control, of participation in decision-making. More recently, the word has entered the vocabulary of development agencies, including international organizations and the United Nations'. And Vanessa Griffen (1987) explains it also through gender lens, as her, empowerment means.

- having control, or gaining further control;
- having a say and being listened to;
- being able to define and create from a women's perspective;being able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society (not just areas of society accepted as women's place)
- being recognized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make.

And again Beteille (1999:591), discusses it as power distribution without having clear power. According to berteile, 'the main point behind empowerment is that it seeks to change society through a rearrangement of power'.

It reflects the kabeer's opinion. But, Dandikar (1986:26) has described empowerment as a multifaceted process, which involves four parallel aspects. These are:

- The women's economic/resource base;
- The public/political arena allowed to her by society;
- Her family structure, and the strength and limitations it imposes on her; and
- Perhaps most important, the psychological / ideological "sense" about women in her society, which in turn shapes her own perception of herself and the options she allows herself to consider.

When we observes S. Batliwala (1993) observation, where she says the word "power" is contained within the term empowerment implying that empowerment is about changing the balance of power in a given society, power being defined as control over resources and ideology. The resources may be categorized into physical, human, intellectual, financial, and self, including self-esteem, confidence, and creativity. Ideology refers to beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking and perceiving situations. She point out that empowerment is a process that involves a redistribution of power, particularly within the household.

So power, power redistribution and power relationship are emphasized by the modern scholars when they have made clarification.

Regarding empowerment, Hashemi et el (1993) have clarified it in a study 'Targeted Credit Programs and the Empowerment of Women in Rural Bangladesh' and emphasized on women control over on her lives. They have identified six general domains in which, traditionally subordination of women is played out and in which empowerment of women is believed to be taking place. The six domains are: 1.Sense of self and vision of a future. 2. Mobility and visibility. 3. Ability to earn a living. 4. Decision-making power within the household. 5. Ability to interact effectively in the public sphere. 5. Participation in non- family groups. In another study of 'Rural Credit Programs and Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh' Syed Hashemi et al (1996) have developed eight empowerment indicators to measure women's empowerment especially for Bangladesh context as a developing country. And his conceptualisation is highly praised in women development area. The eight indicators are: a. Mobility b. Economic security c. Ability to make small purchases d. Ability to make larger purchases e. Involvement in major decisions f. Relative freedom from domination by the family g. Political and legal awareness h. Participation in public protests and political campaigning.

And once it has found, scholars has analyses empowerment through gender lens and establish it for judging women development. Though it is very difficult to differentiate real boarder line between development and empowerment. It has also found in Chen and Mahmud's (1995) clarification when they have conceptualized also empowerment as women's advancement. As Chen and Mahmud (1995)

Empowerment is a process of positive change that improves women's fallback position and bargaining power within a patriarchal structure, and identify different causal pathways of change; material, cognitive, perceptual and relational.

In short, empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making power and control, and to transformative action. In addition, empowerment is a process that is both individual and

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collective. Sometimes it involve people as groups that most often begin to develop their awareness and the ability to organize to take action and bring about change.

III. Alternative Thought as Beyond

Today, when empowerment approach is reigning supreme, there is need for a cool and dispassionate scrutiny of some of its infirmities. In the interest of systematic scrutiny, I explain it through liberal, structural and cultural perspectives.

Viewed from liberal perspective, women's empowerment approach suffers from three fallacies: exclusionary bias, adversarial orientation and subversive logic (Sharma: 2000:21). It suffers from an exclusionary bias in that it excludes man from the feminist discourse, organisation and movement. It is noticed, it isolates women from men. This is evident from the fact that, by and large most of the women study centres are headed by women and all the seminars and conferences on women are monopolised by women. Even, most of women mobilisations are led by women. Not only that; women academicians invariably claim, gender studies as one of their field of specialisation. As a result, the academic discourse on the gender question seems to have gained an activist impulse. Within the academic discourse again the women question is being viewed in isolation from the gender relations context. A disconnecting consequence of it, all the alienation of men from the gender discourse. As if this were not enough, it also evinces an adversarial orientation. Simply, it tends to project man as an adversary of woman (Sharma;2000:25).

In its present discourse, women's empowerment perspective could also be a threat to domestic peace as it may drive a wedge between man and woman. That is the reason why many women do not favour this perspective; because they feel they are well adjusted and find nothing wrong with gender relations.

From structural view point, women's empowerment approach is intrinsically psychologistic, structural and elitist (Sharma: 2000-26). It is psychologistic in that sense; it places over optimism on the efficacy of conscientization as a key to women's empowerment. Even as the importance of `awareness generation' among women for their empowerment cannot be overemphasised, conscientization of women alone, to the exclusion of man is as important, perhaps even more than change in the attitude of woman, for setting gender relations on an even keel. Above all, while attitudinal change among both women and men is a necessary condition for gender equality, it is, however, not a sufficient condition. From Marxist angle, women's empowerment framework suffers from a sort of non-structuralist conditions. That is so because it ignores the importance of existential conditions, including the fact of economic dependency of woman on man. The economic dependency of woman is built into the structure of property relations which are dominated by man. For sure, developmental approach has failed to make a dent into the structure of gender-based property relations.

From structural viewpoint, another problem with women's empowerment is that it treats women as a homogeneous category, an undifferentiated mass. This, however, is not true. The fact of the matter is that there is internal differentiation among women and it is as telling as between man and woman (Sharma: ibid). These women differ significantly not only in their backgrounds but also in their needs and interests. The question, then, is; whose empowerment are we talking about? Empowerment of women of which section or class? It is no secret that movement for women's empowerment has been hijacked ny women of higher strata, particularly upper class/middle class and power elites (Caplan: 1985).

From cultural perspectives, women's empowerment approach can be criticised for its marked Western ethnocentrism (Sharma: ibid). It has incapability to relate to the cultural ethos of the countries of the East, including Indian Subcontinent. Its most severe limitation is its Western ethnocentric bias. So mired it is in the Western feminist discourse that it fails to capture the cultural reality of gender relations in the non-western pert of the world.

In view of the above delineated limitations of women's empowerment approach it needs gender empowerment. Where it fails also to identify male's empowerment because most male of Third World Countries have no power and they are also exploited by the existing power-structure in the society. So it needs also to define empowerment as a gender-neutral concept. At this point, it is necessary to clarify the concept of `gender empowerment'. Gender empowerment should not be mistaken for empowerment of man vis-a-vis woman or the vice versa. It signifies transformation of gender relations from hierarchal to egalitarian plan rather than just tinkering with women's power position. It aims at reworking of gender relations in a complimentary framework rather than a conflictual framework. Gender empowerment is a broad category which includes empowerment of women without creating a misgiving of emasculation of men. It stands for fostering a balance in gender relations as against the one-sided women empowerment approach. Furthermore, empowerment is not just a question of rearrangement of power both economic and political; it is also a matter of change of values. In my view, men need gender sensitisation as much as women do. In fact men need it even more, for they still are in a position of domination on account of the perpetuation of patriarchy.

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Secularization and Development in Africa: A Terrific Façade

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Abstract- This article highlights secularization debate; identifying its major variants; critiquing the idea with particular reference to Peter Berger's rendition; and presenting his recent position on the debate. The paper then provides a snapshot of development from the Western perspective, examining the relationship between religion and development, showing how it differs from an African perspective. The paper argues that,the Western models of development are not compatible with Africa because they are alien, incompatible with the norms and values of most Africans, and notably, neglect or relegate several important aspects of the people's culture, including the role of religion in development.Thus, when African leaders embrace and applaud the Western-based idea of secularized development at the expense of the subalterns, who do not feel the impacts of these superficial developments, it becomes a terrific façade. The article concludes by proposing a bottom-up approach to development conception and implementation in non-Western society, notably Africa, asserting that it has to beconsidered as a process compatible with the people's realities, reflecting their values, including religion and culture generally.

Keywords: *religion, development, secularization, peter berger, façade, ideas, practices.*

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Secularization and Development in Africa: A Terrific Façade

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Abstract - This article highlights secularization debate; identifying its major variants; critiquing the idea with particular reference to Peter Berger's rendition; and presenting his recent position on the debate. The paper then provides a snapshot of development from the Western perspective, examining the relationship between religion and development, showing how it differs from an African perspective. The paper argues that,the Western models of development are not compatible with Africa because they are alien, incompatible with the norms and values of most Africans, and notably, neglect or relegate several important aspects of the people's culture, including the role of religion in development.Thus, when African leaders embrace and applaud the Western-based idea of secularized development at the expense of the subalterns, who do not feel the impacts of these superficial developments, it becomes a terrific façade. The article concludes by proposing a bottom-up approach to development conception and implementation in non-Western society, notably Africa, asserting that it has to beconsidered as a process compatible with the people's realities, reflecting their values, including religion and culture generally.

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I. Introduction

This essay is divided into two main sections. The first section presents arguments on European[1] sociologists' conviction about the increasing secularization of "modern" society, drawing from the ideas of Peter Berger and Max Weber. The paper then reviews and critiques some of the contemporary postulates on the debate. The second section of the paper presents discussion on the nature of religion and economic development, examining how Western development models fail to work in Africa[2], and proposing a bottom-up approach that is compatible with the realities of the people, reflecting their values.

II. Increasing Secularization of "Modern" Society

Secularization is one of the main themes in sociology of religion. The terms of the current anthropological literatureon secularism are set in relation to both classic and recent developments in secularization theory (Cannell, 2010:86). As with most concepts in the social sciences, there is no single or widely accepted definition of secularization. There is, first of all, disagreement about its locus. Some definitions[3] emphasize individual beliefs and practices, others the influence of religious norms, and elites, and still others the differentiation of religious and nonreligious spheres or institutions (Gorski and Altinordu, 2008:57).In*The Sacred Canopy*(1967) Berger first deals with his theory or conception on the nature of religion. He argues that humans are biologically fated to "exteriorize" and fill their world with meaning, that is create a culture, which is then "interiorized" by a process of socialization. Often, this leads to "alienation[4]", since humans start to regard products of their own activity as natural, unchanging and external objects that are "out there"(1967:2). Berger introduces the notion of "plausibility," structure- a conversation by which this particular reality[5] works, asserting that whenever the conversation stops, the world starts to shake.

Culture[6] and society are rooted in man's biological nature. Society structures, distributes, coordinates, and provides the infrastructure for the world-building activities of man. Society is a necessary condition for culture because "only in society can the products of those activities persist over time" (p.7). Berger asserts that religion itself has been probably the most powerful agency of alienation because religion has been a very important form of false consciousness (1967:87).It is worthy to note that Berger's ideas on secularization stem from Weber, and is therefore an

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[1] The roots of the secularization idea can be traced to European scholars, but the later proponents are not necessarily Europeans.

[2] It is worthy to acknowledge that Africa is a huge continent with diversities and differences even within sub-regions and individual countries. This is not to generalize and say that all African societies are the same or should follow the same patterns of development.

[3] Berger subscribes to the modernization definition. He defines the term as a process in which religion diminishes in importance both in society and in the consciousness of individual secularization is the direct result of modernization (2001: 443).

[4] He borrows the idea from Marx

[5] Social construction (externalization, objectivation, internalization)

[6] Berger refers culture to the totality of man's externalized products and the term "society' to refer to the specific social arrangements upon which culture rests (1967: 6).

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extension of Weber's analysis of the"secularizing[7]" function of Protestantism. Let me briefly recount Weber's idea on secularization.

When Max Weber designates as secularization the process whereby the concept of "calling" moves or is relocated from the religious to the secular sphere to signify, now for the first time, the exercise of secular activities[8] in the world, he is using as analogy the canonical meaning of the concept (Casanova, 1994:13). Similarly, Hughey (1979) argues that, with reference to Max Weber's work, secularization[9] may refer to very different phenomena in different situations, depending on the content and specific sociohistorical context which it occurs(90). Rationalization, with particular reference to religious intellectuals can be used to illustrate that. The process of intellectual rationalization results in a systematization of religious values in terms of their own autonomous and internal logic. At the same time, secular sphere of value (political, economic, kinship, military, aesthetic, intellectual, etc.) undergo the same process of intellectual rationalization and how they are organized into logical systems based on their own immanent laws. The further the rationalization and sublimation of the external and internal possessions of- in the widest sense- 'things worldly' has progressed, the stronger has the tension on the part of religion become (Weber 2011). Thus, the more intellectual rationalization proceeds toward systematizing each institutional order in terms of its logic and values, the more the internal logic of each sphere can be seen to conflict with that of every other sphere.

Peter Berger in his *The Sacred Canopy* (1967) defines secularization as "the process by which sectors of the society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols". Additionally, he sees secularization as empirically available "processes" of great importance in "modern Western[10] history" (1967:107). To explain modernity, Berger contends that secularization operates in dialectical tension with "pluralism.[11]" Berger uses pluralism as a key part of his discussion of how religion has changed from its previous roles in human culture. The plausibility of all religious systems become undermined when encountered with competing belief systems, consequently producing a "crisis of legitimation" for organized religion. Along with this crisis is competition among religious groups with "the same legal status" but pits these groups against "*non*-religious rivals in the business of defining the world" (1967:137). Against this background, Berger concludes that Pluralism is particularly detrimental to "religious ex-monopolies" (1967:137). On the effect of secular society on religion, Berger asserts that it represents a severe rupture of the traditional task of religion, which was precisely the establishment of an integrated set of definitions of reality that could serve as a common universe of meaning for the members of society (1967; 134). Couple of decades later, Berger changed his mind and debunked his theory. The next section reviews some critiques of the secularization theory.

III. Secularization: A Critique

In *The Desecularization of the World,* Peter Berger(1999) identified mistakes in his theory andrefuted his claims that "modern" society would become increasingly secularized. "My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false" (1999: 2) he declared. The world today, he further argues, "with some exceptions to which I will come presently, is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever" (1999:2). But even before that, his ideas and theory were challenged. On decline of religious beliefs, Berger (1999) surveys the contemporary world scene and found little evidence of religious decline, except on some American university campuses and perhaps in Western Europe. Again, it was apparent to him that modernization has had some secularizing effects, more in some places than others. But it has also provoked powerful movements of "counter-secularization" (1999:3). In fact, secularization operates at different levels- for instance societal level secularization is not necessarily linked to secularization on the level of individual consciousness. James Beckford (2003) provides a detailed analysis of clusters of ideas about secularization. These are: *differentiation, rationalization, modernization, metamorphoses, continuing vitality, and universality of religion*.

Stark (1999) argued that secularization certainly seemed to have slowed or even stopped, asserting that it had never happened, urging for expunging the term from the sociological lexicon. He based his arguments on a number of events that disproved the secularization apologists' claims. These include the Iranian Revolution, the rapid spread of Pentecostalism in the global South, communal violence in Southern Asia, the collapse of communism qua secular religion, etc. Another dimension of attack on the secularization thesis is looking at it from the privatization of religion angle. Jose Casanova (1994) questioned this, utilizing empirical data within the United States and other continents including Africa. He concludes that we are witnessing the "deprivatization[12]" of religion in the modern world,

[7] Weber did not seem to use the term secularization but instead disenchantment, which could mean secularization
[8] Secularization of religious motives
[9] Disenchantment of the world
[10] He justifies modernWestern based on its roots in the religious tradition (Berger, 1967:124).
[11] A social-structural correlate of the secularization of consciousness (Berger 1967:127)

[12] By deprivatization I mean the fact that religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization reserved for them (Casanova 1994:5)

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citing examples with social movements that have appeared which were either religious in nature or challenging in the name of religion for legitimacy and autonomy of the primary secular spheres, the state and the market economy. More so, "religious institutions and organizations refused to restrict themselves to the pastoral care of individual souls" and continue to raise questions about the interconnections of private and public morality and "to challenge the claims of the subsystems, particularly states and markets, to be exempt from extraneous normative considerations" (Casanova 1994:5).

Chaves (1994) puts forward another puzzle by shifting emphasis on the secularization debate from a supraindividual level to the power of ecclesiastical elites and institutions. He argues that secularization is most productively understood not as declining religion, but as the declining scope of religious authority. Strikingly, Warner (2002) came up with some data that proved particular social and institutional conditions in the U.S.A. which made its religious scene distinctively different from Europe's. Thus, secularization theories based on the European canon are no particularly useful for understanding religion here. This point further validates the fallacy of Berger (1967) that makes bolder claims that his model applies to all religions. Another important stride in critiquing the secularization debate is Berger's (2001) reflection that he was wrong when he had thought that, modernization necessarily meant secularization. He further traces the source of his idea to an interpretation that was eloquently expressed in Weber's phrase of "the disenchantment of the world" (2001:443).

James Beckford (2003) considers the idea of secularization with reference to the metamorphoses[13] idea as "deceptive" (2003:52). He then cites David Lyon who asserts that 'the idea of secularization, if taken to refer beyond institutional religiosity to the attenuation of all forms of faith, spirituality, and belief, is plainly mistaken' (2000:x). To buttress this point, David Lyon refers to Robert Bellah's works since the 1960s, insisting that it is no longer possible to divide mankind into a binary of believers and non-believers. Rather, all believe something.

From the above, we can appreciate the role of religion and religious ideas in "modern" society. If Berger's secularization idea was extending the works of Weber and perhaps Durkheim, one needs to ask if the *Sacred Canopy* ever existed in the first place because we have to be critical of the contexts – the times and processes (events). What led to Weber and Durkheim's mode of thoughts? Both of these classical scholars were noticing industrialization and modernization happening in their own societies at those periods. It was an established fact that there was "disenchantment of the world" in Weber's case, which was linked to the idea of economic development, although, he was not saying in explicit terms that there was secularization. If Berger missed the point[14], then what was he not noticing?

There are many variants of secularization with emphasis on various aspects. I have highlighted six:differentiation, rationalization, modernization, metamorphoses, continuing vitality, and universality of religion. Peter Berger's "favorite" was the modernization, which assumes that modernization means the decline of religion and the institutional order and then the consciousness of individual. These ideas have been challenged by scholars including Berger himself, a leading proponent of the theory. As Casanova (1994) asserts, and he is right, there are two take-homes: religion has come to stay, thus putting to rest one of the cherished dreams of the Enlightenment. Second, religion shall continue to play important public roles in the ongoing construction of the modern world. Empirical data across continents and the U.S. dispute the secularization idea. Modernity does not necessarily lead to secularization, but pluralism. Although the debate on secularization seems to focus around Europe and or "modern" society, students of sociology of religion in Africa have many things to learn from and explore in their study[15] including observing the continuous importance of secularization debate as an important theme in sociology of religion. The next section of the essay is devoted to the idea of religion vis-à-vis development. It first briefly gives an overview of the notion of development in Africa, highlighting how it is conceived, challenging the Western models, and advocating for a bottom-up approach that considers the felt-needs and realities of the target recipients.

IV. Religion and Development – An African Perspective

The secularization paradigm, based on European history and the modernist model of the progressive exclusion of religion from the public sphere, has seen religion as an obstacle to progress, to be sidestepped, ignored or eliminated (Barbara Bompani and Maria Frahm-Arp 2010). From the outset, modern ideas about development generally overlooked the role of religion in Africa, or assumed that it would be relegated to a matter of private belief as secular states gained strength and confidence, or even represented

[13] With variants though, a popular point for recent argument about the metamorphosis is the decline in the number of young people who regularly participate in mainstream Christian churches (Beckford 2003:53).

[14] May be Berger did not realize that the Calvinists' work, which was inspired by the "calling," a religious motivation, was not differentiated or divided into sacred and secular

[15] There are several studies conducted in Africa on the subject matter, Ann Swidler's (2010) "The Return of the Sacred…" is a good example.

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religion as an obstacle to development. As wasindicated in the introductory notes, development process in Africa should consider religion. Strikingly, Gerrie Ter Haar (2010) observes that it is now apparent that religion is a growing force in public life in Africa, as in many other parts of the world. She further asserts that development schemes designed without due reference to local cultures are bound to run into difficulty, and cultures – however interesting they may be from folkloric viewpoint are bound to change.How are the Western models of development viewed, especially in relation to Africa?

Building on the debate on secularization, Dorothea (2010) observes that development in the twentieth century Western European model was seen as progress from a deeply religious, irrational and non-bureaucratic world, to a modern space where material advancement was achieved that led to secularization and loss of the spiritual. This trajectory has not been universal and the United States of America is a good example of a developed nation-state that has not lost all sense of the spiritual and religious discourse in the public sphere. It is worthy to understand the shift from progress to process in understanding development. Progress is about material increase while process tries to bring about the advancement of the whole person and their society. Development should be about helping people realize their potential- what they are, what they can do for themselves, and who they could be. By implication therefore, students of African religion should not be imposing or creating meanings or defining for their subjects what development is. Rather, the subjects should not be objectified or made "other" since they know better what their situations are.

