Empowering People through Education from the Perspective of Millennium Development Goals

Shashikamal Kodithuwakku,

Department of International Relations, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
shashi.uoc@gmail.com

Abstract— Education plays a significant role in people's empowerment which ultimately leads to sustainable development in any country. Therefore, this crucial position held by the education has become a universal acceptance. Further, as revealed by the South Asian Development Report, if the men and women are not empowered by the education and the health, the sustainability won't be a reality (2004).Moreover, it has emphasized the education as one of essential components of growth process.

Generally, the term empowerment refers to a multi-dimensional social process that enhance diverse of human capabilities. Further it is relevant to all the aspects that boost competences of human beings which are crucial for the development. Empowering people can be varied from the individual level to the community level. Even more it can go beyond the community level reaching up to the international level. Therefore, it is imperative to study how people can be empowered through the education since education is recognized as a key player of the human empowerment.

Main objective of this study is to explore the potential of education to empower people as human development is considered as one of central pillars of development. Concurrently, this study aims to examine the applicability of the Millennium Development Goals to such scenario focusing on its most apposite segments. Mainly this research would be an archival research which would base on secondary sources. Additionally, the study would focus on the United Nations reports and statistics.

This research finds that education is an indispensable factor regarding empowering people .Further; this research reveals that human empowerment is a multi-commitment task which is directly applicable to development process. Concurrent to that, this research has highlighted the relevance of the Millennium Development Goals to the implementation of empowering people through education. Moreover, this study finds that empowering people through education can generate apparatus required for the development process leading to profound social changes at both personal and societal level.

Keywords—Education, Sustainable Development, Millennium Development Goals

I. INTRODUCTION

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was set by the United Nations in the year 2000, with the aim of achieving eight major development goals by the year 2015. This crystallized the growing consensus which emerged during the 1990's, namely the poverty reduction and the provision of basic social services need to be at the centre of development policy. From these eight goals achieving Universal primary Education is the second and one of the key Goals in the Millennium Development Goals. Out of the eight Millennium Development Goals, two are directly related to education, they are: (central role of education in the MDG)

In general way millennium development goals can be considered as universal framework for development. It is adopted by all the members of UN in 2000. Mainly it provides a holistic approach for developing countries to achieve the goals of sustainable development. Further United Nations has intensified the significance of education for sustainable development. As revealed by new research, learning failures have high costs for countries. (MDG global monitory report, 2007). Therefore it is obvious that MDG's are directly linked with promoting education. Similarly education can considered as one of central pillars of empowering people with essential skills and capabilities. Moreover, the educational

development will increase the opportunities for individuals while make them more independent. In this scenario, Millennium Development can accelerate the development of other areas focussing on educational enhancement.

Achieving MDG 2, universal primary education by 2015 will allow every child to complete full course of primary education creating a sound background for sustainable development. In addition to that, this achievement would lead to one of indispensable requirements of development.

As MDG 3 the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women with, specifically, the elimination of gender disparities at primary and secondary school levels by 2005 and across all education levels by 2015. Further this increase the participation in development endeavours irrespective of factors such as gender disparities.

This indicates that Education plays a significant role empowering people which ultimately lead to sustainable development. Therefore education has become a Universal acceptance. In the South Asian Development Report it has being revealed that if men and women are not empowered by education and health, the sustainability won't be a reality (2004).It has also emphasized that education as one of the essential components of growth process.

One of the ways of achieving universal primary education for all boys and girls by the year 2015, can be done through empowerment of women, training teachers to be gender sensitive, promoting the value of educating girls, making the schools safe, postponement of early marriage and childbearing, allowing pregnant teenagers to continue studying and return to school after delivery, offering scholarships and providing universal access to reproductive health.*(master plan for development, http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/sitemap/icpd/ MDGs/MDGs-ICPD)*

According to United Nations reports, it is clearly indicated that number of children out of school in 2007 was 28% low than in 2000 (MDG Summit 2010). According to these statistics, it is obvious that achieving primary education can impact positively empowering people. Further, some of the world poorest countries have significantly increased enrolments in education and harrowed the gender gap related to educational opportunities while extending the opportunities for disadvantaged groups (MDG Summit, 2010).

This kind of assessment on MDG's related to education clearly shows, how member countries are committed to achieve millennium development goals.

