

Promoting Community Empowerment through the Intervention of Self-help Approach and Self-help Initiatives

Md. Jafar Iqbal*

Abstract

This article articulates the potential intervention of some systematic, well-managed and innovative programs undertaken by local community members based on self-help approach and Self-help Initiatives to empower their own community. As a mode of collective empowerment, community empowerment is ensured when community organizational domain is established and practiced mutually by community members themselves. It focuses on some local partnership based, self-help run, self-controlled, well-managed and maintained initiatives, local peoples' mutual activities, sense of belongingness and collectiveness and logically analyses their outputs as empowerment domains. The article highlights participation and role-playing of community members at policy formulation, decision-making, and implementation and consumption levels of various self-driven and self-controlled programs and services initiated in the community. It follows the method 'PRISMA' to collect required secondary data online by applying different 'search terms' and explores those to identify their impact on community empowerment. Some programs and services like identifying potential local resources and maximizing their utility, building and strengthening local institutions, developing human resources, implementing social protection services, health services, expanding social business are logically analyzed with a view to how collectively people gain empowerment domains like ownership, partnership, authority, knowledge, management and communication skills, leadership, sense of belongingness, decision making and problem solving capacity, determination and confidence so that they can apply co-operative and coordinated teamwork strategy to enable themselves to increase control over their lives.

Introduction

Communities are groups of people who are usually connected, share common interests, concerns or identities and participate in the same economic process. 'Empowerment' implies the process by which people gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives. It is the process by which they increase their assets and attributes and build capacities to gain access, partnership, networks in order to gain control.¹ It assumes that people are their own assets, and the role of the external agent is to catalyze, facilitate or accompany the community in acquiring power. People's action undertaken with a philosophy of collectiveness

* Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Jagannath University, Dhaka

and teamwork is more effective to promote sustainable empowerment. Community empowerment necessarily addresses the social, political and economic determinants that underpin health, social protection, social and economic institutions, local resources and human resources, social capital and seeks to build ownership and partnerships with other sectors in finding solutions. Community empowerment works to empower people in diverse way. It is an approach or comprehensive process or way that promotes the level of confidence. Community empowerment approach enhances team building and team work through which they are involved in an inclusive and organized manner in different socioeconomic, cultural and political activities and in this way networks are formed, and mutual dependency, belongingness, interaction and sharing are promoted. Self-help initiatives are very crucial for both individual and collective level empowerment. Self-help group works increase peoples skills, knowledge and confidence – and instills a belief that they can make a difference. Self-help teams mobilize the process of inclusive and holistic approach which brings people together around common issues and concerns in community organizations and groups become more open, democratic, accountable and transparent. Building positive relationships across groups, identifying common messages, developing and maintaining links to national bodies and promotes development partnership among them are common activities of self -help approach. It encourages and equips communities to take part and influence decisions, services and activities which ultimately empower communities.

Methodology

PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method is partially and manually used in this study for secondary data collection. The secondary data are searched and collected from printed and online articles, book chapters, reports and published and unpublished journals, books and reports for the extraction and tabulation of information. The following ‘search terms’ are used manually by avoiding PRISMA checklist: ‘community empowerment, local initiatives, building local institutions, developing human resources, health care services, social protection services, social capital and economic organizations and social business’. Some domains of community empowerment like ownership, partnership, knowledge, leadership, sense of belongingness, decision making and problem solving capacity are also used to search study related issues. A manual search was carried out to identify additional articles. Additionally, printed local

journals that could not be accessed online were also searched manually. The full-text for the gray literature from different libraries and seminars was retrieved. The articles, journals, books, reports etc. having qualitative outcome data on community empowerment which were published in English were included. For the selection of literature through the initial search of databases, 93 documents (articles, journals, books and reports) on community empowerment and related issues were identified. After the review of titles and the abstracts 37 documents were excluded as they were deemed not relevant to the review and published in other languages rather than English. Out of the remaining 56 documents, 3 failed to meet the screening criteria and full texts of the remaining 50 documents were further reviewed and checked for eligibility which resulted in further exclusion of another 8 documents, 45 of which were highly relevant and fulfilled the requirement. The method of content analysis was applied to analyze the contents of all search terms for articulating to what extent those terms were linked with community empowerment. Printed books and journals were studied and deep intuition of author was applied to analyze the issues.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess the potential intervention of some self-help driven group initiatives in community empowerment and analyze what types of community empowerment domains are strengthened among community members through mutual interactive and teamwork based self-driven, self-managed and self-controlled programs. The objective of this study was to find out the intervening factors which promote community empowerment like community belongingness, knowledge, awareness and skill, leadership, partnership, social capital, team work and so on. Another objective of the study was to build a comprehensive model of community empowerment.