In line with the above, Elizabeth (2010) identifies a difficulty among the Westerners in comprehending how, in African culture a continuum exists between visible and invisible worlds. It is also a surprise to some that religion reaches all sectors of public life, and how religious ideas come to have a bearing on the way political power is actually perceived and exercised. Studying aspects of religion in Africa therefore requires the researcher to appreciate the nature and relationship between the visible and the invisible to the subjects. In other words, isolating or treating religious aspects alone without bringing into cognizance other aspects of the society will not help. Several good examples exist- Linda Thomas' *Under the Canopy* (1999) is a good case, where she considered not only the health but equally social, economic, political, symbolic, etc. aspects of the Saint John's Church in South Africa.

V. Conclusion

This essay briefly highlighted Peter Berger's idea on secularization as well as Max Weber's and providinga critique, and discussing the relationship between religion and development from an Africa perspective. It argues that, the Western models of development are not compatible with Africa for many reasons: they are alien, as well usually attached with conditionalities- just like many African countries experienced with the IMF/World Banks' structural adjustment programs in the 1980s and 90s. In addition, the Western models of development as we have illustrated, are not compatible with the norms and values of the people. This means that it neglects or relegates several important aspects of the people's culture, including the role of religion in development. Over the past decade there has been growing interest in engaging with religion, both as a means to achieving established development goals and as it is increasingly recognized that religion is central to the lives and values of most people in developing countries, thereby also paying a potential role in shaping development programs (Ter Haar and Ellis, 2006). As demonstrated, several empirical studiesproved that the contraposition between modernity and religion rooted in Western interpretations of secularism does not ring true in non-Western societies. This relationship needs to be rearticulated in theoretical and interpretive manner. Religion remains the most important means by which Africans secure access to the invisible world. They can achieve their development through utilizing religious ideas and resources[16]. Development, when referred to Africa, should not be considered only in a unilineal, Western, top-down. Instead, it should be from bottom-up, allowing people from the grassroots to identify their problems and prioritize their needs. Failure to appreciate this and apply it to non-Western, mostly African societies, wherethe leaders embrace and applaud the secularized developmentidea at the expense of the citizens who do not benefit from the artificial development, it becomes a terrific façade.

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Toward a Sociology of Public Intellectual Action: The Challenge of the Molecular Intellectuals

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Abstract - The present essay aims to give both a contribution to rethinking sociology of intellectuals and to the study of transition from the hierarchical order of modernity (idea of Society) to a social pattern based on persons and subjects. In particular, we will try to paint a sketch of the transformations of the intellectual function. Exerted by big bureaucratic machines, today the intellectual action partially detaches itself from the intellectual function carried out by big bureaucratic machines of the modern era. New typologies of intellectuals were born as well as a new, deeply ambivalent public space. The Internet and networked individualism are the main carriers of these transformations.

Keywords : *intellectuals, agency, networking society, molecularization.*

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Toward a Sociology of Public Intellectual Action: The Challenge of the Molecular Intellectuals

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Keywords : intellectuals, agency, networking society, molecularization.

I. Introduction

The term "intellectual" comes from late Latin *intellectualis,* adjective that, in philosophy, refers to what deals with the theoretical activity separated from the perceptible experience/world. So we can give the word intellectual two different meanings. The first meaning refers to: «the social stratum composed by all the people who perform an activity that can be classified as intellectual – implying a use of signs and symbols instead of a use of materials, together with a precise and effective mental effort – being the latter of technical, administrative, scientific, medical or artistic nature» (Gallino 2004:386). We can define this first group, to whom Antonio Gramsci (1996) refers with particularly deep thought, intellectual workers. They were one of the most important groups into middle classes during the Twentieth Century. Using a second meaning, the term intellectual does not imply a precise social group, but a specific public role: public intellectual or *engagé*[1]. Public intellectuals may or may not be part of intellectual workers. They, by making public actions, exploit their cultural reputation in order to influence public opinion and political élites about specific "events" (such as international crises, a social movement mobilization and so forth) or cultural issues. During the first modernity, public intellectuals thought themselves as well as a spiritual and cultural élite on the straight of a strong sense of ontological True and ideological seduction (Antonelli 2012; Aron 1957; Dahrendorf 2006). This *avantguarde* was part of the hierarchical order of modernity because of exerting a cultural power on non-intellectuals people – the majority of population was illiterate or non-educated people during the Nineteenth and until the mid-Twentieth Century in Europe. At the same time, a lot of critical and nationalist thinkers built a strong stigma on intellectual workers – whom were in relentless social rise as part of new meddle classes: they were judged a share of the commercialization of culture and mankind, cause either through Capitalism or world **bureaucratisation (Adorno, Horkheimer 1972; Burnham 1941)**. After Sixty's – the "Golden Age" of the public intellectuals – during post-industrial society rising, the consciousness of crisis struck themselves and they lose social, political and cultural influence.

Nonetheless, it has been finding since the end of Seventy's either analysis on the role of intellectuals inspired by a sense of "homesick" for the "Golden Age" or reproposing of the same old-fashioned model to explain political-cultural processes, both in Public speech and scientific literature: a couple of examples of the first kind, it is Italian book by Alberto Asor Rosa titled *The Great Silence. Interview on Intellectuals* (*Il grande silenzio. Intervista sugli intellettuali*, 2009) and the book by Frank Furedi *Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?* (2004). An example of the second type is the recent Volume 25, Iusse 4 of the Review *Terrorism and Political Violence,* focuses on the relationship between terrorism and intellectual engagement.

Most of this analysis strongly undervalues contemporary transformation of public intellectual subjectivities due to new cultural and economic mode of production mainly based on networking way – also called *informationalism* (Castells 2003). The findings of that are, on one hand, the conclusive decline of avantguarde model – that survival just like a symbolic simulacrum (Baudrillard 1981) – and, in the other, the rise of a new one: *molecular intellectual*. It is based on the new public and political role of the latest version of

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[1] The above suggested differentiation partially follows the one gave by Mannheim in relation to the distinction between "mobile" elements (meaning not rooted in a specific cultural context) and "local" elements (on the contrary, expression of a well determined community) of a historically identified intellectual élites. *See* Mannheim, Shils 1980.

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intellectual workers: *knowledge workers* whom break previous split between public intellectuals and intellectual workers as well as political-cultural function and productive processes.

In the first and second paragraphs it is explained our theoretical and methodological approach: it is is based on a rethinking of post-marxist perspective through the contribution of the sociology of agency (Antonelli 2009; Giddens 1984, 1990; Ritzer 2003; Touraine 2007a). In followings they are analyzed the avantguarde model (industrial society), the factors of its crisis (transition to post-industrial society) and, finally, the model of molecular intellectuals (global networking society).

II. Analyzing Intellectuals: Classical and Post-Classical Perspectives

Classically, roles, missions and subjectivities of the intellectuals were mainly studied through two different kind of perspectives: on one hand, intellectuals are seen as actors oriented by an universalistic pattern of True, as legacy the age of Enlightenment; thus, they would be dis-embedded both social stratification and class interests. In a deeply divided world, as modern society certainly is, this means intellectuals are the only ones would be able to rule *beyond* social struggles and *over* partisan points of view. In turn, this Platonic" perspective have had two different versions since the Nineteenth Century: the oldest one is based on mainstream identity of intellectual and the supremacy of humanistic knowledge. The most recent is the *technocratic* one, a point of view focuses on scientific background of "new intellectuals" – a theory has been developed since Saint-Simone and Comte age (Antonelli 2012). Finally, we could consider Karl Mannheim's sociology one of the most representative on the whole Platonic point of view so long as his work is a sort of synthesis of humanistic and technocratic theories, as Chiara Canta argues (2006).

In the other hand, we can find a *Marxism inspired perspective*: on the contrary of Platonic theory, according to neo-marxist, intellectuals always involved in economic structures and they are "agencies" of different social classes and different ideologies. Most of seminal authors in this point of view did not kwon Marx and Engels important book on intellectuals and ideology *The German Ideology* (1845): in fact, it was rediscovered and published only in 1932. Surprisingly, neo-marxism authors considered their theory about the world as the only scientific one as well as arguing by Karl Marx in his book: the others point of view would be either partisan – that is bourgeois – or outdated by History. Thus, intellectual world is divided between who works for proletariat and who for bourgeois. In neo-marxism, politics and culture are fundamental in order to make Revolution and building socialism: a "good" socialist and revolutionary politician must be an intellectual. In a way, a "good" philosopher, writer, artist or poet supports the proletariat by his cultural opera. Nevertheless, in this construction the supremacy is accorded to the political-intellectual pattern. So, beginning from a common perspective based on this specific avantguarde idea, they may be divided in two groups: the first one (Leninist) argues the most important mission of intellectuals is lead proletariat and building their political awareness through the Party. This point of view sounds more suitable in not-industrial society rather than in an industrial context. On the contrary, the second one (Gramsci and Italian School) seems longer valid for industrial societies. In fact, according to it the mission of the Party is involving both public intellectuals and intellectual workers - that is meddle classes - into Itself in order to develop a political and cultural hegemony. In particular, Antonio Gramsci argues modern intellectuals not as talkers, but as practically-minded directors and organizers (in our words as intellectual workers) who produced hegemony both by means of ideological apparatuses - such as education or media – and through performing their tasks in modern workplace – for example, bureaucracy. Furthermore, he distinguished between a "traditional" *intelligentsia* which sees itself (wrongly) as a class apart from society, and the thinking groups which every class produces from its own ranks "organically". Such "organic" intellectuals do not simply describe social life in accordance with scientific rules, but instead articulate, through the language of culture, the feelings and experiences which the masses could not express for themselves. Finally, relationship and membership to the Party are both fundamental to realize the transition from "unaffected" intellectuals to an "organic" one: specialized, technical or humanistic knowledge are not enough without a collective and political experience in the Party – that Gramsci called "Modern Prince", inspired by Niccolò Machiavelli thought (Gramsci 1992).

Despite to a shallow looking at them, Platonism and Neo-marxism theories seem deeply different, they share actually two common *general theoretic* assumptions:

1. *An image of the modern society based on a hierarchy idea*: both of them share the social (status) and instrumentally (function) distinction between intellectuals and non-intellectual people due to both different political-social functions performing and their linked ranking; at the same time, public intellectuals – that are intellectuals who perform political-culture tasks – have got the preeminence on the intellectual workers themselves.
2. *Every actors - included the intellectuals - are dominated by a general false consciousness*: on one hand non-intellectual people cannot act to achieve emancipation for themselves and society at whole without to be leading by intellectuals. At the same time, each social action of the intellectuals never work to own advantage or interest. They

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would (or *should*) always be driven by some superior Standard (such as Rationality for technocratic platonism), Value (such as the Universal True for humanistic Platonism) or Subject (the Political Party for neo-marxist, of course).

Structuralism, Post-structuralism and, afterwards, Post-modernism movements have *partially* destroyed the first assumption since Seventy's, *mainly* on theoretical side. They showed supremacy of the (public)-intellectuals is only a historical and social construction, rather than a "natural doom", orienting toward power relationships: the idea of "prophet" intellectual was rejected. At the same time, Pierre Bourdieu pointed out judgments of taste and cultural behaviors are themselves acts of social positioning, included intellectual actions: according to Bourdieu, intellectuals are "dominated share of ruling class" and preserve their social privileges across generation (Bourdieu 1979; 1990; 1992). On the other hand, Zygmunt Bauman's analysis, in particular through his famous book *Legislators and Interpreters* (1987) underlines the "death of strong ontological True" in order to explain and change human History, in contemporary societies: today, the intellectuals survival just as "cultural hubs" and "intermediaries" among different social worlds. Nevertheless, in my opinion all these analysis are strongly disappointing for a couple of reasons: at first, about practice iusses. In fact, while post-structuralist authors - such as Foucault or Bourdieu himself – were struggling against classical intellectual idea, they were as very important public-intellectuals as the other ones – for example Jean-Paul Sartre. The old idea refused on theoretical side were reproduced throughout everyday political life. The outcomes are been the powerlessness, the homesick and losing their legitimacy.

III. Rethinking the Point of View: The Sociology of Intellectual Action

A very serious theoretical reason is on the basis of that: a determinism view about social world linked by the false consciousness assumption. According to them social actions are conditioned by impersonal forces and this situation is reproduced in space and time during the centuries: superficially everything changes and than nothing happens. Human consciousness is always imprisoned. So, all these authors do not keep in touch with a social, political and economic world more and more complex - like our time is. They do not catch the linked between systemic transformation and human agency, each other influences. In particular, the role of the subject, its irreducibility freedom to the structure – the first reason to social changes - is too in the shade.

Differently, we embrace Giddens' position: social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time are the very medium of this constitution (Giddens 1984). Thus, as Alain Touraine argues: «sociology was the study of social systems; it must now be defined in different terms as the study of the struggles of social actors who are fighting for their freedom and their rights insofar as they are subjects» (Touraine 2009b: 214). Translated to our discussion, it means we have to begin again from a fundamental question: *who is a public intellectual?* Sociologically, we can define an intellectual as a social actor, making public actions, exploit its cultural or artistic or scientific reputation in order to influence public opinion and political élites about specific "events" (such as an international crises, a social movement mobilization and so forth) or political issues. Intellectual is *embedded in* and *mobilized* specific social and power relationships: *it need to move from a sociology on intellectuals to a sociology on intellectual action*. Cultural and knowledge field, its history, networks and institutions are the source of intellectuals themselves; nevertheless, a scientist, a writer or a researcher become a public intellectual when he\she just approaches his\her knowledge to a public issue and he\she introduces himself\herself into public sphere – such as Burawoy explains about specific and, at the same time, general case of the public sociology (Burawoy 2005). In add, *it must be oriented by a situated engagement for human emancipation*. That action becomes an intellectual one and its structuration concerns three worlds: economy, communication and politics. About the first, modern society has always been charactering for a very important process: capitalism has tried to embed knowledge, science and culture in Itself for ages. Intellectual workers partially are a finding of that trend. Thus, the first kind of relationships mobilizing are those between public intellectuals missions and intellectual workers, and, in add, between public intellectuals, economic actors and social classes. About the second (communication), it is important to remember the impact of the means of cultural and opinion production on public intellectual identities: for example, "Gutembergian" means, such as journals or books, are linked with a particular idea of Public sphere – analyzing by Habermas (1989), among others (Cubitt 2005). Changing of these produces fundamental transformations both in possibility of intellectual actions and in audience. So, another remarkable kinds of relationships and actors are between public intellectuals, their audience and cultural gatekeepers.

Finally, politics forms are very important too because, on one hand, politics is the last goal of public intellectual activity and, on other side, it is the general environment of that. Thus, last but not least, we have to consider the relationships between public intellectuals and political actors – such as parties, political élite and so forth.

On the straight of this theoretical frame - that entails to accept the challenge of a new intellectual presence in a global world - we can make three hypothesis about contemporary public intellectual social action:

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- The decline both avantguarde model and intellectual hierarchy order based on bureaucratic mass organizations. We call this process *disintermediation*.
- Transformations into knowledge and culture field have produced the centrality of *knowledge worker* for almost ten fifty years. Thus intellectual worker is substituted for knowledge worker as the findings of the contemporary relationship between knowledge, new technologies (web 2.0) and capitalism. Most of public intellectual actions are going to arise from knowledge worker.
- By action of: a) higher education level among population than in the past b) rising web 2.0, number of persons whom are involving in public intellectual actions are going to increase. Nevertheless, status of these subjects is not equal: there are actors more influential than others. At the same time, the difference between intellectuals and non-intellectuals people is more and more undefined. We call the whole described process *molecularization*.

IV. The Intellectual in the Hierarchical Order of Modernity and its Clash

During XIX and XX Century, the intellectual workers, and above all, public intellectuals, were part of the hierarchical order of modernity because they exerted a cultural power on non- intellectuals. From this point of view, in the modern era, intellectuals aspire to be:

1. Interpreters of the true needs of masses (*action of social mediation).*
2. Keepers of the knowledge about the development of history and nature (*cognitive action*).
3. Supreme legislators of the way human beings should organize their actions, their society and their ways of life (*normative action*).

Each of these three actions has its roots in a universal concept of Truth which gives the intellectuals a moral superiority and a (presumed) superior mission: to lead and educate the masses. Between centuries XIX and XX the hierarchical order expanded: in order to lead and discipline wider and wider masses, bureaucratic machines were created in order to organize and exploit cultural power; they used intellectual workers as the main labor force: the intellectual actions became complex social functions. Particularly, as functions, all the intellectual actions put into action in the society are performed by bureaucracies of knowledge (mass schooling that educates new generations), by the information system and by the cultural industry (mass media that inform and influence the audience), by politics (mass parties that politically educate and lead their members), by the administration (a factory administration that scientifically organizes the workers; public administration that regulates the life of citizens/users).

The intellectual workers grew in number, their work started being hierarchically organized, their skills put at service for a general purpose. In the first half of century XX, the organic intellectual analyzed by Antonio Gramsci is a bureaucratized intellectual. He organizes the masses and the social work. He himself is organized and so socially detached: there are "executive/leader" intellectuals and "directed" intellectuals in such a hierarchy.

During the 60's and the 70's the shift from industrial to post-industrial mode of production led to the establishment of a programmed society. In Alain Touraine's seminal analysis – Post-industrial society in 1970- that society links the effort for an indefinite material growth to forms of total dominion (of the single persons and the society). Knowledge – meant as capacity of generating new creativity – is the *trait d'union* between these two elements. Bureaucratic machines are its main social structure. The dominant social class in programmed societies is defined on a knowledge basis; meaning specific knowledge which can be managerial, administrative or technical. The working class, that is subjected to the action performed by machineries in different ways, is composed either by those who claim a rise in their own consumption or by those whose private life resists to the changes; so: «the principal opposition between these two great classes or groups of classes […] Comes about because the dominant classes disposes of knowledge and control of information» (Touraine 1970: 61). Considering the first two levels of power in a programmed society:

1. Political-strategic level: at this level the rulling class is composed by technocrats, who believe in the submission of politics to the imperative of defence, of science, or economic concentration. Among the various subdued social groups there are "professionals" meaning members of "professions", two of which have a particular importance in our society: education and public health. Professors, researchers and physicians, who are not wage earner directors, nor, in the great majority of cases, members of professions. On one hand, their activity requires rationalized organizations; on the other hand , it aims to maintain and empower the capacity of productions of people and students;
2. Administrative level: at this level the rulling class is represented by high level bureaucrats.

Among the member of the working class there are employees and technicians who work in bureaucratic machines; experts engineers, accountants, jurists, psychologists.

Alienation and submission cases to which the different subdued categories are subjected don't lead to class movements and struggles automatically: they simply lay the basis for them. Re-interpreting *The Post-Industrial Society* by Touraine today shows, therefore, a core aspect: conflicts in a programmed society, seen at their beginning by the French sociologist, were struggles between different groups of intellectual workers: on one side professionals,

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experts and students and the other side technocrats and high level bureaucrats (the rulling class).

New social movements in the 70's (ecologism, localism and so forth) were put into action by the first group against the second one. A struggle that arose from the heart of intellectual bureaucracies, between "executive/leader" intellectuals and "directed" intellectuals, in a growing number (Antonelli 2012). The hierarchical order of modernity was so questioned by those who most had contributed to its development. In a society dominated by the service industry, the directed intellectual workers, besides being producers, they also are a significant portion of consumers and citizens; they refused to be directed and represented in a authoritative fashion by the top sectors of bureaucratic machines: so the social mediation function and the normative function started experiencing a crisis. A crisis that is based on the decline of the authority (Inglehart 1998) and on strong Idea of Truth (Vattimo, Rovatti 1985). The intellectual subject - in first place in his role of public citizen, user and costumer - demands autonomy, in order to use and spread knowledge and information in a more democratic fashion. The intellectual action, that starts spreading in the society through the expansion of intellectual workers, begins its riot against the intellectual function, which is institutionalized and bureaucratic.

V. Networked Societies and The New Molecular Intellectuals

During the 70's and 80's of century XX, therefore, the boost to the expansion of the intellectual actions and its separation from the function, was shown by the new social movements and by the loss of credibility and influence exerted by "organized intellectuals". During the 90's, this process reached its acme through the new ITC (Blogs, Social Networks, Web 2.0 and so forth).This process is currently redefining in a completely new fashion the public space as part of the definitive overcoming of the (hierarchical) concept of society. The exclusive and centralized use of the intellectual actions (organizational function) is being undermined (but it won't disappear); groups of intellectuals produce and broadcast knowledge and information autonomously. As a matter of fact, as demonstrated by Manuel Castells, the convergence (highly unlikely) between the end of the fordist system, the innovations brought by the new social movements, mass schooling, the expansion of communication and the more and more growing role of creativity and of the innovation in the economic field, will lead not only to an exponential quantitative growth of intellectual workers, but also to their social and cultural and economic change (Castells 2003): born *molecular intellectuals*[2]. There is a wide number of workers and consumers who can handle knowledge, culture and technology; they won't merge into social classes but will be spread in the social stratification and in relations of production: a part of them will become a part of the social élites, others will merge in a new middle class, others will, at the bottom of the social pyramid, form a new and precarious intellectual proletariat (Berardi 2004; Castrucci 2006; De Biase 2007). The high education rate, the use of cultural, symbolic and cognitive instruments while working, the search for cultural goods of consumption, individualism, are the common sides of this magmatic subjectivity. Today the intellectual worker does not merely reproduce knowledge and information, in the new networked economy he is urged, above all, to produce and innovate knowledge (*creative class*) (Florida 2002). Each subject part of this new and complex group of intellectuals:has (or thinks he has) cultural and cognitive means to self- representation, to produce values and projects and put them into use in the society[3].