Main objective of this study is to explore the potential of education to empower people as human development is considered as one of central pillars of development. Concurrently, this study aims to examine the applicability of the Millennium Development Goals to such scenario focusing on its most apposite segments. Mainly this research would be an archival research which would base on secondary sources. Additionally, the study would focus on the United Nations reports and statistics.

II. EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

What is Empowerment? According to the Oxford Dictionary it means that to make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights. Generally, the term empowerment refers to a multi-dimensional social process that enhance diverse of human capabilities. It is also relevant in all aspects that gain confidence of human beings to be competent enough so that it would be a crucial aspect for the development process. As defined by the World Bank " Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes". *(http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOP ICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTEMPOWERMENT/0,,contentM DK:20272299~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSit ePK:486411,00.html).*

According to this definition, empowering of people refers to a process that transform people's choices into appropriate proceeding and endings that comply with the social needs and development. Further, it can be elaborated as an expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives (The World Bank's 2002). Therefore, it is important to understand that people's empowering increase assets and capabilities of individuals in order to make their purposive choices in to a reality.

Empowering persons can be varied from the individual level to the community level and also it can further go internationally. Therefore the key tool for empowerment is through education and that is the central pillar of development. And it can also be said that Education is an indispensable factor regarding empowering people. It is revealed that human empowerment is a multi-commitment task which is directly applicable to development process. And therefore it becomes one of the key component goals in the perspective of the Millennium Development Goals.

Developing regions have made impressive strides in expanding access to primary education, with the adjusted net enrolment rate growing from 83% in 2000 to 90% in 2011.Over the same period, the number of children out of school worldwide declined by almost half from 102 million to 57 million. But the progress of this in the beginning has considerably slowed down. Between 2008 and 2011, the number of out-of school children of primary school age fell by only 3 million. That means that, at the current rate, the world is unlikely to meet the target of universal primary education by 2015.(The Millennium Development goal report, 2013)

Household poverty is the single most important factor keeping children out of school. This was analysed by a survey in 63 developing countries between 2005 and 2011.Children and adolescents from the poorest are at least three times as likely to be out of school as their richest counterparts. Rural children are nearly twice as likely to be out of school as urban children. Across these countries girls are more likely to be out of school than boys among both primary and lower secondary age groups. The gender gap in school attendance widens in lower secondary education, even for girls living in better off households. (The Millennium Development goal report, 2013)

The education can plays a crucial role regading the Poverty eradication through empowerment based on knowledge/education. In the field of education, lifelong learning is crucial in order to eradicate poverty: in some cases, families that live just over the poverty line (and apparently are not poor) turn suddenly into poverty for the crisis effects (loss of jobs). (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/FullSurveyEmpowerment.pdf.) According to this, it is imperative to mention that, education provides a broader range of opportunities to empower people. For this reason, lifelong learning can be considered as one of effective tool to enable the "new poor" to find other solutions in order to avoid poverty and to "empower themselves". (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/FullSurveyEmpowerment.pdf.)

In this scenario, it is apparent that proper educational system provides the basis to economic opportunities; similarly this instance portrays people can have the chance to achieve a better life through a better education system, that could transfer their knowledge into possible ways through which they can gain what they need. Indeed, proper education would allow them to get access to many opportunities. This multiple opportunities would reduce the risk of being unemployed or being vulnerable in terms of economic needs. It is very important to mention, in the event of such loosing economic opportunities, proper education may provide numerous choices to overcome the issue. In the same manner, this would support individuals to make effective discissions as their empowered with an appropriate educational system.

Therefore, the contribution of education is crucial to create new opportunities to empower people. For instance, poverty is one of major obstacles to empower people and it decreases the choices and opportunities for people. Further, poverty can be a cause of some other social issues that would negatively impact on people empowering. Therefore, education can provide new alternatives, skills and capabilities that combat with poverty. "Education helps, provide people with choices and gives them the ability to improve themselves and their surrounding society." (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/FullSurveyEmpowerment.pdf.) Hence, the considerable allocation given by the MDGs for education can be justified as education is a core pillar of empowering people. Further, other aspects of people's empowering also will depend on the success of the education system.

The following table further illustrates how education can arbitrate the circumstances that directly negatively impact on the people empowering.