Rationale of the Study

Bangladesh has a long history of cooperative, teamwork and group experience based development activities where self-help group approach is practiced widely. Self-help approach is used to eradicate poverty from rural areas. Hundreds of NGOs of Bangladesh have been successfully using this approach to reduce extreme poverty from rural areas. This approach is adopted and applied to promote community development. Many African countries now are using this approach for empowering their communities but still they are fighting a lot. Very recently an NGO like BRAC is launching a program namely Community Empowerment

Program (CEP) based on self-help approach at a smaller scale. But whether the application of this approach contributes to community empowerment or not or to what extent it contributes is still worth knowing. That is why this study has been conducted to know the possible intervention of self-help approach in community empowerment on the basis of secondary data.

Conceptual Orientation: Community Empowerment, Self-help Approach and Self-help Initiatives in Context of Empowerment

Community Empowerment

Empowerment, in its most general sense, refers to the ability of people to gain understanding and control over personal, social, economic, and political forces in order to take action to improve their life situations. Community empowerment refers to the process of enabling communities to increase control over their lives. Empowerment refers to the process by which people gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives. It is the process by which they increase their assets and attributes and build capacities to gain access, partners, networks and/or a voice, in order to gain control over services and organizations.² Community empowerment, therefore, is more than the involvement, participation or engagement of communities. It implies community ownership and action that explicitly aims at social and political change. Community empowerment is a process of re-negotiating power in order to gain more control. It recognizes that if some people are going to be empowered, then others will be sharing their existing power and giving some of it up. An empowered community is one in which individuals and organizations apply their skills and resources in collective efforts to meet their respective needs.

Self-help Approach

Every human being has God given tremendous potential. This hidden potential in the poor can be unleashed if the right environment is provided. As an individual the poor are voiceless, powerless and vulnerable. By bringing them together as a homogenous collective aware of their rights, they have tremendous strength. Empowerment is a slow process that involves both individuals and institutions. Individuals are the ones who come together and go through the process of empowerment. Institutions such as promoting organizations and government agencies can support empowerment with processes that increase self-confidence, develop self-reliance, and help people set their own agenda – unleashing their potential. Community institutions

enable the residents to be organized under an umbrella by which they participate in group activities reflect in degrees of generosity, individual humility, communal pride, mutual supportiveness, loyalty, brotherhood and camaraderie. Collective activities, mutual co-operation and regular communication in the community institutions help share information, values, common entity which creates the process of building and mobilizing social capital as power. The individual is vulnerable, voiceless and powerless, but can develop enormous strength in self-help groups (SHGs) keeping the sense of collectiveness. Self-help community initiatives are self-guided ideas or activities having economic, intellectual or emotional basis, promote self-improvement. In a community, self-help driven initiatives are essential intervention or assistance introduced by communities themselves with GOs and NGOs collaboration and partnership to accelerate the process of development and empowerment. In this process the community avails the support and assistance from local and national bodies or other agencies as mutual cooperation approach to be empowered.³

Self-help Initiatives

Self-help initiative is a self-guided effort undertaken by community members themselves for their substantial socio-economic, cultural, political and intellectual development. They introduce different self-help group base programs, each with distinct focus, techniques, associated beliefs, same socio-economic process and proponents which promote their strength and distinct identity. The self-help initiative connotes a programme of activities involving the concerted efforts of members of a given community aimed at ensuring ownership, partnership, unity, altruism and strength in that community. Self-help initiative is one of the most important means of empowerment of people living in community. It's an effort of changing situation by utilizing own resources and potentials. Self-help initiative is a group solidarity which enables community members to support each other and to overcome common difficulties through the exchange of experiences, information, insight and knowledge. The self-help approach seeks to use voluntary grassroots organizations to restrain this desire and to, in a participatory way and outside government budgets, ultimately provide for the people's basic (food and non-food) needs by mobilizing private resources. It entails the development of the resources of the community by efforts of members of that community alone, instead of relying on outside initiatives or assistance. It is an inward-looking approach to self or group improvement, which relies solely on own efforts and largely for own

benefits.⁴ To stimulate and sustain the self-help motive in rural community empowerment, it is necessary to mobilize and organize people in particular community for effective project conception, selection and implementation. The self -help strategy therefore presupposes the existence of like-minded people with initiatives, integrity, and foresightedness; apart from capital and a favorable investment environment.