Through technology he has the actual chance to put into practice his will.

In other words, not only produces he immaterial goods linked to the production, he directly produces, through blogs, social networks, web tv's, opinions and knowledge as a citizen and consumer (Levy 1994; Tapscott, Williams 2008). Therefore, each of these new intellectuals feels and can represent himself as a public intellectual: public intellectuals who operate in great mediatic and institutional circuits keep being there but they are more and more participating in a great rumor and, therefore, less and less capable to influence the audience and the cultural classes.

In a very similar way, the monopoly – and therefore their credibility – of organized intellectuals (mass media, school, administrations) is going down, in favor of more complex paths. Therefore we can see the silhouette of a new public space. The public space, as shown by Richard Sennett, is the location (social and symbolic) where a series of social actors share a language, a way of expression and matters on which they share opinions (Sennett 1977). According to the American thinker, the fall of public man, visible already at the beginning of century XIX, lies in the progressive disappearance of shared public behaviors in favor of the private dimension. Actually, it has been just a decade since the analysis of Sennett became visible in reality, following a redefinition of the public space which links polarization (meaning a vertical differentiation process on a structural basis) and fragmentation (meaning a

[2] This concept is been formulated and statement by Francesco Antonelli and Robert Castrucci during the Italian Congress of Political Sociology (2009). *See* Antonelli, Castrucci, 2009.

[3] For a summary of the different analysis carried out about the redefinition of the concept of intellectuality as a productive force and of the intellectual as a knowledge worker in contemporary societies, in relation to the process of democratization *see* in particular Formenti 2008; Castrucci 2009.

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horizontal process of differentiation on a cultural basis). Simplifying analytically, on one hand, as a matter of fact, a layer of population, mainly old and/or with a limited cultural capital, lives (almost) exclusively inside the public space created by mass media, by other collective intellectuals and by the most important public intellectuals. On the other hand, following the prompt coming from new intellectuals that operate through the Net, there is a multiplication of niches of consumption, of ways of living, of political opinions (fig. 1):

The emergence of networking societies lead to the molecularization both intellectuals (salaried producers of cultural and symbolic goods) and audiences (consumers of cultural and symbolic goods); at the same time, these social figures tend to merge with one another.

Another way to represent previous scheme is the *Long Tail Model* by Chris Anderson. In his book – *The Long Tail* (2006) – Chris Anderson explains how the paretian distribution known as the 80/20 rule looses much of it's grip on media distribution (Anderson 2005). Online business such as *Amazon.com* or *iTunes*, obtain more than half of their income from titles outside the 20% of the profitable selling books in a briks-and-mortar bookshop or cd's in a cd-store (Brynjolfsson, Hu, Smith 2006). So, in these markets there is a molecularization both cultural goods – with theirs *intellectuals-producers* (authors of books, journalists, scriptwriters and so forth) – and audiences; simultaneously, it is developed a dual processes based on the social polarization and fragmentation: in fact, the importance and the success of the cultural goods or intellectuals are different. In a Cartesian system the most important goods\intellectuals constitute the "Head" of the distribution; the sum of least important forming the "real" long tail (fig. 2; 3):

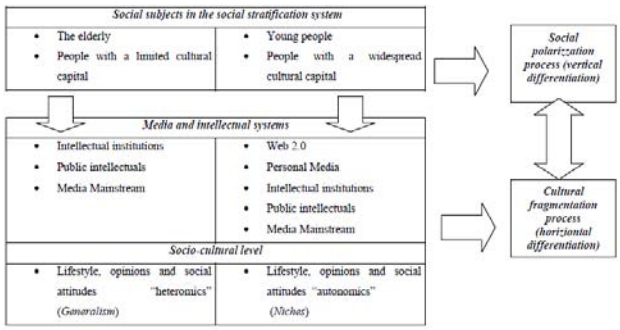


Fig. 1 : Public and Social Space is a Networked Society

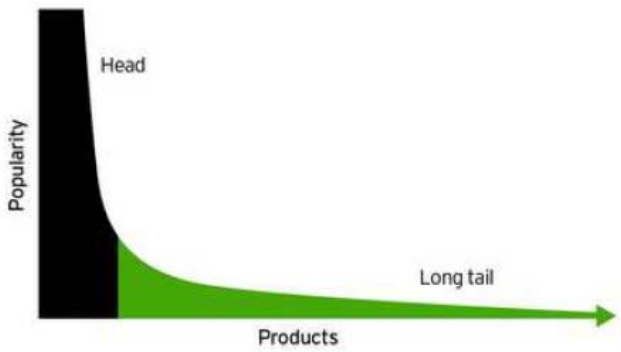


Fig. 2 : The model of Anderson's Long Tail

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VI. Conclusion

Let us summarize the brief analysis carried out so far. Starting from the 60's and the 70's a first expansion of the intellectual class lead, at first, to the explosion of internal struggles in the institutions that exerted intellectual functions: on one hand the "executive/leader" intellectuals (technocrats, top bureaucrats), on the other the intellectual workers (students, professionals, experts); the prize was represented by the production and by the use of knowledge and information. Later on, starting from the 90's to today, a second expansion of the intellectual workers - more and more involved in creative tasks (creative class) - together with the spread of the Internet, lead to: 1) the spread of intellectual actions in the society; 2) the shaping of a wide decentralized area of intellectual production (in terms of critical knowledge and information); 3) the progressive separation between intellectual functions- exerted by the great bureaucratic machines we inherited from the early modern era- and intellectual actions; 4) the loss of credibility and influence of the great public intellectuals and of institutions which keep on performing intellectual functions.

The creation of a new public space was the outcome of this process, in which social polarization is linked to cultural fragmentation. About polarization: social stratums that own a scarce cultural capital and belong to the oldest layers of age of the population, they keep being dependent on information and knowledge produced and spread by those institutions which exert intellectual functions and by public intellectuals. The social stratum with the widest cultural capital and the young ones (new intellectual classes) tend to self-produce and spread cultural objects autonomously. With regard to fragmentation: there is a multiplication of channels and cultural offers; the public space tends to look like an amount of cultural niches only partially independent.

This process is characterized by a strong ambivalence (Bauman 1991). On one hand, on the opportunities side:

1. There are new chances for people to be successful and establish themselves (Touraine 2007).
2. The civil society become stronger and able to exert a wider control on power.
3. Wider knowledge and information will be able to be spread: the cultural basis of global society will be increased, the risk of manipulation exerted by the power will be diminished.

On the other hand, the risks side

1. A growing lack of communication between social classes and groups in the society (a common ground of meanings and comparison will disappear).
2. It will become more and more difficult to tell apart reliable and non-reliable information and knowledge.
3. More and more frequently waves of populism will arise from the bottom layers of the society, they will undermine the authority of institutions, leading to a generalized lack of trust.

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Two Theoretical Approaches to Power: Coloniality and Cosmopolitism

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Abstract - The article compares two approaches that attempt to explain the socio-economic events and policy within states and global society: the Coloniality of Power and Cosmopolitanism. The article reconstructs the discourse of both of these theoretical perspectives to continue next with an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. In a third stage, the article compares the commonalities and disagreements between the two. We conclude that the two paradigms make significant contributions, and that the social researcher has the important challenge of articulating both of them coherentlyin order to account for a concrete reality.

Keywords: coloniality of power, cosmopolitism, globalization, inequality, humanrights.

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Two Theoretical Approaches to Power: Coloniality and Cosmopolitism

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Summary - **The article compares two approaches that attempt to explain the socio-economic events and policy within states and global society: the Coloniality of Power and Cosmopolitanism. The article reconstructs the discourse of both of these theoretical perspectives to continue next with an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. In a third stage, the article compares the commonalities and disagreements between the two. We conclude that the two paradigms make significant contributions, and that the social researcher has the important challenge of articulating both of them coherentlyin order to account for a concrete reality.**

Keywords : coloniality of power, cosmopolitism, globalization, inequality, humanrights.

I. Introduction

This article compares two theoretical perspectives. One has its origins in the "South", specifically in Latin America, and it is called "the Coloniality of the Power" (Anibal Quijano and other authors). The other one has European/American origins, and it is called the Cosmopolitism (Ulrich Bech Martha Nussbaum, Jurgen Haberman, among others).

Is global society inevitably heading towards the heartless realm of the savage capitalism, guided by an uncontrolled power machine? Or towards a world where this (or any other economic system) will be ruled by the recognition of the "other's otherness"?

Are the world dynamics characterized by the Coloniality of Power or, on the contrary, are international regimes, regional integration processes and International Law taking us, gradually, to a sense of cosmopolitism based on the right and respect of "the other"?

Are these two perspectives contradictory or is it possible to articulate them?

II. The Paradigm of the Coloniality of Power: Lights and Shadows in its Explicative Capacity

1.1. What Does The Paradigm State?

I will try to summarize this theory's position based on its most important axes:

a) Power as a Social Pivot

The core idea in social relations is power; power is an omnipresence element:

> "...the phenomenon of power is characterized as a type of social relation constituted by the permanent co-presence of three elements: domination, exploitation and conflict, which affect the four basic areas of social existence,and which is the result and expression of the fight over their control: 1)labour, its resources and its products; 2) sex, its resources and its products; 3) collective (or public) authority, its resources and its products; 4) the subjectivity/inter-subjectivity, its resources and its products" (Quijano, 2000 b:1).

According to this approach, power is understood as a "...world pattern of global domination inherent to the modern/capitalist world-system originated from the European colonialism" (Quintero, 2010 b: 3)

b) It All Began with the Colonization of America

This world pattern of domination arises and becomes global with the European colonization of Latin America in the XVI century. It operates on all social existence's dimensions, permeating the daily life (Quijano, 2000 a.:342).

c) The Coloniality Emerged After The Colonization

Latin American countries went through a process of decolonization but not through one of decoloniality:

> "Coloniality refers to the continuity of domination and exploitation forms after the end of the colonial administrations, produced by the structures and the hegemonic cultures of the capitalist-patriarchal/colonial/ modern world- system" (Grosfoguel, s.f.:14).

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d) Eurocentrism as a (Racial) Ideology of Perceiving Reality

Its core idea is the notion of superiority: Europeans are racially superior to the colonized peoples and have a thinking structure equally superior. Coloniality nurtures from the ideology of Eurocentrism which is "...characterized by a social imaginary, a historical memory and a knowledge perspective, subject to not only the demands of capitalism but also to the colonizers' need to perpetuate and naturalize their domination (Quintero, 2010: 10).

Within this perspective, not only those who dominate are a part of it but also the group of those who are being socialized under this hegemony.

Eurocentrism is a cognitive perspective that was moulded by the hegemonic powers (not only the Europeans, the United States of America is also included in this group). This perspective makes non-Europeans or the dominated groups perceive the asymmetric power relations that began with the colonizing processes as natural; and therefore, today, numerous decades after formal independency, the domination continues in the economic and commercial areas.

e) Articulation of the Social Whole Over Power and Domination

The Coloniality'sdiscourse presents the social as a complete architectonic construction based on power and domination:

> "....the current world pattern of power consists in the articulation of: 1) Coloniality of power, this refers to the idea of "race" as basisof the universal pattern of basic social classification and social domination; 2) Capitalism, as the universal pattern of social exploitation; 3) the state as the universal central form of collective authority control, and the modern nation-state as its hegemonic variant); 4) Eurocentrism as an hegemonic form of control of subjectivity/intersubjectivity, particularly in the mode of producing knowledge" (Quijano, 2000 b:1).

1.2. What are some of this Paradigm's Strengths?

The valuable characteristics of this approach are:

a) Its Holistic Aim

This paradigm encloses five basic aspects of social existence, such as:labour, nature, sex, collective authority and the subjective/intersubjective relations, which include, according to this approach's aim, all areas in which social relations develop (Quijano, 2000 a:345).

b) It Undresses The Subjective/Partial Character From Which Things Are Looked At

This theoretical approach reveals the "epistemology of the North": it notes that both the "world view", which is perceived as real or true and valid, and the theoretical perspective of many of the studies on globalization and political economy are made from the perspective of hegemonic countries.

c) Continuity, Under Other Formats, of the Domination Relations

It is important to highlight the fact that "the postcolonial world" is, to a great extent a myth as it considers that with the elimination of colonial administrations a legal and political decolonization came about. However, a) trade and political power relations continue under the given formal independence and b) mental domination (coloniality) continues as well.

d) New Dimensions of Social Reality

The paradigm highlights gender conflict and ethnic domination, two dimensions forgotten even in the original Marxism (Marxism itself is an Eurocentric thinking according to this paradigm)

III. Weaknesses of the Paradigm

Just as any theory, the "coloniality of power" has limitations:

a) Loss of Specificity of The Social Dimensions

This paradigm, as it was already mentioned, encloses five basic aspects of social existence (labour, sex, nature, collective authority and subjective/ intersubjective relations); thus, it includes all areas in which social relations develop.

This holistic aim is a virtue but, at the same time, it constitutes a weakness as it subsumes in a single unity aspects that have their own specificity and relative autonomy, despite being interrelated. The author tries to grant autonomy to each area but in a hierarchal way.

> "...the power relations that are constituted in the fight over the control of these areas or spheres of social existence do not emerge or derive from each other, but they cannot exist,except in an untimely and precarious way, one without the others. In other words, they form a structural complex which is always historical and specific. It is always about a determined historical pattern of power" (Quijano, 2000 b: 1).

However, the mixture between the different dimensions of the social lies beneath:

Throughout the colonial world, the norms and the ideal-formal patterns of genders' sexual behaviour, and consequently, the "Europeans" ' family organization patterns were directly founded in the "racial" classification. (Quijano, 2000 a:.377)

b) Social Reality is Exclusively Reduced to Relations of Domination, Exploitation and Conflict

This paradigm suggests that the five basic elements of social existence (labour, sex, nature, collective authority and subjective/intersubjective relations) are affected by the domination/ exploitation/ conflict triad that shape the power.

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Everything is reduced to the conflict, and it does not allow to capture the coexistence between conflictive logics and cooperative logics in the capitalism itself, nor in any other dimensions (sexuality/gender, etc.).

This approach states that domination, exploitation and conflict are a constant rule of social existence. But where is the slow but constant progress on Human Rights and the power of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, and the States' role to protect those rights and, particularly, the non-discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or gender?

c) The World-System Characterized Exclusively by the Same Logic of Exploitation Which Characterizes the "National" Societies

According to this approach, in the decolonization/ coloniality, the capitalist system allows the hegemonic powers to have an accumulation of wealth through commercial relations based on the domination/ exploitation/conflict. But, where are, at the internal level, the Unions, and, at a global scale, the alliances between "poor" countries that fight for a fairer international trade? Where are some nongovernmental organizations from the developed countries themselves that put pressure to their governments for trade rules that protect the labour and environmental rights of poor countries?

d) The States' Autonomy is Not Stated

The planet is shown in the form of a world-system (capitalist) with a motor that moves everything and everyone: Capitalism. But it does not explain how that kind of Global Central Autonomy (capitalism) fits with the (multiple) existent States. Do the States blindly obey the orders of capitalism? Or, in some cases, can the States themselves, being immersed in the capitalism, respect (against some companies' and international corporations' will) human, labour, and environmental rights? States are often pressured to respect these rights, an initiative that does not even come from the States themselves, but from the pressure civil societies and NGOs put on them.

e) The Omnipresence Capitalist Logic

It does not explain how the capitalist global system relates to other productive and property logics: cooperativism, property of the commons, indigenous property, unless it can be said that these other logics, in the end, obey the rules of capitalism.

IV. The Paradigm of Cosmopolitism

a) What Does this Paradigm State?

Unlike the previous paradigm that has a central exponent (Aníbal Quijano), cosmopolitanism is a theoretical approach "diluted" in a series of authors, mainly Europeans and Americans, that--I warn the reader—probably would not like to be classified together under a single category or theoretical approach.

Therefore, explaining this paradigm's main stipulations becomes a daring task, and italso demands the reconstruction of its discourse.

Having explained that situation, I can summarize this paradigm on the following points:

b) The Existence of a World Society and the Weakening of the Nation-States

Ulrick Beck uses the term "globalism" to refer to the ideology that advocates neoliberal globalization as an inevitable and convenient path for humanity. Then, he makes a distinction between "globality" and "globalization".

c) In His Words

Globality reminds us the fact that from now on nothing that happens on our planet may be considered as an isolated event, on the contrary, every discovery, victory and catastrophe affect the entire world and we all should reorient and reorganize our lives and tasks, as well as our organizations and institutions along the "local-global"axis (Beck; 1988 a: 30).

d) Globality Manifested in Eight Palpable Phenomena

- The growth of international trade and diverse exchanges at a planetary scale, the global network of financial markets and the constantly growing power of multinational corporations
- The Information technology and communication, constantly changing
- The claim to respect human rightswhich become universal heritage and are no longer just a national affair matter
- The establishment of cultural patterns at a global level
- A global policy that exceeds States, characterized by a variety of sources of power, where countries co-exist with a number of international, sub-national, supranational and transnational actors, public and private ones, as well as with member of civil societies.
- The phenomenon of global poverty, linked to the planetary scale production and the casualization of the workforce.
- The ecological damages and threats operating on a global scale, not confined to one or more countries (extreme events do not know States' boundaries)
- The cross-cultural conflicts that occur in specific spaces (global-localism) such as migration, ethnic strife, among others (Beck, 1988 a: 29-30).

Having clarified what constitutes Globality, "... globalization means the processes in which sovereign states mix together and overlap with transnational actors and their respective power possibilities, orientations, identities and networks" (Beck, 1988 to 29).

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e) What Characterizes Today's Society are the Risks

The benefits of the industrial society are substituted by evil or damage:

"With the emergence of the risk society, conflicts over the distribution of 'evils' are superposed to the conflicts over the distribution of 'goods' (rent, labour, industrial safety) which constituted the basic conflict of the industrial society and that there was an attempt to solve them within the relevant institutions. These conflicts over the distribution of evils can be interpreted as conflicts over distributive responsibility. They arise around the distribution, prevention, control and legitimization of the risks associated with the production of goods (nuclear and chemical mega-technology, genetic investigation, environmental threats, super-militarization and increasing impoverishment outside Western industrial society).In the context of social theory and cultural diagnosis, the risk society concept designates a phase of modernity in which the threats that the development of industrial society has been producing begin to predominate" (Beck, 2008: 19).

But what is a risk? It is an interplay between an event that is taking place, and a potential outcome that causes concern or fright:

"...risks are somewhat unreal. In a core sense, they are at the same time real and unreal. On the one hand, numerous dangers and destructions are already real: polluted and dying water, forest destruction, new diseases, etc. On the other hand, the real social power of the argument of risk is the projection of threats for the future" (Beck, 1998 b: 39)

In this position, the ecological risks have a significant role.

f) " World Society" does not Mean an Integrated Society

i. *According to this Paradigm*

"The world society is not a national megasociety that contains –and solves in itself—all the national societies, instead, it means a world horizon characterized by the multiplicity and the lack of integrability, that only opens when it is produced and kept in activity and communication" (Beck, 1988 a.: 32)

Thus, globalization is an enormous building with a significant construction flaw: the absence of a world government-State (Beck, 1988 a.:32) to control the damages and environmental and social risks generated by the capitalist productionthat escapes nation-States and now operates worldwide.

g) The Cosmopolitan Project

In Beck's work is clearly stated the idea that globalization is inevitable. However, the idea that globalization is a fact, a reality, does not mean we need to sit down quietly to contemplate its damagesand its ecological and social risks: it is necessary to oppose neoliberal globalization or actually existing cosmopolitism, the cosmopolitan project. The neoliberal globalization whose value and ultimate goal is to profit (even if to obtain that profit,nature is destroyed and human beings are exploited) needs to be opposed with a cosmopolitan project which, according to Beck, should be based on the others' otherness, that is, respect towards different cultures, environment, present and future generations, and respect towards other rationalities and ways of thinking (2004: 373)

This cosmopolitan project has two vectors:

(a) The other. Indeed, the cosmopolitism has an otherness ethic

"What characterizes the cosmopolitan virtue is the reflexive distance of the own specificity that allows to consider the others. Therefore, it is a series of practices and moral dispositions that affirm, from a distance, an identity and value its otherness. This is an inclusive concept of the identities as opposed to the fact that these can justify exclusions. One of the main arguments of the cosmopolitan virtue is the development of the otherness's ethic..." (Pérez, 2006: 82).