Table: 1

IDENTIFIED CAUSE (perception)	INTERVENTION
Circumstances beyond the control of the people (natural disaster and bad luck)	To relieve immediate suffering through relief and charity
Lack of education and motivation of people; low level of resources	To raise production through provision of vocational education and income-generating activities, savings and credit
Poor functioning or lack of delivery of health, education and agricultural services.	To make existing programs work better and provide alternative services such as health care, legal advice and establishment of citizen's committees for strengthening the delivery of services
Exploitation and inequality	To overcome exploitation and inequalities by mobilization (political parties, movements and awareness-raising programs)
Structural problems (unjust structures)	Building new economic, political, legal and educational structures through mobilization and concretization programs as well as new forms of education

Source:http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/I HRIP/circle/modules/module20.htm#_edn9

According to the table, it is apparent that, education can involve overcoming issue areas that directly linked to empowering people. Specially even in the circumstances that beyond individuals controls, proper education system can provides means to mitigate and minimize the coast of such event. Even it is an unprecedented event; multiple alternatives provided by the proper education can manage the damage of such circumstances.

Further, the education can eliminate some prominent obstacles by transforming existing unjust socio economic structures into more acceptable and fair structures. In the same manner education can contribute to the well being of some other aspects such as: health, infrastructure and agriculture that are crucial in human empowering.

Before adopting the MDGS, "120 million primary-school-age children were not in schooling in 1999, 53 per cent of them girls and 47 per cent of them boys. This is a narrower gender gap than in 1990" (UNICEF, 2001).According to this , it is very clear that before the adoption of MDGs , there wasn't satisfactory access towards primary education. Further reports reveal that, Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia reported the highest numbers of children who are not in engaged in primary education in by 1990.

III. CONCLUSION

This paper has identified three major functions of education in relations to empowering the people.

- Transformative function: the proper system of education can transform troublesome existing socio economic and political structures into more acceptable and appropriate structure that can facilitate human empowering.

- Preventive function: Any effective education system can prevent people become powerless in terms of social, economic and political by providing a necessary guidance.

- Constructive function: The appropriate education can provide many creative alternatives in order to replace prevailing obsolete or weak structures. Further it can cerate many choices and opportunities.

Further it can be concluded that education plays a key role in empowering people providing numerous opportunities and choices for the people. Similarly it creates alternatives and necessary adaptations to vulnerable situations which can jeopardize the human empowering. In addition, education is directly linked with some other aspects that impact on the human empowering. Therefore, it is essential to improve the educational systems that can creatively involve in the development process leading to effective human empowering. The achievements of MDGs in order to empower people

through education are satisfactory with some exceptions. Still there are some regions such as Sub –Saharan Africa and South Asia to improve the situation complying with the second MDG: achieving universal primary education.

Moreover, this paper reveals frequent emergence of a large number of non-traditional security threats in the world such as: natural disasters, trans-boundary terrorism, political instabilities, use of advanced and sophisticated weaponries and other prominent non-military issues have a great negative impact on achieving universal primary education. In the same manner it has impact on eliminating the gender gap in primary and secondary education. Indeed, this phenomenon has congested some of the genuine commitments of achieving universal primary education.

Therefore, this study suggests the genuine needs of countries are essential to make MDGs a reality. Concurrently states should incorporate effective mechanisms to enhance the access to education, specially focusing on the primary education. Further, some other aspects which can have a great negative influence on the education and the people empowering should be addressed via guanine commitments of states. Mainly non-military threats that would jeopardize the educational development and human empowering should be addressed through effective means. Concurrent to that, a proper assessment regarding the progress of achieving primary education is needed to bridge the existing lacuna in educational progress of some regions.

This research finally intends to focus on the recommendations in order to empower the people through education by referring the millennium development goals.

- International Mechanism that can monitor the MDG, no :P 2 which focus on primary education should be establish in order to make necessary recommendation and guide lines.
- All states should comply with the MDG, No: 2 in cooperating achieving primary education agenda in to their national policy making procedures.
- All states should be committed towards international mechanism that empowers

people through education having necessary adaptation.

- The other external issues that can obstruct empowering people should be addressed in very effective manner.
- Necessary cooperation between state and non-state actors should be initiated to empower people.
- States should emphasize the significance of education to empowering Individuals.
- This perception should be promoted among the communities to have genuine commitments towards empowering people.
- Empowering people cannot be achieved only through the millennium development goals since it require the support from other aspects as well. Therefore converged approach is needed to empower human beings in effective manner.

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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Author is an assistant lecturer attached to the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Arts, and University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. His research interests include foreign policy, human security and international organizations. Currently, he reads for Master of Arts in International Relations offered by the Department of International Relations, University of Colombo. He has authored several research articles on different areas related to International Relations.