(b) Proposing a form of globalization that, unlike globalism which considers profits as the only motor, this one is characterized by being integral because "...the cosmopilitism it is a response to globalization and to the normative implications of the international order, and it works in places where alternatives to exclusively economic or security matters are explored. For instance, cosmopolitism, unlike globalization, can be expressed through movements whose purpose is to put global forces under the control of cosmopolitan publics and cosmopolitan states (Delanty, 2008: 38).

h) Civil Society as the Subject of Change

Since there is not a world government-State, who will carry out the cosmopolitan project? Isn't it a utopia, a beautiful idea, but impossible to put into practice, impossible to make it operational? Beck's answer to these questions is based on the idea that this project does not belong to the classical figure of nation-states; instead, it is fostered by "new" international actors such as non- governmental organizations (2004: 391).

This project may be implemented by allNGOs, individuals, community groups and associations, and the States themselves that even thought they are weakened because ofglobalization; they still have an important role and certain power of decision (Beck, 2004: 399).

i) The Cosmopolitan State and the Breakdown Of Identitarian Excesses

The idea of a "Cosmopolitan State" proposed by Beck is based on the "national indifference" principle:

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"Just as how the peace of Westphalia put an end to the religious civil wars in the XVI century by separating state and religion, my thesis is that it is possible to face national (civil) world wars of the XX century by separating state and nation. The same as a non-religious State allows the worship of different religions, the Cosmopolitan State should guarantee, through the constitutional tolerance principle, the coexistence of national identities" (Beck, 2004: 141).

This leads to breaking the identitarian excesses, since"...they can lead to racism, religious or cultural fundamentalism because they build an essentialist and distorted image of the otherness, turning difference into a stigma." (Pérez, 2006: 71).

j) Citizenship Based on The Fulfilment of Human Rights, And Not on the Sense of Belonging to a Certain State

This leads us to examine and re-dimension the concept of citizenship. A citizen is not an inhabitant of a country or State, a citizen is, as stated by Habermas, a man or woman entitled to Human Rights. As a matter a fact, "...the citizens of the nation do not findtheir identity in the ethnical-cultural community but in the practice of citizens who actively exercise their democratic rights of participation and communication." (Habermas, 1998: 12).

Specifically, the "world citizen" is a) a cosmopolitan person, capable of recognising (and, above all, capable of respecting) the otherness of those who are not the same as them, even to the extent of learning and enriching themselves from those who are different; b) a personthat because of their human condition (not their nationality or particular ethnicity) is entitled to the fulfilment of Human Rights.

k) World Citizenship: the Sense of Belonging to Multiple Circles Without Denying the Primary Habitat

i. *As Martha Nussbaum states*

"The Stoics do not stop repeating that in order to be a world citizen a person should not give up their local identifications which can be a large source of vital wealth. On the contrary, what it is suggested is that we should think about ourselves not as being devoid of localaffiliations but as beings surrounded by a series of concentric circles. The first of these circles surrounds the self, the second one the immediate family, and this latter is followed by the extended family. Then, and according to the order, the neighbourhood or local groups; the concitizens and the fellow citizens (and we can easily add to this list other groups based on ethnic, linguistics, historical, professional, gender, and sexual identities). Around all these circles, we find the largest of all of them: the entire humanity" (Nussbaum, 1999).

l) Solidarity Exercised Beyond Our Primary Circle, Applied to the "Others"

Corollary to the above, if we belong to a series of joined circles, if we are world citizens; solidarity cannot be limited to just those included in our primary circle. It should be exercised among all of them:

"If solidarity is related to the community, it is necessary to broaden the community's limits...or to considerer that the community should be working in solidarity with its otherness, the othernesses. It is not reasonable to expect an unlimited and unconditional solidarity, but in a global world is not justifiable to define the boundaries of solidarity exclusively based on a particular identity. New initiatives and new expressions should combine the moral grammar of concrete forms of solidarity beyond boundaries" (Pérez, 2006: 99).

2.2 What Are Some of the Strengths of this Paradigm?

The cosmopolitism presents some strong elements, the most relevant ones are:

l) Presenting a Proposal for the Neoliberal Globalization

In the same way the Coloniality power paradigm believes possible an alternative to the European-American vision presented as the hegemonicview, Cosmopolitism opposes and proposes globalism-s project of globalization centred on "the other's otherness".

m) The Importance of the Possibility of Change

While in the other theoretical approach almost everything tends to the reproduction of conflict and inequality relations, which can lead to infer that the overcome of these situations would be possible only due to radical change, a revolution, in the cosmopolitism changing the order of things starts within the individual and associations of people (NGOs): respect to the "other's otherness" can be implemented in a daily basis, with small, individual and collective actions that can cause a multiplier effect.

n) The Emphasis On Human Rights From Different Generations

While in the Coloniality of power the individual suffers from domination, in this paradigm individuals are entitled to Human Rights.

o) Human Beings Are No Longerthe Sole Focus and the Environment Starts Being Taken into Account

In the Coloniality of power, just as in many other sociological theories, the environmentis conceived as something given, as the setting (not changeable, but permanent) where social relationstakes place. It is assumedthat the environment will always constitute the setting for the social.

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Within the cosmopolitism, mainly in the Global Risk Society theory, environment is being deadly threatened and; consequently, the social is being threatened as well. Social class, ethnic, and gender conflicts may come to an end, but not due to the fact that they can be solved positively but because their setting, their habitat might become extinct.

V. Weaknesses of the Paradigm

Along with its strengths, this approach also has weaknesses which include the following:

a) Lack of a Concrete Strategy to Articulate Individual and Group Actions

Although in this approach, NGOs play an important role as actors of the cosmopiltan project, there is a void on how to link the single, daily actions whose objective is to implement the "other's otherness" with more macro efforts, in the same sense these organizations do.

b) The European Context of the Theory

Even though Beck states that class differences do not disappear in the risk society, and that the lower you are in the social pyramid, the higher are the negative effects of the risks (for instance, a poor person is more vulnerable to extreme climate events) (Beck, 1998 b: 40-41), it is hard to support the idea that in Latin America the fight over the appropriation of goods, which characterizes the industrial society has been substituted by the fight over the non-appropriation of the evils and risks of the post-industrial society or the risk society (Beck, 2008: 19).

In other words, class, ethnic, and gender conflicts constitute the motor of societies such as Latin America where inequality prevails, and contrary to the European societies, for example, where the social gap has been reduced.

In this context of inequality, risks (such as the environmental ones for example) do not do anything more but to increase that condition.

c) Partial Respect for Human Rights

Closely linked to what was mentioned above, it is the respect for Human Rights as a guarantor of the "other's otherness". Even though the European Union has made considerable progress in this area, the Latin American reality is very different, even to a point in which in various countries of the region, life itself is simply not guaranteed by the States.

d) Perverse Effect of Applying the Theory Out of Context

Corollary to the two ideas above, suggesting the respect of the "other's otherness" in situations of inequality could lead to the perpetuation and even legitimization of inequality and social injustice. This, in the sense that it could be assumed that respecting othersis to accept their socio-economic situation (we need to respect the rich's wealth and the poor's poverty), considering it as something natural, and even more dangerous, as something that should not be changed.

e) The Limitations of World Citizenship

Although the world citizenship is a sound project to control the dreadful consequences of extreme nationalism, it is not clear how to make it feasible for people to break with the exaggerated idealization of their country and adopt a sense of belonging to a larger country: the world.

In addition, even though the European Union has been partially able to diminish the local loyalties of the citizens of its member States and to create an European identity, this situation has become a new source of exclusion towards non-Europeans, just as it is evident in the immigration controls (often in violation of Human Rights, the same ones Europe boasts so much about) imposed to immigrants coming from Africa, Latin America, and from certain other latitudes (and even against ethnicities that live in their own land, such as gypsies).

Perhaps the mainchallenge in the construction of a world citizenship is that we all walk together in that direction simultaneously because, otherwise, some would end up losing. As a matter a fact, if people from Latin America feel they are world citizens, if they take that step, relativizing their nationalist sense of belonging, but the Europeans continue perceiving themselves not as world citizens but just as Europeans, and US citizens increasingly strengthen their patriotism instead of considering themselves cosmopolitans, we run the risk of weakening the Latin America identity.

VI. Closure Comment: Coincidences and Differences

To conclude, it is important to consider possible encounters and clashes between these two theoretical positions.

a) Common Elements

First of all, the two positions break the "nationalist-state narrow view": criticism towards the coloniality of power derives from the world-system, and the cosmopolitism from the global society, although their conclusions are different.

A second common element is that both paradigms are based on the existent asymmetries: Coloniality presents clear power and domination relations and Cosmopolitism, regarding inequality, calls for the recognition of the "other" as equal as "the self". This recognition involves a component of solidarity towards those who are "different" ("other" communities).

The "other's otherness" is based on the "recognition of other nationalities' otherness" (Beck,

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2004: 373), not only the European one, and with this, we find a third coincidence with the coloniality paradigm.

b) Opposing Aspects

However, there are also opposing elements in both paradigms, which have already been clarified in this article but that will be summarized briefly.

The first one is that in the coloniality the world is seen as a system characterized by socioeconomic, racial, and gender inequality. In the cosmopolitism,even though the global society is not an integrated society, the universality of Human Rights of all the generations of these rights may lead to reduce inequalities (Beck, 2004:143).

A second difference has to do with the ability of moving in the direction of overcoming inequalities. In the coloniality, the individual is considered a passive subject who suffers from exploitation and inequality. In the cosmopolitism, neoliberal globalization can be stopped by individuals who recognize the otherness of other individuals, individuals who unite with other people through NGOs and work together to promote the cosmopolitan project.

Finally, while in the Coloniality paradigm the origin of the current inequality condition is attributed to the European colonization, in the cosmopolitism the current construction model of the European Union is perceived as a way to overcome inequalities, make Human rights prevail above all and ensure public participation (Beck, 2004: 146, 147; Habermas, 1998; Rojo, 2010:137).

Even though there are limitations as well as opposing elements in each of these paradigms, it is important to recognize that they both make very valuable contributions to understanding current events. It will depend on the theoretical-methodological ability of the social researcher to articulate both approaches coherently in order to visualize a concrete reality.

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Development: Socio-Cultural Dimensions

By Dr. Sribas Goswami
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Abstract -This paper deals with the development issues of marginalized section of population living in slums in India. The people in slums live under the most deplorable conditions, with little access to effective social and health care services, potable water, or sanitation facilities and are therefore more vulnerable to epidemics and developmental challenges. Their low socio-economic status, low level of education and high fertility and mortality- all indicate that they need special attention in terms of public health, family planning and reproductive health programs. However, unfortunately reverse is the case with such segments of slum population. Rapid slummification has caused wide spread of environmental degradation in the city. The government has conceded that despite imposition of regulatory measures, the magnitude of pollution from industrial sources in the city has not shown any appreciable decrease during the last few years. An attempt has been made to unfold several development issues needed for the slum dwellers through this study.

Keywords : *slum, illiteracy, child marriage, development.*

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Development: Socio-Cultural Dimensions

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Abstract - This paper deals with the development issues of marginalized section of population living in slums in India. The people in slums live under the most deplorable conditions, with little access to effective social and health care services, potable water, or sanitation facilities and are therefore more vulnerable to epidemics and developmental challenges. Their low socio-economic status, low level of education and high fertility and mortality- all indicate that they need special attention in terms of public health, family planning and reproductive health programs. However, unfortunately reverse is the case with such segments of slum population. Rapid slummification has caused wide spread of environmental degradation in the city. The government has conceded that despite imposition of regulatory measures, the magnitude of pollution from industrial sources in the city has not shown any appreciable decrease during the last few years. An attempt has been made to unfold several development issues needed for the slum dwellers through this study.

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I. Introduction

A slum is a compact area of overcrowded populations, poorly built congested dwelling condition, unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities. Living conditions in slums have a direct impact on people's health. One of the major challenges that face urban planners globally is the proliferation of slums in urban areas and the host of health hazards that they bring along with their wake. However, the prolific spread of slums has been a rampant problem in urban areas worldwide. The living conditions in slums are usually unhygienic and contrary to all norms of planned urban growth. Human development and improvement in the quality of life is the ultimate objective of all planning programmes leading to higher economic and social development. There exists a very strong linkage between attaining economic prosperity and enriching the quality of life, which is reflected in the social indicators of health, longevity, literacy and environmental sustainability. These indicators serve as valuable inputs for developing suitable policy initiatives. Present study is a humble attempt to explore the environmental scenario of Raipur city- capital of Chhattisgarh. It is really a challenge for the urban planners to achieve the sustainable development. In true sense, environment development with progressive transformation of economy and society with its major objectives lie in the satisfaction of human needs and aspirations.

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In India, economic development during the last five decades has resulted in a little increase in average per capita income. There is no hesitation that living conditions have improved everywhere, even in the most backward places. Yet a large section of people have remained poor. There is observable deterioration in the physical environment and quality of life in the urban sectors caused by widening crack between demand and supply of necessary services and infrastructural facilities. The growth of slum is a sign of urban poverty as the greater part of urban poor reside in the slums. It has become vital to raise the quality of life by creating conditions conductive to the achievement of crucial objectives in terms of shelter, medical attention, sanitation, education. This study is very much significant, especially in the light of the magnitude of the slum problems in the country. Rapid slumification due to urbanization is most crucial problem for the policy makers and urban planners. In this regards government has initiated several developmental programmes for the betterment of social ill-being[1]. A descriptive approach to the study of slum settlements involves understanding the interrelationship between their constituent elements at a certain period of time. The study of the physical form and structure of slum is the study of urban sociology. Why is such a study significant? The urban way of the city influences behavioral, economic and social processes within it (Vance, 1990)[2]. Thus, the study of slum settlements has an encompassing view of all the activities it supports.

This research is a descriptive research and aspires to contribute to basic research in sociology. The literature review shows that a specific study of slums of Raipur has not been previously documented. Therefore, this study will augment existing knowledge about social configurations of slum dwellers of this city. An interpretation of the emerging social pattern reveals something of the social character of the city. The study of urban slums also serves as a framework for further research.

Formation of Raipur as the capital of newly born state Chhattisgarh in the threshold of this century has got immense importance in the map of our country. The accelerated inward migration to the city caused unplanned slum formations which bring about far-

[1] See Satterthwaite, D. & Wratten. 1995. 'The under-estimation and misrepresentation of urban poverty: Urban poverty: Characteristics, causes and consequences' Environment and urbanization, in IIED, Vol. 7 No 1.

[2] See World Development Report, 1992

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reaching consequences. Several developmental programmes have been started and thousands of employment opportunities have been generated skilled and unskilled both. People have started migration from the neighbor states. This caused overcrowding the city and the consequence is more development of slums. Before formation of capital city Raipur has many slums and those were neglected but now huge money is invested to renovate the slums in various ways. So the study will reveal the overall social development of slums which is taking place in recent times since its emergence as capital of Chhattisgarh. It is a natural fact that along with the economic growth slums will continue to exist.

II. Methodology

The data have been collected from secondary and primary sources.

a. *Secondary sources:* Data is collected and compiled from the books, reports, published and unpublished papers, leaflets, booklets, Municipal records and Governmental circulars.
b. *Primary sources:* Interviews from the field with respondents, word counselors and slum leaders have been conducted to elicit their opinions and experiences in slum life with the help of interview schedule. The field survey was carried out during 2012.

III. Sample Size

The study was conducted on slums of the capital city of Chhattisgarh, Raipur, India. Total 300 families from four slums taking 95 families from Gandhi Nagar, 88 families from Moulipara, 100 families from Kushalpur and 17 families from Kota basti have taken as sample. Total surveyed population is 1383. Head or senior most persons of the family are the respondents.

a) Social Conditions for Urban Development

Urbanization is both a resultant condition and a determinant of economic growth. Yet urbanization in India has progressed at a far slower rate than the economic growth rate generally. India has severe problems in both management and financing of cities. The Service Industry, IT industry and Manufacturing Industry are leading motivations to the economic growth. The reasons for slow urban development include policy biases against replacement of labor with industrialization, location of industries in urban areas, and urban concentrations. Other reasons for slow growth in urban areas are as follows (Mohan and Dasgupta, 2004).

- Inadequate Increase in Rural Productivity: India's major population is residing in rural areas with low income. A relation between urbanization and per capita income is developed by researchers. The low productivity in agriculture except in some regions is restricting the flow of agricultural labor in rural areas.
- Technology Choice in Industry: Selection of appropriate technology and product could be another reason for less rural population attracted to the industries. The tariff structure favored more towards generating capital intensive industries, which were corrected after the tariff reforms in 1990's.
- Labor Legislation and Small Industries Reservations: On comparing the development rate and urbanization rate with other countries, India's lack of growth may be explained by slow growth in manufacturing as well as labor rigidity and policies on expansion of small scale industries.
- Urban Infrastructure Investment: The high cost in moving to urban areas with poor infrastructure facilities like water and sanitation facilities, lack of affordable urban transport, and expensive land development could have been another possible reason for slow urbanization (EGCIP, 1996).
- Rigidities in Urban Land Policy: The urban land cost grew high because of the policy introduced in mid-1970's Urban Land Ceiling Act. The act made it difficult for people to change the use of land, reducing the availability of land and increasing the prices in urban areas.

Therefore the social development that has the potential to become a tool for the self-conscious progress of the collective and its members must limit its scope to certain horizons; otherwise, it may lose its force of application. The current effort limits its inquiry to the origins, principles, powers, forces and processes of society's upward directional movement from lesser to greater levels of energy, efficiency, quality, productivity, complexity, comprehension, creativity, enjoyment and accomplishment--social development [3].

IV. Socio-Economic Background of the Slum Dwellers

This chapter is mainly concerned with the study of the following socio-economic characteristics of the respondents: namely age, sex, caste, religion, language, education, marital status, occupational status and monthly income of the respondents. The first part of the chapter consists of the general information of the respondents and second part consists of family background and their socio-economic status. The

[3]See the report on 'Social development: Challenges faced in an unequal and plural society' by Gore (2003) has focused on the several aspects of development in Indian context. He has examined the broader philosophy of the social development and its linkage with the concept of human rights and the fundamental rights as enshrined in the Indian constitution. Another emphasis has given on relevance to social work practice. The study further has discussed and elaborated the concepts of development in a liberal society.

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sample size for the present study is three hundred (300) slum dwellers of Raipur city. From the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents a comprehensive picture can be drawn on their slum life. Details of the analysis are presented bellow. The socio-economic status is an indicator of social class. Each profession has certain prestige and forms a group of social class. Variables such as income and education are closely correlated, and act as the socio-economic indicators. Here an attempt is made to understand the slum life in general.

a) General Information Of Respondents

According to the information collected from three hundred respondents about their age, four persons belong to 14 years group, 290 persons belong to 15 - 59 years age category and six persons are found to lay the category of 60 years and above.

The sex composition of the respondents is almost same in which male is 52.33% and female is 47.66%.

The caste as a social stratification plays predominant role in our social life; it helps us to understand the social fabric. In the present study 41.33% people belong to general caste where as 34% belong to SC (Schedule Caste) and 11.66% ST (Schedule Tribe) and 13% belong to OBC (Other Backward Class). Most of the ST people are dwelling here for a long time. Another important aspect of our social life is religion. It has been observed that 63.33% people belong to Hindu religion. 18.66% are the followers of Muslim religion and 8% respondents are Christian. During the field work it is noticed that 8% people have been converted to Christianity from other religion. Rest 10% people belong to other religion such as Sikhism, Jainism etc.

All respondents can speak Hindi fluently and at the same time they know their mother tongue also. 68.33% respondents' mother tongue is Hindi, and 21.66% speak Oriya at home. While communicating within their own community 3.33% respondents speak Telegu. Remaining persons speak other languages like Bengali, Marathi, and Tamil etc. Here one remarkable phenomenon is noted that maximum people other than Hindi speaking are residing in these slums from 2nd or 3rd generations. It is very encouraging that 92% people are literate. They can read and write. In the present study it has been observed that 98% respondents are married and 2% respondents are widow. Present study also shows that 65.66% respondents are working or acting as money earner. But 34.34% respondents are not working because their family member earns. 1.66% respondents' monthly income is up to Rs.1000. But 28% respondents earn money in between Rs.1001-Rs. 2000, 17.33% respondents monthly income lie in between Rs.2001-Rs. 5000, where as 19.66% earn more than Rs. 5000.

The paper also consists of the information related to family background of the respondents, size of the family, age of the family members, and marital status of the family members, age of marriage, educational level, occupation and income of the family members.

Children's food habit and health status are directed by household's socio-economic condition. Also, children are susceptible to environmental sanitation while they are found most of the time playing around or spending outside environment which is very unhygienic. Socio-economic factors like income, expenditure and education are analyzed to depict households' ability and knowledge about dietary practice and prevalence of disease occurrence among children.

Table 1 : Population Growth in Raipur City

Description	2011	2001
Actual Population	4,062,160	3,016,930
Male	2,048,856	1,523,925
Female	2,013,304	1,493,005
Population Growth	34.65%	19.29%
Density/km^2	310	231
Proportion to Chhattisgarh Population	15.90%	14.48%
Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	983	980
Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	965	965
Average Literacy	76.43	68.51
Male Literacy	86.50	81.97
Female Literacy	66.21	54.81
Total Child Population (0-6 Age)	569,447	515,582
Male Population (0-6 Age)	289,815	262,406
Female Population (0-6 Age)	279,632	253,176
Literates	2,669,362	1,713,653
Male Literates	1,521,582	1,034,063
Female Literates	1,147,780	679,590
Child Proportion (0-6 Age)	14.02%	17.09%
Boys Proportion (0-6 Age)	14.15%	17.22%
Girls Proportion (0-6 Age)	13.89%	16.96%

Source : www.census2011.co.in/census/district/495 raipur. html

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Table 2 : Sex and Age Composition of the Respondents and Their Family Members

Name of Slum	Sex and Age composition												Total Male	Total Female	Total Population
	Up to 14 years				15 years to 59 years				60 years and above						
	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%			
Kota Basti	13	16.88	12	15.58	26	33.77	24	31.17	1	1.30	1	1.30	40 (51.94)	37 (48.06)	77 (100%)
Kushalpur	53	12.27	61	14.12	159	36.80	150	34.72	4	.93	5	1.16	216 (50)	216 (50)	432 (100%)
Gandhinagar	95	20.09	67	14.17	153	32.34	140	29.60	10	2.11	8	1.69	258 (54.54)	215 (45.45)	473 (100%)
Moulipara	75	18.70	69	17.21	130	32.42	116	28.93	6	1.50	5	1.24	211 (52.61)	190 (47.38)	401 (100%)
Total	236	17.07	209	15.11	468	33.84	430	31.09	21	1.52	19	1.37	725 (52.42)	658 (47.58)	1383 (100%)

Table 2 clearly shows the sex and age composition of the respondents and their family members. Within these four slums 52.58% respondents are male and 47.58% respondents are female. Slum wise sex composition reveals that almost all the slums are exhibiting the more or less the same picture as reflected in Census report. Remarkable information is coming out while analyzing the table that only 1.37% people have attended 60 years and above age. The number of young people dominates in the studied slum areas. As the young slum dwellers are residing in slums for earning money and the young age group is most effective for work. 32.17% population of the slums belongs to 14 years of age group and bellow.

Table 3 : Caste Composition in Slums of Raipur

Name of Slum	General		S.C		S.T		OBC		Total Sample population
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	
Kota Basti	8	47.06	6	35.29	1	5.88	2	11.77	17 (100%)
Kushalpur	36	36.00	40	40	9	9.00	15	15.00	100 (100%)
Gandhinagar	45	47.37	20	21.05	15	15.79	15	15.79	95 (100%)
Moulipara	35	39.77	36	40.91	10	11.36	7	7.96	88 (100%)
Total	124	41.33	102	34	35	11.67	39	13.00	300 (100%)

Source : Personal Survey-2012

From the above table 3 it is seen that 41.33% people belong to the general category. The SC and ST population are respectively 34% and 11.67%. This state is dominated by ST population but the urban population of the ST is 8.4% (2011 Census). The OBC population is 13%.

Almost one third respondents belong to Scheduled Tribes and about 11.6 percent of the population is listed as Scheduled Castes in Chhattisgarh. Other communities including a large number of people belonging to the Backward Classes constitute the rest of the population. The bulk of its people are concentrated in the central region, while the northern and the southern regions have a considerably lower density of population. Kushalpur and Moulipara slums have almost same SC population distribution

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whereas Kota Basti has the lowest ST population. All four slums are projecting the high percentage of general category population. Kushalpur and Moulipara have almost equal SC population. In Raipur a large number OBC people also resides. In Kushalpur and Gandhinagar both slums have comparatively high OBC population than others.

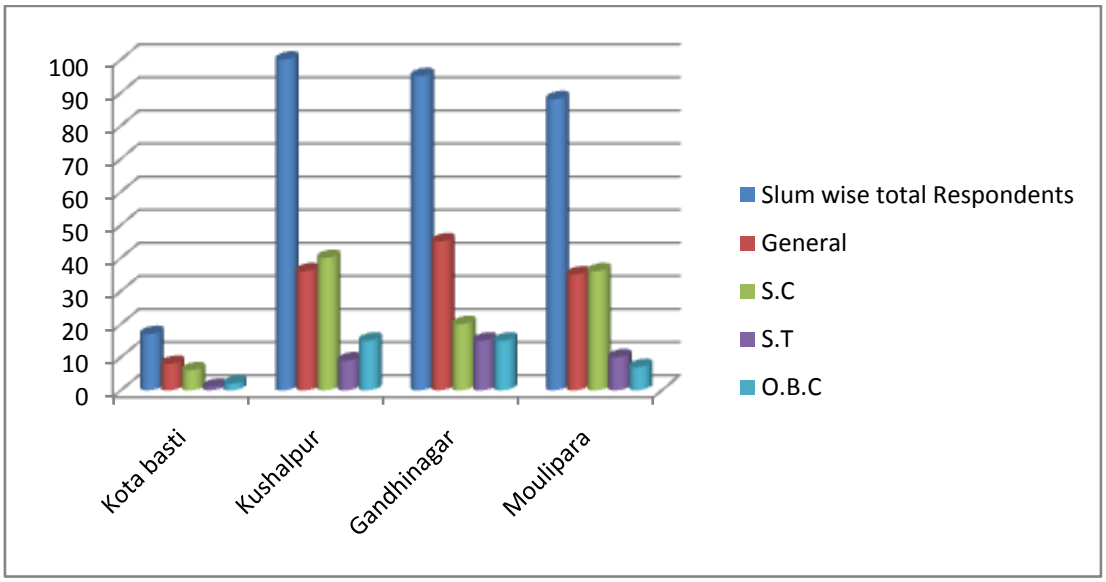


Figure 1 : Caste Composition in Slums of Raipur

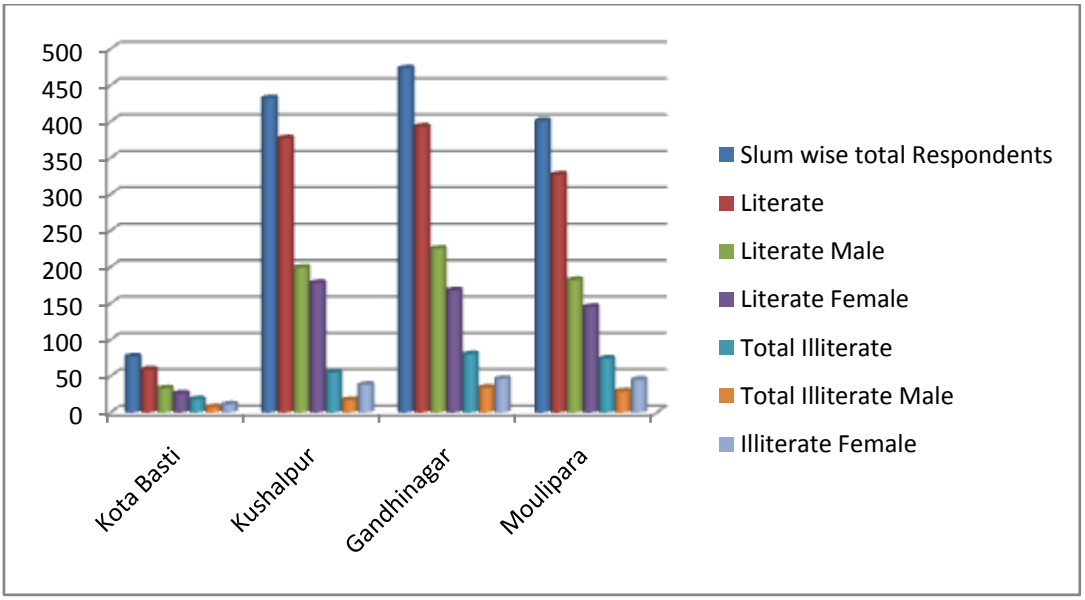


Figure 2 : Educational Statuses of the Slum Dwellers

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Table 4 : Educational Status of the Respondents and Their Family Members

Name of Slum	Educational Status										Total population
	Literate					Illiterate					
	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%	Total	
Kota Basti	33	42.86	26	33.77	59	7	9.22	11	14.58	18	77 (100%)
Kushalpur	199	46.06	178	41.20	377	17	3.94	38	8.80	55	432 (100%)
Gandhinagar	225	47.57	168	35.52	393	34	7.18	46	9.73	80	473 (100%)
Moulipara	182	45.38	145	36.16	327	29	7.23	45	11.23	74	401 (100%)
Total	639	46.20	517	37.38	1156	87	6.30	140	10.12	227	1383 (100%)

Source : Personal Survey-2012

Education is an important indicator of social development, since higher level of growth is generally believed to be driven by innovation. Education is the backbone of social and economic development. It acts as the catalyst for Human Resource Development (HRD), which encompasses better health, nutrition and improved socioeconomic opportunities. Education imparts knowledge and skills, and shapes values and attitudes. It is vital for the progress of society and is universally recognized as an important investment in building human capital, which holds the key to persistent high growth in per capita income.

Majority of slums dwellers are first generation learners. From the table 4 educational statuses are observed at a glance. The table shows that 83.58% surveyed population is literate. The city literacy rate is also very close to these figures. It is seen from the illiterate part of the table 10.12% females and 6.30% males are illiterate. As Kota Basti is largely migrated people dominated (basically from Orissa) the illiteracy ratio is higher in compare to other slums. So far literacy is concern Kushalpur has the top position in this regard. While comparing all slums regarding literacy it is clear that male literacy rate is dominating.

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Table 5 : Educational Qualifications of Literate Persons

Name of Slum	Educational Levels																				Total literate population
	Primary					Middle					9th to HS					UG/PG					
	Total	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%	
Kota Basti	20	9	15.25	11	18.64	27	15	25.42	12	20.34	9	6	10.17	3	5.09	3	2	3.39	1	1.70	59 (100%)
Kushalpur	90	40	10.61	50	13.26	146	63	16.71	83	22.02	104	66	17.51	38	10.08	37	28	7.42	9	2.39	377 (100%)
Gandhinagar	125	72	18.32	53	13.49	152	83	21.12	69	17.56	89	46	11.70	43	10.94	27	24	6.11	3	0.76	393 (100%)
Moulipara	88	45	13.76	43	13.15	149	76	23.24	73	22.32	83	55	16.82	28	8.56	7	6	1.84	1	0.31	327 (100%)
Total	323	166	14.36	157	13.58	474	237	20.50	237	20.50	285	173	14.97	112	9.69	74	60	5.19	14	1.21	1156 (100%)

Source : Personal Survey - 2012

From the table 5 it is clear that 1156 persons are literate and have formal education. 27.95% population has primary level education (up to IV standard), 41% population has middle standard (class V to VIII), 24.66% population has class IX to XII standard and 6.40% respondents have either completed graduation or post graduation. Most of the primary level educated persons are affected by the drop out cases who couldn't continue their education because of familial problems. Here the trend of perusing study up to class VIII is very high. In most cases girl students are deprived for higher studies. However Kushalpur is the only slum where overall educational qualification is better than other slums. This slum has been encouraging population with graduates and post graduates.

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Table 6 : Marital Status of Respondents and Their Family Members

Name of Slum	Unmarried				Married				Widow		Divorced				Total Population		
	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	Total	%	M	%	F	%	Male	Female	Total
Kota Basti	19	24.68	10	12.99	21	27.27	20	25.97	7	9.09	-	-	-	-	40 (51.94%)	37 (48.05%)	77 (100%)
Kushalpur	100	23.15	104	24.07	116	26.85	108	25	4	0.93	-	-	-	-	216 (50%)	216 (50%)	432 (100%)
Gandhinagar	140	29.60	97	20.51	118	24.95	109	23.04	9	1.90	-	-	-	-	258 (54.54%)	215 (45.45%)	473 (100%)
Moulipara	110	27.43	85	21.19	101	25.19	98	24.44	7	1.75	-	-	-	-	211 (52.61%)	190 (47.38%)	401 (100%)
Total	369	26.68	296	21.40	356	25.74	335	24.23	27	1.95	-	-	-	-	723 (52.27%)	660 (47.72%)	1383 (100%)

From the table 5 it has been observed that 48.08% population is unmarried. 49.97% population is married with 1.95% widows. Divorce or separated cases has not been found. The widows generally stay with their married daughter and with the family of sons. Majority of the families stay in nuclear family as has been observed from the field. In comparison with tables 5.4 and 5.5 it is clear that 37.37% females are educated and 24.23% females are married.

Table . 7 : Age of Marriage of Slum Dwellers

Name of Slum	Age of marriage															Total Married Population		
	Bellow 18 years					19 years to 21					Above 22 years							
	Total	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%	Male	Female	Total
Kota Basti	10	-	-	10	24.39	12	3	7.32	9	21.95	19	17	41.46	2	4.88	21 (51.21%)	20 (48.78%)	41 (100%)
Kushalpur	66	-	-	66	29.46	39	-	-	39	17.41	119	114	50.89	5	2.24	116 (51.78%)	108 (48.21%)	224 (100%)
Gandhinagar	48	-	-	48	21.15	71	8	3.52	63	27.75	108	105	46.26	3	1.32	118 (51.98%)	109 (48.01%)	227 (100%)
Moulipara	52	19	9.55	33	16.58	59	17	8.54	42	21.11	88	63	31.66	25	12.56	101 (50.75%)	98 (49.24%)	199 (100%)

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Total	176	19	2.74	157	22.72	181	28	4.05	153	22.15	334	299	43.27	35	5.07	356 (51.51%)	335 (48.48%)	691 (100%)

Source : Personal Survey-2012

Table 7 shows that 22.72% females are married under 18 years where as 2.74% males married underage. In between age of 19-21 years 26.21% people are married. But notable subject is that 43.27% males are married beyond 22 years and percentage of female is 5.07. Through analysis of the above table it is seen that till date the slum people use to practice child marriage. It is also seen from this table that very few married males are found under age because the parents don't encourage marriage before employment. Although 4.05% male in the age group of 19-21 years are married. Maximum males go for marriage after 22 years of age and only few females are noted in this regard. Most of the persons answered that they don't want to keep young daughter unmarried because of many societal and economical reasons. They think keeping unmarried daughter at home is risky due to many reasons now a day. The society of slum is conservative more often preservative. As average the income of the family is not high some of the girls are forced to marry. Till now in slum areas male children are more acceptable than daughter and they are considered as lucky to the family. Sometimes early marriage leads to innumerable health problems in brides, including the increase in unwanted and terminated pregnancies, early sterilizations, miscarriages, stillbirths, high infant mortality and these are interrelated issues with the age of marriage which has been discussed in through the following tables. All four slums reflects more or less same picture in this regard.

Table 8 : Monthly Family Income of the Respondents

Name of Slum	Family income(Monthly) in Rs.								Total Respondents
	<1000		1001-2000		2001-5000		5000>		
	No of earning member	%	No of earning member	%	No of earning member	%	No of earning member	%	
Kota Basti	1	5.88	6	35.30	9	52.94	1	5.88	17 (100%)
Kushalpur	-	-	33	33.00	56	56.00	11	11.00	100 (100%)
Gandhinagar	3	3.16	20	21.05	39	41.05	33	34.74	95 (100%)
Moulipara	1	1.14	25	28.41	48	54.54	14	15.91	88 (100%)
Total	5	1.66	84	28.00	152	50.67	59	19.67	300 (100%)

Source : Personal Survey-2012

The present research reveals the monthly income of the respondents or his/her family members which is closely connected with their quality of the life. High income creates better standard of living. From the above table (8) it is seen that 1.66% family earns up to Rs.1000 per month. 28% family earns in between Rs.1001-2000 per month. Maximum family (50.67%) earns 2001-5000 per month. And 19.67% earns above Rs.5000 in a month. In the present study, it is seen that only few business persons earn above highest category. Maximum people involve in small informal service sectors they can't earn much money as in the market cheap labour is available. So it can be seen that having with uncertainty in life in respect to income sometime with lack of skilled knowledge the slum dwellers are forced to take low wage jobs. Here a vicious cycle of poverty can be seen grabbing destitute people. Males in slums have inadequate earning skills leading to low incomes and an inability to provide adequate resources for household expenses. This leads to frustration, which is often expressed through escapism in addiction of various types. The youth are frustrated, as they do not have the opportunities that their better-off peers have. This results in a cynical and diffident attitude, which

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becomes a handicap during adulthood. A major portion of households' income is spent on food items following expenditure on nonfood items and house rent. Survey data reveal that a major share of their income is spent on food. Here through present study the relationship between socio-economic status and nutritional status can be understood. Some of these queries show a strong relationship between nutritional status and several measures of income. Relationships among income, age and food consumption have also been widely demonstrated. Facts relating to income, age and food pattern on the slum population are lacking, especially on low socio-economic groups. The present investigation through this table examines income pattern of slum dwellers from four slums. Those families earn more than Rs.5000 a month it must be noted that many cases found where more than one person is money earner. Gandhinagar slum has the highest number people with high income whereas Kota Basti has the lowest position in this regard. Actually immediate after inception of Raipur as a capital city, commercial and industrial activities needed cheap labor in the city. Jobs created by the economic growth, attracted many people for their livelihood. Diverse job with diverse wage rate created wide range income groups.

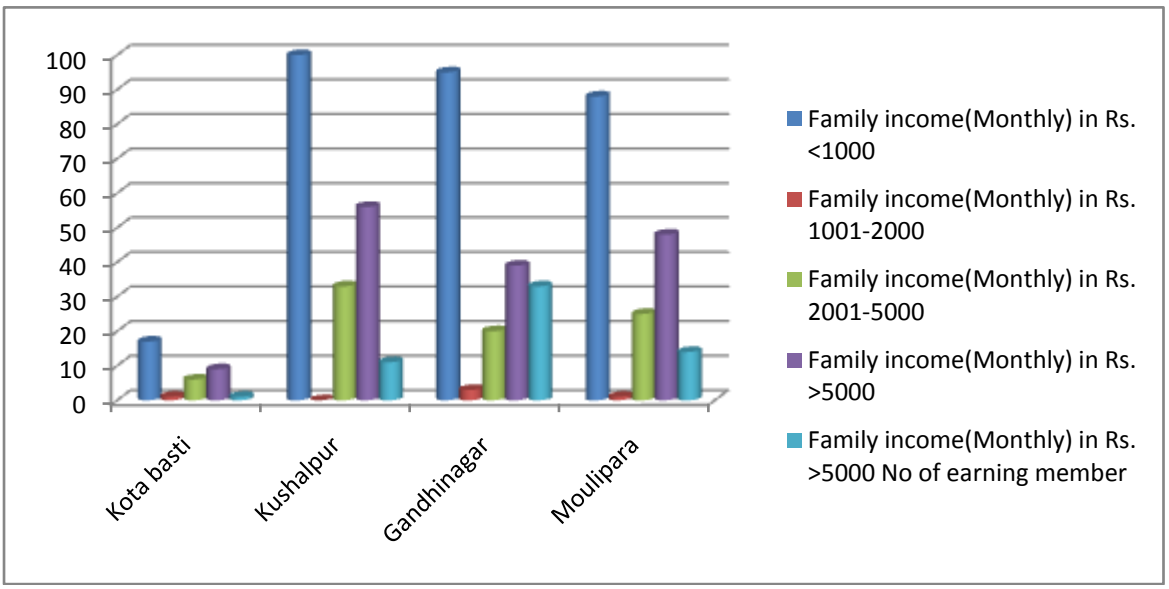


Figure 3 : Monthly Income of the Slum Dwellers

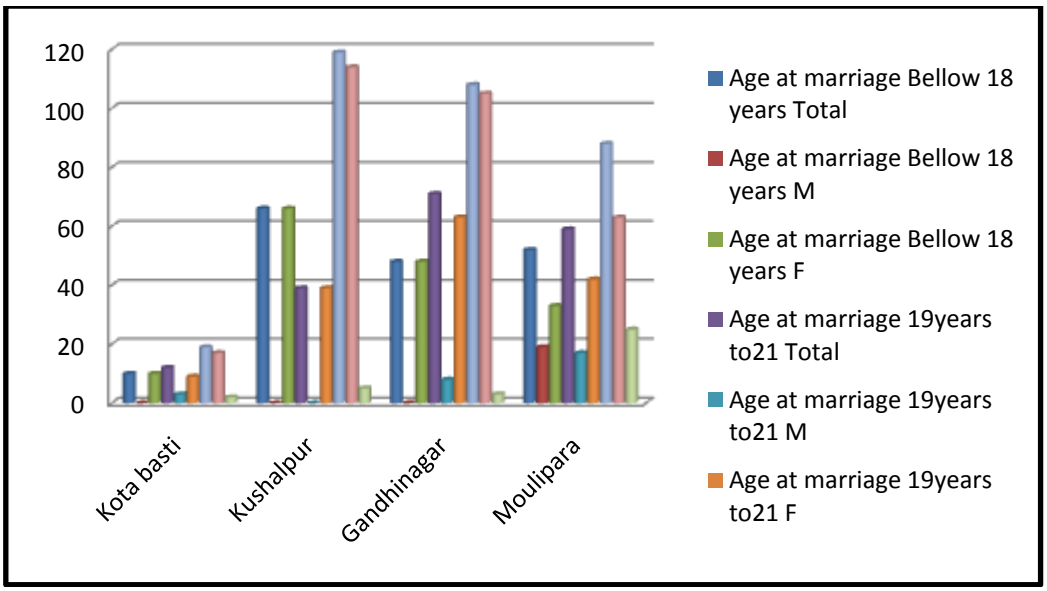


Figure 4 : Age at Marriage of Slum Dwellers

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Table 8 : Occupational Positions of Slum Area In Raipur.

Name of Slum			Kota Basti	Kushalpur	Gandhinagar	Moulipara	Total
Non working population		%	38.96	38.66	32.98	38.90	36.80
		F	30	167	156	156	509
		%	23.38	17.59	24.30	20.95	21.19
		M	18	76	115	84	293
		T	48	243	271	240	802
Working population	Service	%	1.29	1.85	2.33	-	1.45
		F	1	8	11	0	20
		%	7.79	6.48	8.03	2.00	5.78
		M	6	28	38	8	80
		T	7	36	49	8	100
	Business	%	1.30	3.24	0.85	3.74	2.45
		F	1	14	4	15	34
		%	9.09	14.82	8.46	10.72	11.14
		M	7	64	40	43	154
		T	8	78	44	58	188
	Labour	%	3.90	0.93	4.44	4.49	3.33
		F	3	4	21	18	46
		%	9.09	4.63	8.03	6.73	6.65
		M	7	20	38	27	92
		T	10	24	59	45	138
	Others	%	2.60	4.17	4.23	2.99	3.76
		F	2	18	20	12	52
		%	2.60	6.94	5.50	9.48	6.94
		M	2	30	26	38	96
		T	4	48	46	50	148
	Child labour (<14 yesrs)	%	-	-	-	-	-
		F	-	-	-	-	-
		%	-	0.69	0.85	-	0.51
		M	-	3	4	-	7
		T	-	3	4	-	7

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Majority of the slum dwellers lack required skills for the skilled jobs. They possess skills that do not have any significant market in the city. Unscrupulous companies taking advantages of the ignorance of slum residents and often cheat them. The banking in the formal sector does not welcome disbursement of small loan amounts to the slum residents, as that is quite expensive for these organizations. Hence, the slum residents are forced to borrow loan from moneylenders. Table no 8 shows that 57.99% respondents are nonworking population. Among the working people 7.23% involves in service, 13.59% respondents do business, 9.98% respondents are labourer, 10.7% people involve in other activities such as housekeeping or home servant etc. Only .51% child labour can be seen. Raipur's slums are basically traditional slum that's why the child labour cases are very little. Almost 20% jobs are done by unskilled persons. They involve in house related jobs, rickshaw pulling, driving etc. Through this study it is felt that the slum dwellers require learning new skills, which require long-term investment of time and resources, which they do not have. Their only option remains is getting engaged in occupations that are unskilled and menial, and where the incomes are low. These are also casual jobs. Irregularity of employment and no address of employment disqualify most of them from accessing credit for small businesses.

V. Concluding Remarks

From the above discussion comprehensive information is noted about the respondents and their family members. Slum communities as a smaller part of socio-economic activities of Raipur have direct impact of it on their social life. In the beginning information about the respondents in details is received. In the second part a brief account of family background is noted. The study shows that how slum life is influencing to the dweller's daily life. Good numbers of literacy are noted among the young generation and encouraging sex ratio can easily be seen. While noting the caste composition in slum areas, general caste is dominating followed by Scheduled Caste. Few cases of early marriage are noted. The slum dwellers' economic condition is not sufficiently improved. Somehow they are being exploited overtly or covertly. The people of the slum have diversified nature of occupations, such as business, service in informal sectors, driving, home service etc.

In the present study it is seen that 41.33% people belong to general caste where as 34% people belong to SC and 11.66% ST and 13% belong to OBC. Most of the ST people are dwelling here for a long time. It has been observed that 63.33% people belong to Hindu religion. 18.66% people are Muslim and 8% respondents are Christian. Rest 10% people belong to other religions such as Sikhism, Jainism etc.

The study shows very balanced sex composition of the respondents and their family members. Within these four slums 52.58% respondents are male and 47.58% respondents are female. In Chhattisgarh the sex ratio of urban population is 938 as per the 2011 Census report. Slum wise sex composition also reveals that almost all the slums are exhibiting the more or less the same picture. Remarkable information is coming out while analyzing the data that only 1.37% people have attended 60 years and above age. The trend of urbanization is clearly reflected in this study.

Majority of slums dwellers are first generation learners. Children from slums are generally looked down upon. The data show that 83.58% surveyed population is literate. The city literacy rate is very close to this figure. It can be seen from the data available that 10.12% female are illiterate and 6.30% males are illiterate. Kota Basti is largely migrated people dominated (basically from Orissa) the illiteracy ratio is higher in compare to other slums.

It is clear from the analysis that majority of the workers are engaged in the informal sector or informal employment, which are accessed through various informal channels or networks of information flow designated as 'social capital.' In fact, the existence of these informal networks facilitates the slum based. However, the limitation of the social capital is that the job of the new entrant and that of the contact person tend to be the same, implying overcrowding and prevalence of low wages in certain activities. The livelihood of urban poor are determined by informal employment which has absolute no place for social security programmes. The initiatives and administrative approach for formulating the social security plans separately for the urban poor, in fact, requires stupendous policy planning with pan-city approach. To foster inclusive growth so as to cover urban poor too, some interventions are required to make urban livelihood qualitative.

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Gender and Information Communication Technologies (ICTS) in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects

By Hajara Umar Sanda & Mustapha Hashim Kurfi
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Abstract - In contemporary civilized Nigeria, the Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) has become a household name used in offices and at homes to access, receive and retrieve information. Many innovations in the world today are as a result of the exposure and access to the world of the ICTs and people all over the world can access any other parts of the world to receive information about anything that borders on their interest in life. Women in their quest for empowerment and societal recognition have adopted and accepted ICT as an instrument for their advancement and empowerment. This is manifested in their previous two world conferences in Nairobi, 1985 and Beijing, 1995, where among several areas of concern, the role of the media in subordinating women featured prominently. But unfortunately, despite the much emphasis placed on the use of ICTs in Nigeria, women are often underrepresented in terms of access and use. It is against this background that this paper examines the challenges and prospects of ICT utilization among women in Nigeria. These challenges include lack of infrastructure, education and skills; urban-bias; and sociocultural and economicchallenges.The study concludes that to address these gender gaps in ICTs in Nigeria, all hands must be on deck to change women's attitudes towards ICT use by overcoming technophobia;women should be provided with educational and economic empowerment; government ICT policies and programs must address the needs of women; andthe civil society should be part and parcel of this crusade for the betterment of women and the society at large.

Keywords : *ict, gender, nigeria, discrimination, empowerment, technophobia, nana asma'u.*

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I. Introduction

The concept of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) is an emerging field in the world of communication, which is wielding an unimaginable influence on global activities. It restructures politics/governance, economy, culture, health etc. in many countries and regions around the world. The ICT provides a great development opportunity by contributing to information dissemination, providing an array of communication capabilities, increasing access to technology and knowledge among others. Individuals and groups have accepted it globally as a tool for enhancing their varied interest. According to Tiamiyu (2003) the ICTs are the electronic technologies for creating, acquiring, storing, processing, communication and using information. This involves the process whereby computers and other related machines are used in the dissemination and retrieval of information. This is a new technology from what is originally known in the traditional mass media of the print and broadcast.

In contemporary Nigeria, the ICT has become a household name, used in offices and at home to access, receive and retrieve information. Emphasis is being placed in the use of the ICTs to access the world at large. Similarly, many innovations in the world today are as a result of the exposure and access to the world of the ICTs, and people all over the world can access any part of the world to receive information about whatever that borders their interests in life.Women in their quest for empowerment and societal recognition have adopted and accepted ICTs as instrument for advancement and empowerment. It is also a tool for speedy global mobilization and dissemination of information among women. Women have long been aware of the power of information and knowledge sharing as a strategy for mobilization, advancement and empowerment.

The importance attached to information and knowledge sharing by women in pursuing their course is manifested in their previous two world conferences in Nairobi, 1985 and Beijing, 1995, where among several areas of concern, the role of the media in subordinating women featured prominently. The fourth world conference on women in Beijing in 1995 recommended that women equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information, communication, and markets, as a means to further the advancement and empowerment of women and girls including the enhancement of their capacities to enjoy the benefits of equal access to these resources by means of international cooperation. In addition, the conference highlighted in its platform for action on women and the media, diagnosis: strategic objectives which include; to increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision making in and through the media and information communicationtechnologies as

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well as to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

These declarations and strategies are clear indication that the women recognize and appreciate the place of information in driving home their points. Unfortunately, despite the much emphasis placed on the use of ICTs in Nigeria, women are often underrepresented in terms of access and use. In spite of the fact that women make up the majority of the population as well as their workforce of any society and women also play a pivotal role in the development of their societies but still their impact has not been felt or has been silenced in this new technology due to lack of access and the necessary skills for the operation amongst other several obstacles. Notwithstanding, ICT if given the enabling environment can be used to empower women not only through access, but also through control over the kind of information women access, receive, obtain and collect. Furthermore, women can also use the ICT to adopt and to create collected information into new and localized knowledge for further sharing with others in the community, thus contributing towards their empowered, self-determination and well-being.The thrust of this paper therefore, is to examine the challenges and prospects of ICT utilization among women in Nigeria. Prior to that, it is pertinent to clarify certain key concepts such as Gender and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs).

II. Operationalization of Some Concepts

a) Gender

Gender is a socio-economic variable for analyzing roles, responsibilities, constraints, and needs of men and women in a given context. It refers to the social and cultural constructs that each society assigns to behaviors, characteristics and values attributed to men and women. The basis of the construct lies behind the idea that they are natural or intrinsic, and therefore, unalterable. These gender constructs are shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethnic, economic and cultural determinants.These are usually translated into social, economic and political inequalities, where men's activities and their gender attributes are perceived as essentially superior to women's. Buttressing this notion, Okunna (2000) opines that gender relations in Nigeria are characterized by a lot of imbalance, to the disadvantage of women, by keeping women in subordinate positions to their men counterparts. The larger society and the male subculture still see women and their aspirations as subordinate, resulting in a situation in which the marginalization, trivialization and the stereotyping of women becoming glaring aspects of Nigerian life.

According to Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre(CIRDDOC, 2001) gender could be described as "a system of roles and relationships between men and women that are determined not biologically but by social, political and economic context" (p.1). Gender also involves the process by which individuals who are born into social categories of male and female become the social categories of men and women through the acquisition of locally defined attributes of masculinity and femininity which is beyond biological differences, all other differences between men and women are socially constructed and have no logical relationships with their biological composition. Burgos-Bebray(2010) asserts that though gender roles are distinctively different and important in every existing human society, they are nevertheless not unequal and that during struggles, they are irrelevant. As if invoking Burgos-Bebray (2010), Boserup (2007) argues that colonization came with gender inequality as an instrument to strategize the perpetuation of women subordination, subjugation and exploitation.

In the developing nations like Nigeria, where people are raised in a culture highly dominated by role differentiations, the women are often reminded of their natural roles as wives and mothers and that these are the only places where they can fit in and perform. The effect therefore, is that women especially in Nigeria tend to shy away from other roles they can comfortably fit into. This stereotype thereby strengthens the patriarchal worldview amongst most African that women are not expected to participate in decision-making process. By implication therefore, women should be seen not heard.

The concept of gender is used to understand the social and political relations between men and women as well as how the concepts of femininity and masculinity are constructed. Gender attributions are therefore often justified on the basis of sexual or biological differences. For instance, women are perceived to be "naturally" nurturing, a characteristic linked to their reproductive capacity as child bearers.This gender attribution has permeated the field of science and technology globally. This is because it is often categorized as "hard" and therefore "masculine", a field traditionally considered suited for men not women. For instance, the perception that women fare poorly in science and technology relative to men is often attributed to biological limitations of women, rather than to gender stereotypes in educational materials, teaching approaches, study opportunities and technological designs that contribute to gender gap in ICT use.

Encapsulating the above situation, Okunna (2000) argues that the Nigerian woman is characterized by low self-esteem because the society has continued to regard her as unimportant and inferior to her male counterpart. Right from the time immemorial, society prefers the boy child to the girl child. All through her growing-up years, the girl child is socialized to accept her subordinate position even when it is well known that Liberal Feminist theory is correct in its argument that

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boys and girls are born with equivalent potentials that could be fully realized, given the proper and conducive environment. Consequently, men are assumed to be better equipped to pursue science and technology compared to women, creating greater obstacles for women from entering the field.

b) Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Information and communication technologies are often synonymously used with New Media or New Communication Technologies. They are simply communication gadgets or equipment that have modernized, improved and eased exchange of ideas and information of various kinds between and among people within or across distant boundaries/frontiers. ICTs extend and change the entire spectrum of technological possibilities for public communication.

Tiamiyu (2003) describes ICTs as a generic name used to refer to a number of communication hardware adopted in ensuring instantaneous dissemination of information and social values across the globe. It is also a disparate set of communication technology that shares that digitization made possible and is widely being made available for personal use as communication device. The essential features of the ICTs lie in their interconnectedness, their accessibility to individual users as senders and/or receivers, their interactivity, their multiplicity of use and open ended character and their ubiquity and delocatedness. These featuresessentially describe a computer-mediated medium – the internet.

According to Biagi and Foxworth (1997) the internet is a combination of thousands of computer networks sending and receiving data from all over the world – competing interests joined together by a common purpose, but without common owner. It is used mainly as a communication channel for electronic messages (such as e-mail), but it also holds an enormous amount of useful information (much of it consisting of multimedia) stored by individuals, governments, educational and research establishments and by commercial establishments. The Internet brings the cost of communication to a level where many can afford it. Thus, this affordability makes a person an instant publisher with access to an audience of millions of Internet users, creating a whole new class of mass communicators (Dominick, 2002).

With the emergence of the ICTs, the traditional mass media i.e. print and broadcast, which was believed to have brought the age of the media to a 'zenith', began to dwindle. The technology was being replaced by an age of personal or participatory media – the ICTs. With the ICT culture, people no longer passively 'consume' media but actively participate in them.Thus, the boundary between audiences and creators is blurred and often invisible. Some of the ICTs, which upset the traditional mass media, include:

a. Wikipedia – These are web pages that allow anybody who is allowed to log into them to change them. It is similar to an encyclopedia. Among the ICTs, the Wikipediais perfect compliments of blogs. The success of Wikipedia is hinged on mutual trust whereby accuracy evolves as more and more eyeballs examine an item. According to Weinberger cited in The Economist (2006), it is the purest form of participatory creativity and intellectual sharing and represents a socialization of expertise. Wikis allow groups of people to get on the same page.
b. Blogging – A blog is an online journal. It has to do with a web page to which the owner regularly adds new entries or posts which tend to be short and often containing hyperlinks to other blog or web page (The Economist, 2006). Blogs usually have a raw unpolished authenticity and individuality that makes it participatory in nature. A blog provides commentary or news, functioning as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines texts, merges and links to other blogs, web pages and other media related to its topic. The ability of readers to leave comments in any interactive format is an important part of many blogs.
c. Metaverse- This stands for "metaphysical universe" as created by Linden Lab, San Francisco Internet Company. Metaverse means a second life. Something that is happening not in the real life. Second life according to The Economist (2006) is not a video game, but a place where people make things. People who log on to second life create an "avatar", an online extension of themselves. As avatars, they mingle, go to parties, create what they wear and drive in, build houses where they live, paint pictures and compose music. Avatars are futuristic in nature as a lot of things created in the second life are exported into real life as fashion, music etc.
d. Pod casting – The word is derived from a combination of pod from Apple's iPod – a fashionable portable music player, and casting from broadcasting. It is all about Internet broadcasting. It involves sending a radio signal to an entire population in a particular geographic area at a particular time. Pod casting involves recording of anything from music to philosophical ramblings, professional news or snorting noises – into a computer with the aid of a microphone, then posting the audio file onto the Internet. There, people can listen to it and more importantly, subscribe to a "feed" from the same pod caster, so that all new audio files from the source are automatically pulled down as soon as they are published. Pod casts are different from blogs and Wikis in that they cannot link directly to other pod casts. This makes pod casting a less social and probably less revolutionary medium.

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III. Gender Differences in ICT use in Nigeria

In Nigeria, gender differences in ICT use is linked to patterns of discrimination in the society at large as well as with patterns of power relations within the home. According to Jensen (1997) only 10 percent of the people riding the information superhighway via the internet are women. In the same line of thought, Okunna (2000) posits that this is the twenty-first century, but yet tradition, culture, religion and other factors have continued to widen the disparity between Nigerian men and women at the expense of women. Furthermore, in many parts of the world, high female illiteracy rates mean that women have little access to the print media. As for television and radio, women may not always be able to watch or listen to their preferred programmes due to so many obstacles, including spending most of their times caring for children.

Recognizing the vital role of women in the development of less industrialized societies, Scanlan (2004) argues that, it is undoubtedly a fact that regardless economic development level, population pressure, democratization, globalization, or region, women are in the fore front of development. Where then is the problem? Part of it is in colonization as Boserup (2007) argues. But there are still many other factors, including the way and manner women's narratives are written. For example, Women in Nigeria have taken an active role as partners in nationalist struggles, and at times spear-heading the movement to declare war against many forms of colonial impositions even prior to decolonization periods. The early stages of nationalist revolt against entrenched British rule in West Africa took the form of localized skirmishes like the Aba Women's fight against colonial tyranny of 1929. The Igbo women of eastern Nigeria feared that the head-count being carried out by the British was a prelude to women being taxed. Yet, the Perham's (1937) negative connotation The Aba Market Women's Riot in Nigeria, 1929 presents the women and their actions as violent and unlawful, ignoring the fact that about 25,000 of these women faced colonial repression and over a two-month period of insurrection, during which 50 of them were killed. These silences, stereotypes, prejudices and negative narrations against women further "justify" discrimination and bracketing of their immense contributions to sustainable development.

It is in line with the above that Guha (2002) argues "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another: that is it exists in being acknowledged" (p.18). This kind of self-consciousness is what Nigerian women need, and the best way to achieve this in the contemporary state is through the ICT. If the Aba women in the early 20thcentury succeeded in mobilizing fellow women against the colonial tyranny without the use of any advanced technology as available today, what would they achieve by the year 2020, when effectively and efficiently utilizing the ICTs? As Gallagher (1995) notes, issues relating to policy making in technological fields often ignore the needs, requirements, and aspirations of women unless gender analysis is involved.

A sociologically relevant observation at this juncture is that, the post-colonial policies that we have are an extension of the British colonial strategies of inequality. To this end therefore, it is worthy to note that, the benefits of favorable policies do not accrue only to women but to both men and women with very positive impacts on the economy and society at large. With the current situation, it is inevitable that the women are left out. Jorge (2001) described the fate of the women as vastly under-represented in government, business, political and social institutions and men still hold most of the management and control positions in telecommunication companies and regulatory or policy making bodies; regulatory decisions are made without any impact analysis; service licenses are attributed to companies without equal opportunity policies and controlled mostly by men.

Women's marginalization from ICT stems from the assumption that women benefit less from new educational and employment opportunities. Gender differences also exist with regard to access to information, access to ICTs, developing skills to search for information, and the very use of these technologies. In an entrenched patriarchal society like Nigeria, women were much less likely to use media especially computer-based media. This is partly because women lack the necessary skills to make use of the ICTs and had many negative attitudes about these media. Notwithstanding, in recent years there are some changes in women's use of the ICTs whereby they are now developing skills needed to operate this new technology effectively.The potential of the ICTs for the advancement of women is considerable. Networking, research, training, sharing of ideas and information– all these could be infinitely easier through relatively affordable computer-mediated communications such as E-mail, Internet hypertext and hypermedia (Steffen, 1995).

IV. The Challenges of ICTS use for Women

The challenges or obstacles to ICT utilization for women's development are a global phenomenon but it is more obvious in developing countries. As a result of Africa's numerous problems such as poverty, high level of illiteracy among others, it is the worst hit. Just as in many areas of development (e.g. agriculture, health, and education), women face enormous challenges in ICT for their own development. Using and benefiting from ICT requires learning, training, affordable access to the technology, availability of information relevant to

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them and a great amount of collaborative efforts to create an enabling environment.Several obstacles have resulted in the differential access and impact of the ICTs on men and women. The following is a highlight of some:

a) Infrastructure

The success for the utilization of any ICT rests in the availability of the infrastructure that is set up in the environment. ICTinfrastructure in most developing countries and costs are exceedingly high. The little infrastructure available is even concentrated in the urban areas, and the bulk of women live in the rural areas. This tends to pose a huge gender gap in access to communication. It affects the majority of women, who in most African countries including Nigeria are poor and are living in rural areas. They lack access to these infrastructures in terms of access to computers, electricity, phone lines, computer hard and soft wares, servers etc.The infrastructure deficit of the rural areas coincides with gender demographics –more women live in rural areas than men. Therefore, majority of the population in rural areas, women have a smaller chance than men to access new technologies. As the UNDP Report (2000) noted, women with their special responsibilities for children and the elderly, find it less easy than men to migrate to towns and cities. The urban bias in connectivity thus deprives women more than men, of the universal right to communicate.Findings of George (2005) show that economic mobility as well as professional achievements mostly conceal certain underlying conditions of social upheavals among immigrant families and communities. This does not imply that women need to be encouraged to migrate to the cities as bread winners, rather, to show the trickle-down effects of their engagements, and to whistle-blow the dangers associated with urban-bias.

b) Education and Skills

Gender imbalances in education access still persist in most developing countries, despite the fact that education of women has been shown repeatedly to effect improvements in health and economic welfare. Education involves literacy, language, computer skills and information literacy. In each case, women in developing countries are less likely than men to have the requisite education and knowledge. According to the United Nations Report (2000), two-thirds of the world's 876 million illiterates are women who reside mostly in developing countries. Similarly, women are also less likely to know the international languages that dominate the web. Therefore, given their limited access to schooling, women especially those living in the rural areas, are also much less likely than men to have computer skills. This results to limited exposure and isolation of many women in developing countries particularly those in rural areas to have access to education and other skills, which will enhance the utilization of these infrastructures.

The case of Nana Asma'u, the daughter of Sheikh Usman Ɗan Fodio is a good example for reference at this point. Mack and Boyd (2000) have done a terrific job by writing about the historical, spiritual, and literary portraits of this remarkable Muslim woman, who at age 20, was a warrior, a teacher, a poet, and a key adviser to her father in his struggle to bring about a revolution (1804). It was in recognition of Nana Asma'u's intellectual contributions to the revolution that made Mack and Boyd to give the title of their work One Woman's Jihad: Nana Asma'u, Scholar and Scribe (2000). One major take-home from her case is if Nana Asma'u (1793 - 1864), was able to utilize her educational skills and assist in making a successful revolution at a time when cell phones were not invented, what can the current women of the 21st Century achieve, utilizing the powers of ICTs?

c) Socio-Cultural and Economic Problems

There are several issues related to the above factor as it affects women. This leads to various discriminations which extend to the realm of ICTs. Women generally tend to have more limited direct access than men to information and they are even restricted to accessing the Internet in some countries including Nigeria due to culture and religion. The African Gender Institute (2003) stated that in some societies there is disapproval of women's request to overnight browsing in a public cyber café especially married women. In addition, rural information centers are located in areas that women may not be comfortable frequenting. Although, there is recently a transformation in the access to internet through cellphones, it nevertheless has its own limitations including the lack of resources to constantly buy recharge cards for the phones; the power failure to charge the phones; and role conflict with the women's expectations as wives, as mothers, and as workers or full-time housewives. In other words, women have problems of time given their multiple roles and heavy domestic responsibilities. Their leisure hours are few and the centers may not be open when women can visit them. To yield positive results therefore, every meaningful policies should therefore reflect women's moral, spiritual, and cultural values.

Traditional cultural attitudes in most societies discriminate against women, depriving them access to education and technology. Girls are encouraged to take any job or encouraged to get married rather than seek higher education. There is also the issue of gender bias in attitudes towards women studying or using information technology. Many people hold outmoded views that girls cannot think or work scientifically and that science is too mechanical and technical for girls, thus discouraging female students.Phobia is also another obstacle in that most women have developed it

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for ICT especially considering the negative perception of the ICT tool as a tool for domination and oppression of NGOs to disabuse the minds of women on ICT as a negative tool.

Lack of financial resources can hinder women to participate fully in ICT community. This is because almost all communication facilities cost money and majority of women are afflicted by poverty. Poverty is rooted in gender imbalances, which are in turn rooted in gender inequality dynamics that stem from issues which cut across race, religion, status, culture and geographical location among others. Thus in comparison to men, women are worst hit as a result of their very limited involvement in economic activities in relation to their male counterparts. Okunna (2000) stressing on this maintains that the major cause of poverty among women especially in Nigeria is their low access to credit and income-earning opportunities, as well as marginalization from major economic activities. Since most women in Africa are full housewives without paid employment, they cannot fully participate in information technology. The ICT has its financial implication for every user requires money. To use cell phones, it must be recharged and to browse the internet and design web sites require money. Most women do not make much money as men, so they cannot afford the necessary computers, hardware and online services cost. More so, those that have the money believe to spend it on something else than ICT.

V. ICT Prospects for Women

Equal rights and full participation of women in all spheres of life is a sine-qua-non for full and complete development of any modern civilized nation. Women constitute majority of the population of many nations, and therefore need to be incorporated in the activities and affairs of those societies. In the area of information technology, for women's access and use of the media to be addressed it is necessary to consider, appreciate, and utilize their potentials, which could accrue from their full access and equal participation in the ICTs. To this end, certain measures must be put in place to address gender discrimination in information and communication technology. What are some of these measures?

a) Educational Empowerment

Education and information are central to building human capabilities. Education builds cognitive skills for processing information. Women's empowerment educationally will help them strengthen their individual and collective capacity as women. It will also enable them to advance their status as women in the society as well as give them the opportunities that ICT offers. Women should be encouraged in the area of education. Educational empowerment for the women can only be realized through universal access to and completion of basic education with resources adequate to ensure that the functional literacy and numeracy are instilled in a sustainable sense. This will enable them to understand the language of information technology and be in a position to use it efficiently. Hafkins (2001) maintains that women need to educate themselves on technical areas, so that they can translate the technical terms into reality. Similarly, the level of literacy must be addressed by way of providing training for women to learn the use of ICT facilities.As mentioned earlier, this task is not only a government's responsibility, but equally that of the civil society.

As Arimah (2001) posits, the informal sector in Nigeria needs value-based reforms that can be achieved through government's exploration of new ways of engaging the viability of the sector, and through public private partnership (PPP). Thus, the private sector should accrue part of whatever profit it makes to the community in the form of Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) and the education sector needs the largest share from that. Additionally, such policies and sharing formulae should be favourable to the girl-child and women, as educating them is as good as educating the community as a whole.

b) Economic Empowerment

Poverty and illiteracy remain the primary obstacles to internet growth in developing countries like Nigeria. Women and children are still the majority of those living in poverty. Reducing the gender gap in education will invariably increase the opportunity for women's economic empowerment. There is also the need to reduce job discrimination at their work places to financially empower women. In addition, creating cooperative societies for women will enable them have access to small scale loans that would help start small scale businesses.In the long run, it will increase women's finances and make them less dependent on men, and eventually increase their financial access to ICT facilities.

c) Provision of Infrastructural Facilities

To achieve the right to communicate as a basic human right for women in Nigeria, women have to take on themselves the difficult task of gaining access to the necessary infrastructures that will enable them use the ICTs. This entails the provision of more infrastructures that will take care of the majority of women who reside in rural areas as well as making available the latest infrastructure for users' needs. This means an understanding of the system of access and use of the ICTs by majority of the people in the society. Similarly, women must be involved in the technical complexities of information technology in order to reflect gender issues. The Nigerian government and NGOs therefore, should work towards actively devising creative solutions to provide access to ICT. Access to communications and ICT through community access points should be looked into by government and NGOs. They should also look

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into concerns related to consumers' ability to pay for services, particularly in rural and poor areas. Universal access policies aim at developing solutions that provide community access at affordable prices. New technologies have made these efforts promising and many developing countries are investing in such policies.For instance, Nigeria has adopted the rural telephoning policies and with the collaboration of some international agencies that are working towards realizing this goal. Expansion of public telephones and ICT access point's example, in post offices, community viewing centers etc. are some of the efforts.

d) Attitudinal Change Towards the Use of Icts

For women and girls to enter the information age for ICT use to be engendered, women must transcend some attitudinal barriers. Since science and technology disciplines are domainsthat are historically ascribed to males, women and girls find it intimidating and alienating. They therefore tend to see the ICT sector as a realm that is unfriendly and dominated by men. Thus they assume that technology and its production, application and maintenance as areas that fall more easily into the male domain. Women therefore need to overcome this technophobia;they need to be encouraged to change such attitudes that act as 'internal' barriers to their participating in the ICT sector; andthey should be encouraged to take up the challenges of the new information and communication technology in order to excel in it as they have done in other fields of endeavor in Nigeria.

The northern part of Nigeria is known to be the most educationally backward region in Nigeria as Hajiya Aishatu Jibril, the Minister of State for Education estimated the number of child beggars in the region at more than 10million, and the menace is on the increase. Undoubtedly, the girl-child is the worst hit. Now, the from the Nana Asma'u's case, we can understand that, the Nigerian women, notably the northerners, have a role model that can inspire them in changing their attitudes in favor of seeking for the both religious and secular knowledge including the ICTs' for the betterment of their lives and sustainable development.

VI. Conclusion

It is obvious that women have embraced ICT as a way forward in their quest for empowerment. Notwithstanding, they are caught in a web of numerous challenges some of which have been highlighted earlier on. To wriggle out of these problems in Nigeria, ICT policy and programmes must address the needs of women. Similarly, using and benefitting from ICT requires learning, training, affordable access to the technology, availability of information relevant to the user and a great amount of support for enabling environments. Solving ICT problems and enhancing the position of women in access and utilization would indeed facilitate development in the various areas of women endeavours. In addition, sensitizing women's organization and civil society in general to the gender impact of ICT issues in Nigeria would yield greater dividends for women. There is an urgent need to improve the representatives of women in the use of the new technology to enhance their status. This will increase their visibility as women in the society as well as eliminate discriminative tendencies against them. Women in Nigeria need to be committed in the use and access to ICT in order to demystify the general notion that ICT is a field exclusively reserved for men. Furthermore, engendering ICT policies in Nigeria will secure the benefits of the information age for girls and women. This will make them reap the benefits of the information age. Finally, the Nigerian woman needs all the help she can get to free herself from the forces that subjugate her in the wider society and in the world of the ICTs, which are powerful instruments for creating and reinforcing herself-image.

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A New Perspective Regard the Information System for Social Services

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Abstract -The article aims at contributing to the debate about the introduction of ICT in social services with a reflection that, on the basis of the development of the ISSS of the Italian Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia , shows that it is possible to set up an information system fill to the particular nature of social work and, in particular, to its methodology of work and to the complexity of social needs and of the relationship between social services' user and social worker. It points out that to get this result is important to give up the deterministic approach to technology as well as the centralized and top down approach to ISSS, and to adopt a relational approach to both these issues.

Keywords : *information system, social work, new technology, community of practice, your keyword here.*

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Abstract - The article aims at contributing to the debate about the introduction of ICT in social services with a reflection that, on the basis of the development of the ISSS of the Italian Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia , shows that it is possible to set up an information system fill to the particular nature of social work and, in particular, to its methodology of work and to the complexity of social needs and of the relationship between social services' user and social worker. It points out that to get this result is important to give up the deterministic approach to technology as well as the centralized and top down approach to ISSS, and to adopt a relational approach to both these issues.

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I. Introduction

Recently, Recently, in Italy there has been a widespread increased interest about the informatization of cartella sociale and the development of the Information System for Social Services (ISSS). Cartella sociale (CS) is the main professional instrument used by social workers to register the interventions they plan and intend implementing to take care of people with social needs. The ISSS is the informational system aimed at collecting data and information about the users and the activities of social services in order to plan social policies.

In Italy, up to the present ISSS and CS have been thought of as two autonomous instruments, the first related to directional objectives and the second related to managing objectives. The theoretical reflection and the empirical application have also carried out these issues separately. But this is a great mistake and misunderstanding because ISSS and CS are both tied very strictly at the theoretical and at the empirical level.

The Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) tried to overcome this separation, by experimenting a regional ISSS routed on a peculiar kind of CS, that is, a CS that focuses on the social services user instead of on the social worker activity. From 2005 to 2012, I supported the Department for Health and Assistance of the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) to build this new kind of CS and to set up the regional ISSS. In order to overcome the abovementioned limits and to set up an ISSS useful for local and national levels and suited to collect data produced by information systems of different sectors (in primis from the health sector), I adopted a bottom-up approach. Moving from the consideration of the great importance of social workers' activity in order to collect up-to-date data about social services users and activities, I set up a new CS that differs totally from the traditional one and represents the core of ISSS.

The aim of the article is to present the distinctiveness of this perspective on ISSS and the methodological approach assumed to set it up in the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region.

II. The Development of Isss in Italy

Although in Italy the debate on ISSS dates back to 1978, at present there is no national ISSS, but only some regional ISSS which differ from each other even within the same region. This depends on many reasons, but two of the principle ones are: the institutional context - in particular the multilevel governance of social policies, so there are three decisional levels: national, regional and local - and the approach to ISSS development, considered to be a substantially technological issue.

With regard to the first reason, it is possible to see that the debate on ISSS dates back to 1978 when the national law L.N. 833 that set up the National Health System, established to build a national informational system for the National Health System. Since that moment, the interest for a national informational system for social services begun to increase in the social services sector as well. In the 80s, a special national Commission was founded in order to constitute the ISSS. The National Commission failed in its objective. In the absence of a national law for the whole social services sector, it was impossible to regulate this field in order to collect data that represented the same services and interventions. Every region, in fact, organized its social services in an autonomous way. As a consequence, at national level there were many different services and interventions called by the same name. There was neither a common vocabulary to indicate the social services, nor was there a common organization thereof. The failure of the National Commission did not stifle the interest in the settlement of the national ISSS that remained one of the most important issues at national and regional level. The central government as well as the regional governments, in fact, needed more and more data in order to plan and to manage a sector

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characterized by ever growing complex social needs and by more and more numerous actors from non profit and private sectors. In that period, in fact, the non profit and private organizations started to have a central role in delivering public social services and became one of the most relevant partners of the regional and local authorities in planning social policies. Hence, ISSS was considered the most useful instrument to plan social services on the basis of a wide and close analysis of the current state of these services and social needs. ISSS, moreover, is considered as an important instrument to co-ordinate all public and non profit actors involved in delivering social services.

For these reasons, some regions went on by themselves and tried to set up a regional ISSS. But they found the same difficulties at this level too, as there are many different ways to organize social services because each municipality is allowed to organize social assistance in its own way. Hence, the regions have also found it very difficult to set up a regional ISSS.

The national law L. N. 328/2000, regarding the reform of social services sector, brought the attention once more on the ISSS and Art. 21 established that every region must constitute a regional ISSS useful to both the national and regional social services planning. L328/2000 was seen as being the real opportunity of building a national ISSS. But the reforming of the fifth title of the Constitution (L. N. 7/2001), which assigns to the Regions the authority to make laws in matters of social assistance, bereaved the L. N. 328/2000 of its power.

For all these reasons, in Italy at the moment, there is no national ISSS but only regional ISSS which differs each other and also within of the same Region there are a lot of different local ISSS set up by individual municipalities. In addition, these local ISSS are not integrated with information systems of other sectors, such as health, labour market and education, with which it is important for social policies to be integrated. These local ISSS collect administrative data, functional to meet national requirements but not the needs of local municipalities in the planning of local social policies. Integration and information sharing among local municipalities and national agencies is one of the highest priorities of national and regional decision makers in order to plan social policies.

With regard to the second main reason mentioned above, it is possible to recognize that in Italy the reflection about ISSS considers its development as a mere technological question and shows a lack of awareness in the fact that there is a wide range of more complex organisational and people-related factors to be taken into consideration. This shortcoming, very serious in itself, becomes more dangerous in the social services sector. In this case, in fact, the nature of the intervention and of the social services users are so specific that ICT rouses suspicion and fears in social workers. In Italy the social workers' perception of ICT hasn't been explored jet, but a lot of international literature have analyzed this issue and have pointed out that social workers are reluctant to accept the fact that information and the technology that supports the management of information may be useful for them as well. Steyaert and Gould [2009, 2011], for example, reconstruct the current thinking about information technology in social work and categorize social work commentators'critiques under two headings: the humanist and the anti-humanist approaches. «The humanist case is an objection to technology as representing an intrusion into the person-centered project of social work, displacing the authenticity of the encounter between worker and service user and replacing it with pre-occupations with accountability and bureaucratic efficiency (Burton and van den Broek, 2008). A corollary of this is the argument that human reasoning and the heuristics of human problem solving cannot be reduced to algorithms and depend on tacit knowledge (Sapey, 1997). The latter position overlaps with the anti-humanist case, […] focuses on the role of technology in regulating the subjectivity of the person, extending the capillaries of power between actors. This line of critique returned recently in the social work literature in Parton's (2008) assertion that social work is being transformed from the "social" to the "informational". His argument is that there has been "a shift from a narrative to a database way of thinking and operating (Parton, 2008, p. 253) within which the close relationship with individuals is replaced by a more distant concert with subjects reconstituted as the aggregation of the data held about them» [Steyaert and Gould, 2011 p. 58-59]. These considerations about ICT in social services highlight the importance to involve social workers in designing and constructing ISSS. On the contrary, social workers and their intervention have usually been forgotten in the ISSS development. Social workers, in fact, are still stereotyped as technophobic, also there is evidence of their increasingly involvement with technology to enrich professional practice [Rafferty, Steyaert 2007].

In Italy ICT has been introduced in social services under the pressure of the new managerialism and its emphasis on the use of performance monitoring, performance indicators, the evaluation of the end result and transparency. Hence, they have been considered dangerous for the integrity of social work and for the user-social worker relationship. Another reason for the Italian social workers' opposition to ITC and ISSS is related to their limited abilities in using a pc. In many cases, in fact, social workers were not able to use the pc or had only the basic abilities for using it. So they have found many difficulties in using the technologies and programs adopted by the ISSS, that require higher skills. For this reason, the ISSS has often remained an instrument for managers and for a limited number of social workers who are keen on technology or who

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recognize in this a useful instrument for their professional career.

In addition, ISSS development has been carried out following three main approaches: the accountable approach, the encyclopedic approach and the strategic approach. The accountable approach considers the ISSS as an instrument to collect and analyze a limited set of data referred to social services' expenditure, users and workers in order to plan social policies. The encyclopedic approach considers the ISSS as an instrument aimed at monitoring all the social services by the collection of a wider set of data extended to social services' structural and organizational dimension, and to the number and typology of the users and of the workers in the social services. The strategic approach finally considers the ISSS as an instrument to account the input and output of the social services' activities, by the collection of data and indicators referred to supply and demand, quality, efficacy and efficiency. These three approaches have developed three models of ISSS: the top down model, the feedback or bottom up model and the interactive model [Mauri 2007: 32]. These three models, moreover, have been carried out with a centralized method, moving from the national level to the local one. The result of these approaches and method is: the absence of a national ISSS and the presence of some regional ISSS that differ each other and sometimes also within the same region; and the necessity to get data by the expensive collection of data carried out by ISTAT (the National Institute of Statistics) which often contain many errors, missing data and delays.

With the aim to overcome these limits and to set up a regional ISSS useful for the managers of social services as well as for the social workers and for both the national and the regional level of social services system, my colleagues and I have proposed a new approach to ISSS and a new method to set it up.

III. A New Perspective on the ISSS

Our approach regarding the ISSS can be defined relational and operative. In fact it focuses on the relationships between individuals inside an organization and between organizations, and on the social workers' activity.

In our approach the ISSS, before being a data flow, is a relational flow, that is a flow of relationships between individuals inside an organization and between individuals of different organizations that cooperate. This means that the first attention in ISSS development concerns the roles and the positions inside an organization and their interactions. This aspect is particularly important in social services' organizations that are not bureaucratic but adhocratic ones. Social workers, in fact, are semi-professionals, they have a professional autonomy based on the competences obtained by a specific curriculum of studies and training. Hence, they are more dependent on their profession than on organizational hierarchy [Collins 1992]. Moreover, social services' organizations are loosely coupled ones [Weick 1988] that means that relationships between individuals inside the organization have weak ties. Therefore, they are not predefined nor predictable. In this type of organization it may be difficult to define roles and processes with the evidence requested by the ISSS. But, at the same time, flexibility must be allowed by the ISSS. Social work, furthermore, is multi-disciplinary and based on working groups and equipés. ISSS has to reflect all the interactions related to this peculiarity of social work. That means that ISSS cannot only be a data base or a data warehouse that collects data gathered from a lot of different data bases. If it were like this, it would only remain an instrument to archive data with a high probability of making mistakes in registering the data itself, of not recording up-to-date data and of not having data ready available when needed. In our approach, the ISSS is not aimed at collecting data by transferring it from one data base to another, but to build an informational system which puts in relation different informational flows inside the organization itself and between different organizations. ISSS does not transfer data, but connects data flows. That means that the data remains in the flow where it is produced and is the property of its producer. In this way every data producer remains the owner of the data and the person responsible for its validity and reliability. This is a fundamental dimension. The experimentations of ISSS have not paid attention to data producer and have considered the latter as a mere executive who must only provide data, often without any knowledge about its use, and without any utility for his/her own activities. Hence, data producers have no concern for ISSS and consider its implementation a mere obligation or an activity functional to managers or to regional or national authorities. In our approach, on the contrary, ISSS must be useful for data producers as well as for their managers and for other authorities. For this reason it is necessary that data producers know for whom and for what reason they are requested to provide data, and how the data will be analyzed and elaborated. It is also important that data elaboration reflects the original meaning of the data so the producers are able to recognize it in the elaboration. Moving from this convincement, in our approach ISSS must be operative, that is, it should be based on social workers' activity. This, in fact, must be one of the main ISSS's informational flows and ISSS must reflect the process of social work practice. Far too often, in fact, social workers have resisted ISSS because it doesn't reflect their activity and in particular the process of assistance on the whole. In many cases, in fact, ISSS requests from the social workers only single data, extrapolated from

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the context of the assistance project regarding the person they are taking care of.

For these reasons, in our approach CS is considered not only an instrument to document social workers' activity, but also an instrument to implement ISSS. Documentation has always had a fundamental role in social work, in order to support social assessment and planning, to monitor interventions, to involve users in their assistance project, to evaluate how users react to assistance projects and to make the necessary changes. Documentation is also important to account their activity to their managers, but especially to promote reflectivity on the practice. Nevertheless, social workers often consider documentation as a bureaucratic activity only aimed at controlling their interventions by managers or as a personal activity functional only to their practice and not to the whole organization as well [Sapey 1997; Fazzi 2006; Humpreys, Kertesz 2013]. They often don't fill it in completely or register data and information in a subjective way thereby making it difficult to understand it and impossible to use it for organizational objectives and in particular for organizational improvement. The use of technological applications to document the social workers' activities could cause this tendency to grow. If applications are rigid, based on the logic of the data base (Parton 2009), built without paying attention to social work rationale [Rafferty, Steyaert 2007], no other result is possible. On the contrary, if new technologies are adapted to social work methodology, social workers can find in them a real support for their intervention. For this reason, in our approach we used new technologies to support not only the documentation but the whole assistance process and in particular the definition and implementation of the user's assistance project. This has meant the reviewing of the CS in order to make it reflect the user's assistance project in accordance with what is currently happening in the health system with the Electronic Patient Dossier. In fact, the CS may support the social worker's activity only if it does not remain a monitoring instrument but becomes an instrument for planning and evaluation. In other words, it is efficacious only if it is an instrument focused on social services users and not on the social workers themselves. The social services user and the assistance project built for him/her, in fact, is the focal point of the social worker's activity and consequently of social workers' documentation, as well as the focal point of the informational flow from the social work to the ISSS. So, we restructured the CS as a dossier for the social services user.

This passage has entailed the realization of three passages: from the logic of the procedure to the logic of the project, from the logic of categories to the logic of the person, from the logic of automatism to the logic of reflectivity.

The first passage, in fact, concerns the user's dossier which reflects the logic of social planning so it articulates in sections coinciding with social planning sequences that are: assessment, individuation of objectives and expected results, definition of activities, individuation of resources, and evaluation. This characteristic is fundamental to make the user's dossier an instrument useful to support the social worker's activity and not only to account it to managers or to place it in the archives. Social work is aimed at producing a change in social services users by the special relationship built between the user and the social worker. This implies that social work must accompany the development of the relationship and of the changes that the assistance project can make in the users. Hence, the social work needs to be supported by instruments that are flexible, personalized and useful not only to register this subjective dimension but also to promote the reflection about the practice thereof in order to guide the user to attain the objectives of his/her project. For this reason our user dossier reserves special attention in the defining of the objectives of the assistance project. Far too often, in fact, social workers confuse the objectives with activities, or define the activities without indicating the objectives to which the former are addressed. In this way, it is impossible for the social workers to support the user in his/her process of change and to recognize if there has been any change. Without a project, the social worker's activity remains a mere delivery of assistance interventions, defined on the basis of the availability of supply. In addition the user is considered on the basis of the available interventions and with regard to predefined criteria established for access by the users instead of on the basis of his/her real needs.

In the second passage, user's dossier is built with regard to a single person with specific needs and resources, so it reserves special attention for recognizing his/her situation by the assessment procedure and it also defines a personal assistance project by identifying specific objectives and interventions. With regard to these dimensions, our effort has been to avoid the risk of reducing the «assessment to a linear, "tick box" process rejecting any notion of the exchange model of assessment which acknowledges the person's expertise in their situation and gives scope for a sharing of information between client and worker» [Postle 2002 p. 343]. So we tried to find a balance between the logic of the check list, functional to obtain standard information and data useful for statistical elaborations and the «narrative» [Parton 2008] logic aimed at presenting a picture of the social services users which is both subjective and social, and constructed on the basis of the relationship between users and social workers. For this reason the user dossier, in the section reserved for the assessment, offers a check list with a classification of ten macro categories of social problems, each of which articulates in further micro categories, as well as a free field in

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which the social worker can describe in more detail every micro category he/she has selected.

The third passage set up to build the user dossier consists in moving from the logic of automatism to the logic of reflectivity. It is a consequence of the logic of the project that entails the reflection on the development of the project in order to understand whether it proceeds as expected, whether the interventions activated obtain the foreseen results or others and, if so, whether they imply that changes be made or not to the project itself. For this reason, it is important that the user dossier stimulates the social workers to questions themselves and the users about their situation and the development thereof, instead of proving the answers. Asking in-depth questions is necessary not only to reach a better and more complete knowledge but also to produce hypothesis about the causes and the possible solutions of users' problems and difficulties, and also to find innovative ways of tackling them [Bini 2003]. In order to support this kind of mental process, the fulfilling of our user dossier is not an automatic passage from one section to another. Social workers, in fact, are allowed to proceed only if data recorded is coherent with the other data registered in their section as well as in the others. Some problems, for example, can be only tackled with some kind of interventions and the programme identifies whether all the data registered is compatible.

IV. The Role of the Community of Practice

As abovementioned, our approach regarding the ISSS is not only operative but also relational, that is, based on the convincement that unless social workers do become involved in the ways in which ISSS is designed and set up, it will fail to collect constantly up-to-date data and to be used by social workers. In order to set up the FVG Region ISSS we adopted a method based on the social workers' participation and we identified in the community of practice, the instrument to reach it. In particular, we conceptualized the setting up of the ISSS as a process of developing and linking communities of practice. The notion of community of practice was developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger ([Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998] as the basis of a social theory of learning. The basic affirmation made by Lave and Wenger is that communities of practice are everywhere and that we are generally involved in many communities, including families, employee groups, professional organization, sport and leisure groups. We are constantly engaged in the pursuit of enterprises of all kinds. As we define these enterprises and engage in their pursuit together, we interact with each other and with the world and we interweave our relations with each other and with the world accordingly. In other words we learn. In time, this collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the expected social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over a period of time by the sustained pursuit of shared enterprises. It makes sense, therefore, to call these kinds of communities «communities of practice» [Wenger 1998: 45] a community of practice can be defined as a collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavor. Communities of practice emerge in response to common interest or position, and play an important role in forming their members' participation in, and orientation to, the world around them. Members are brought together by joining in common activities and by "what they have learned through their mutual engagement in these activities" [Wenger 1998]. Every community of practice ha its own routines and rituals, artefacts and symbols, stories and histories. In this respect, a community of practice is different from a community of interest in that it involves a shared practice.

We considered particularly useful for the ISSS development the three main characteristics of the community of practice identified by Wenger [1998]: what it is about - its joint enterprise as understood and continually renegotiated by its members; how it functions - mutual engagement that binds members together as a social entity; what capability it has produced – the shared repertoire of common resources (routines, sensibilities, artefacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time.

We considered these three aspects very important in order to set up an ISSS perceived by all the social workers as their own and as an instrument routed in their practice, working methodology and experience and as a consequence, fit to support their daily activity. A community of practice, in fact, involves much more than the technical knowledge or skill associated with undertaking some task. Members are involved in a set of relationships over time [Lave and Wenger 1991: 98] and communities develop around things that matter to people [Wenger 1998]. The community of practice organizes some particular area of knowledge and activity which gives members a sense of joint enterprise and identity.

We considered the community of practice, moreover, very important in promoting imagination and in solving problems in particular, by developing new and alternative ideas and solutions. A community of practice, in fact, includes ways of doing and approaching things shared to some significant extent among members.

For these reasons, our efforts have been to transform the professional community of FVG social workers into a community of practice aimed at developing the FVG ISSS.

First of all, we involved all the social workers in the building of a common vocabulary and in particular a

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common set of categories to describe social needs and social services. According to Marradi [1980, 1988], we assumed that data is not something available in nature and ready to use, but something that needs to be built through specific conceptual operations and agreements. Between the reality and the language used to describe it there is no univocal correspondence. One word can refer to different concepts used to talk about the reality. Hence, it is necessary to define and to share the meaning of the words used to describe the various aspects of the reality. In our case, it was necessary to set the FVG social workers to share the meaning of the terms used to describe social needs and social services intervention, in order to be sure that the data registered would refer to the same aspects as the reality. Since that moment, in fact, every social worker described the social needs of his/her users in a subjective way and every social services organization gave different names to services and interventions that are exactly alike. With the collaboration of all the FVG social workers, through focus groups and meetings, we collected all the classification of social services used by singular organizations and reviewed them in order to elaborate a common classification shared by all the social workers. We also took special care in building a correct classification. Far too often, in fact, classifications in use are not correct because they do not respect the three essential criteria of classification that are, as Marradi emphasizes [1980, 1988]: there is one, and only one, criterion of division – only one fundamentum divisionis; one category excludes all the others – mutual exclusivity of categories; and the categories on the whole are exhaustive. We identified a set of a hundred interventions that cover all the interventions used by the FVG social services. All these interventions are homogeneous and on the same level of generality, but refer to different areas of interventions that are: social work, access to services, housing, work and employment, residential care, semi-residential care and community care. Hence, we identified two distinct levels of intervention: a general level composed of eight macro-categories and a less general level composed of one hundred of micro-categories of intervention. Some of these micro-categories moreover can be further detailed into more specific sub-interventions. In this way, it is possible to describe the social work activity in depth by considering three different and homogeneous levels of complex interventions: the macro-, micro- and sub-micro interventions, which can subsequently be aggregated. We did an analogous procedure to set up a classification of social needs to use for assessment. In particular, we identified ten areas of problems each of which is composed of a set of macro-problems that can be detailed still further in micro-problems. Our effort was to avoid the risk of reducing assessment to a mere check list. In fact, we did not identify a set of micro-problems but left this level to be filled in by every social worker. Hence, after choosing a macro-problem from a set of predefined options, every social worker can describe in a subjective way and in more detail the problem he/she has to tackle.

The participation of the social workers, moreover, allowed us to set up a social services user's dossier that is also an instrument for evaluation. In fact, it was possible to introduce a specific section in which the social worker evaluates the skills of the user and of his/her personal and social network to manage the difficult situation in which he/she is. In this way, it is easier to identify the interventions which better fit him/her and so further empower his/her potentiality. The social workers' collaboration was fundamental in sharing the criteria of evaluation and the scoring.

As you can see, the identification of a set of categories of interventions and of problems and the definition of a set of evaluation criteria are methodological issues that can be handled only with the involvement of social workers and confirm our efforts to adapt the new technology to the specific nature of social work. The social workers, in fact, contribute in avoiding the risk of reducing the assessment to a deterministic, linear process, increasingly far from the complexity of social needs and of the relationship between social services users and social workers. They also contribute to keep the technology used for the documentation of their activities coherent to the nature of social work and to the social workers' day-to-day activity. Moreover, the social workers contribute to the promotion of their reflectivity, the empowerment of their narrative and communicative thinking and the safeguarding of their holistic approach to assessment.

V. The Role of the Web

The ISSS experimented in FVG would not be possible without the New Internet. The New Internet, in fact, is completely different from the data base and its logic feared by Parton [2008]. It has enormously exploded global interconnection and made singular networks more inter-active and inter-operative. While the First Internet, that is the Web 1.0, was characterized by static websites, that made it possible only to send emails and to use research engines but did not allow users to interact, the New Internet, that is the Web 2.0 or 3.0, is characterized by social networks and bidirectional communication [Moruzzi 2012]. By the numerous available technological applications, in fact, users are allowed to participate directly and actively in the communication, not only by reading and answering but also by building on its contents. The New Internet has involved every dimension of life. Hence, we are living in a completely new society called the «web-society» where «action and communication are tied together so strongly that one influences the other and vice versa» and their connection has enormous consequences on

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individuals and on organizations [Cipolla 2013]. On the one hand, individuals connected to Internet may receive at any moment and everywhere an enormous amount of data referred to them and if they want to, and declare their agreement, they can share this data with other people and other organizations. In this way they can be more relational and stronger in the relations with the organizations they are interested in. Individuals become «Citizen Environment» a new organizational entity characterized by a great techno-communication culture, so that they may establish connections with organizations in a more qualified manner, not only as receivers of information but also as producers of more and more personalized communications [Moruzzi 2005]. On the other hand, organizations are involved in a permanent exchange of communication with clients, partners, citizens and other public and private organizations; their traditional boundaries become mobile and can be moved, so organizations extend themselves less along the vertical line and more along the horizontal one [Moruzzi 2005]. In this way, the New Internet develops a new environment characterized by a high level of shared and circulating information that produces a singular synergy between information located in individuals, in organizations and in Internet. So, information may be returned to its producer who is allowed to take possession of it once again and to re-use it for his/her own objectives.

The New Internet offered us the right technological environment to build a relational ISSS and a CS focused on the social services user as described above. In fact, the New Internet not only allows the managing of a huge amount of data but also offers unprecedented opportunities for interaction, interconnection and inter-operability. This enabled us to overcome many limitations and difficulties of an organizational and inter-organizational nature, and to develop highly customized and relational information systems which are not only informative but also communicative. The New Internet allowed us to set up a very flexible user dossier, made up of sections which reflect the process of assistance realized by the social worker together with the user. This process is not linear but goes backwards and forwards, stops and then proceeds and finally joins rationality and irrationality. The user dossier we built with the New Internet reflects all these movements.

In the New Internet, moreover, social work can find a helpful tool with which to effectively address some of the key challenges that are testing it: to get legitimacy by increasingly large groups of people that contest its existence; to respond, in a personalized and equitable way, to needs more and more difficult to detect and that are too complex to be tackled; to guide and accompany the building of social policies in accordance with models of governance that involve a large number of levels and actors.

VI. Conclusion

The aim of the article was to contribute to the debate regarding the introduction of ICT in social services with a reflection based on the development of the ISSS of the Autonomous Region of FVG, that shows that it is possible to set up an information system suitable for the particular nature of the social work and coherent to its methodology of work, to the complexity of social needs and to the relationship between social services user and the social worker. We pointed out that to achieve this result it is important to give up the deterministic approach to technology as well as the centralized and top down approach to ISSS, and to adopt a relational approach to both these issues. On the one hand, this means paying attention to the relational nature of technology and to the relations involved in applying it in organizations. On the other hand, it is important to consider ISSS not only as an instrument to collect data describing the reality but, most of all, as an instrument to develop the knowledge of its users and to promote relationships among them. For this reason, we proposed focusing the ISSS on the day-to-day activity of social workers and building it with their direct and constant involvement. In order to do this, we found the notion of community of practice particularly helpful. The community of practice is a very useful instrument in developing the kind of involvement and mutual commitment as well as the repertory of tools and knowledge that are fundamental to setting up the ISSS. In our experience, in fact, the community of practice among all the FVG social workers allowed to compile a common vocabulary and a set of operative procedures shared by all the social services of the region. As a consequence, the ISSS that we have built reflects the real activity of the social services and collects data which has the same and unambiguous meaning for all those who use it.

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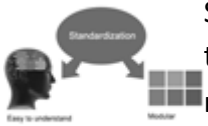


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"

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3. Submission of Manuscripts,

4. Manuscript's Category,

5. Structure and Format of Manuscript,

6. After Acceptance.

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A purpose of organizing a research paper is to let people to interpret your effort selectively. The journal requires the following sections, submitted in the order listed, each section to start on a new page.

The introduction will be compiled from reference matter and will reflect the design processes or outline of basis that direct you to make study. As you will carry out the process of study, the method and process section will be constructed as like that. The result segment will show related statistics in nearly sequential order and will direct the reviewers next to the similar intellectual paths throughout the data that you took to carry out your study. The discussion section will provide understanding of the data and projections as to the implication of the results. The use of good quality references all through the paper will give the effort trustworthiness by representing an alertness of prior workings.

Writing a research paper is not an easy job no matter how trouble-free the actual research or concept. Practice, excellent preparation, and controlled record keeping are the only means to make straightforward the progression.

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To make a paper clear

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Mistakes to evade

- Insertion a title at the foot of a page with the subsequent text on the next page
- Separating a table/chart or figure - impound each figure/table to a single page
- Submitting a manuscript with pages out of sequence

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· Align the primary line of each section

· Present your points in sound order

· Use present tense to report well accepted

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An abstract is a brief distinct paragraph summary of finished work or work in development. In a minute or less a reviewer can be taught the foundation behind the study, common approach to the problem, relevant results, and significant conclusions or new questions.

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- Reason of the study - theory, overall issue, purpose
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- To the point depiction of the research
- Consequences, including definite statistics - if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account quantitative data; results of any numerical analysis should be reported
- Significant conclusions or questions that track from the research(es)

Approach:

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- Present a justification. Status your particular theory (es) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
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Approach:

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- If use of a definite type of tools.
- Materials may be reported in a part section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

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- Report the method (not particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology)
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- If well known procedures were used, account the procedure by name, possibly with reference, and that's all.

Approach:

- It is embarrassed or not possible to use vigorous voice when documenting methods with no using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result when script up the methods most authors use third person passive voice.
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What to keep away from

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
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- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.

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The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part a entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Carry on to be to the point, by means of statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.You must obviously differentiate material that would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matter should not be submitted at all except requested by the instructor.



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Content

- Sum up your conclusion in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
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- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation an exacting study.
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- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or in manuscript form.

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- Do not present the similar data more than once.
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- Never confuse figures with tables - there is a difference.

Approach

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- Make a decision if the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory, and whether or not it was correctly restricted.
- Try to present substitute explanations if sensible alternatives be present.
- One research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind, where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

- When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from available information
- Submit to work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.
- Submit to generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

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	A-B	**C-D**	**E-F**
Abstract	Clear and concise with appropriate content, Correct format. 200 words or below	Unclear summary and no specific data, Incorrect form Above 200 words	No specific data with ambiguous information Above 250 words
Introduction	Containing all background details with clear goal and appropriate details, flow specification, no grammar and spelling mistake, well organized sentence and paragraph, reference cited	Unclear and confusing data, appropriate format, grammar and spelling errors with unorganized matter	Out of place depth and content, hazy format
Methods and Procedures	Clear and to the point with well arranged paragraph, precision and accuracy of facts and figures, well organized subheads	Difficult to comprehend with embarrassed text, too much explanation but completed	Incorrect and unorganized structure with hazy meaning
Result	Well organized, Clear and specific, Correct units with precision, correct data, well structuring of paragraph, no grammar and spelling mistake	Complete and embarrassed text, difficult to comprehend	Irregular format with wrong facts and figures
Discussion	Well organized, meaningful specification, sound conclusion, logical and concise explanation, highly structured paragraph reference cited	Wordy, unclear conclusion, spurious	Conclusion is not cited, unorganized, difficult to comprehend
References	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring

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