Initiatives on the Basis of Self-help Approach

Community Resource Identification and Community Empowerment

Community resource is anything that can be used to improve the quality of community life. It includes human being, physical structures, agencies, community services, business or anything that have potential utility. In rural communities, human, natural and capital resources remain unexplored and unused. The philosophy of self-help initiatives focuses on the identification of community resources to strengthen sustainable development leads to empowerment. Community resource study guideline, community survey, and social mapping are used to explore community resources.⁵ Having actual information about the community resource to the members strengthens the sense of belongingness which provides opportunity to community building and enriches community resource database center. Community details make community perception positive which is crucial, because seeing something as an asset can make it possible to use it and to think them empowered. Community resources exploration is the foundation of community improvement and empowerment. Identifying and mobilizing local resources within the community under self -help approach enable community members to gain control over their lives and organizations. Local resources are used to develop infrastructures and these promote effective and longer-lasting development efforts and welfare services and all enhance sound and empowered community. Resource identification and building infrastructures are essential to reach any types of services (health care, education, training and so on) to the door-steps of community. Proper understanding of community resources and its services strengthen competence and self-determination and initiate new order for empowerment.⁶ When team efforts are planned on the strengths of the community to address community's needs, people are more likely to feel more positive about them, and to believe they can succeed. This positive approach is transformed into empowerment.⁷

Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment

Human resource development encompasses the personal, social, economic, moral, intellectual and spiritual development of the individuals. Improved community development practice demands emphasis on training and retraining of members so as to ensure that each member possesses requisite knowledge, skills, expertise and experience for the performance of community development tasks. Self-help approach based manpower development programs like formal, non-formal and informal education, training, entrepreneurship building motivation and counseling initiated and owned by community members themselves are crucial for long term increased performance. The importance of human resource development in community cannot be underplayed. Resources are the building blocks that community members can draw on to succeed economically and exercise power and agency and resource accumulation is also an outcome of economic empowerment. These can be at the individual or community level and can include human capital, financial capital, and physical capital.⁸ Education, training, awareness building activities, motivation, counseling and guidance, active participation transform community people into human resource which promote skills, leadership, level of understanding, and social networks.⁹ Human resources development is, therefore, regarded as facilitating the development of human capacities to achieve sustainable, inclusive, equitable development and empowered community, at the same time, enhance well-being of individuals.¹⁰ Promotion of knowledge, skill, and awareness among community members are essential for group decision making, problem solving, leadership building, and overall understanding of self-help driven programs and collective activities implementation. Learning and sharing knowledge through education, training, mutual interaction and socialization enable members to understand and gain work skill, business operations or total work system and contribute to social functioning which increase their strength.¹¹

Community Health Services and Community Empowerment

Community health services are significant empowering programs introduced by community members or Local Health Team consists of local physicians, nurses, pharmacists, medical assistants, lab technicians, family welfare visitors and so on.¹² Health services are designed to reach to doorstep to give health services to grassroots members of the community. It is introduced, executed, and controlled by community themselves and external financial and technical supports are utilized and

appreciated. Community-driven health services encourage members to participate actively in decision making that affects the design, delivery system and quality of local health services. Building healthier communities creates the foundation of sustainable development in the process of empowerment. Sustained health promotion requires 'institutionalizing' which means that health promotion is integrated into the building blocks of financial and human resource planning, knowledge management, partnership building, and capacity for effective implementation. Identifying competencies, developing curriculum and strengthening capacity for training for health promotion leadership in countries are an urgent need.¹³ Community people's active and spontaneous participation in community based health programs management, decision making, implementation and evaluation is essential to ensure their empowerment.¹⁴

Community Institution and Infrastructure Building and Community Empowerment

Under self-help initiatives, community members themselves build institutions are democratically managed, in which members share information and power, utilize cooperative decision-making processes, and are involved in the design, implementation, and control of efforts toward mutually defined goals. When politicians, leaders, technocrats, and civil servants take a provision approach, the community is weak, while if they take an enabling approach to the community acting on a self-help basis, the community will be stronger. Community members themselves will build institutions such as volunteer agency, social club, professional association, cultural club, legal aid agency, cooperative society, community development committee, welfare association, environment reservation society, farmers associations, savings and funds raising cooperatives, business organizations and so on. All the institutions are governed collectively by the local residents. Community members become organized in various groups under variety of institutions. Community institutions ensure stronger accountability of the local government towards poor, especially women, in terms of their socio-political empowerment. Community institutions build capacity and motivate them to raise their voice and take collective action and build social capital among various interest groups. The more social networks are built, the greater resource mobilization is occurred among local producers. The social networks are essential in utilizing social, financial, natural, cultural, and human capitals.¹⁵ Mobilization efforts can promote both the short-term empowerment of the poor and the long

term consolidation of democratic institutions.¹⁶ Self-help group driven institutions like development and welfare agencies pursue what is termed a ‘social mobilization’ paradigm of development, linking their activities to the concepts of collective action, engagement, and empowerment with the broader political system.¹⁷

Community Protection Services and Community Empowerment

Besides government, welfare and protection services initiated and executed by local community members themselves promote “sense of belongingness”, “we feeling” and “enabling process”.¹⁸ Social protection enhances an enabling, bonding, bridging and linking environment for promoting the socio-economic empowerment of the under-privileged groups.¹⁹

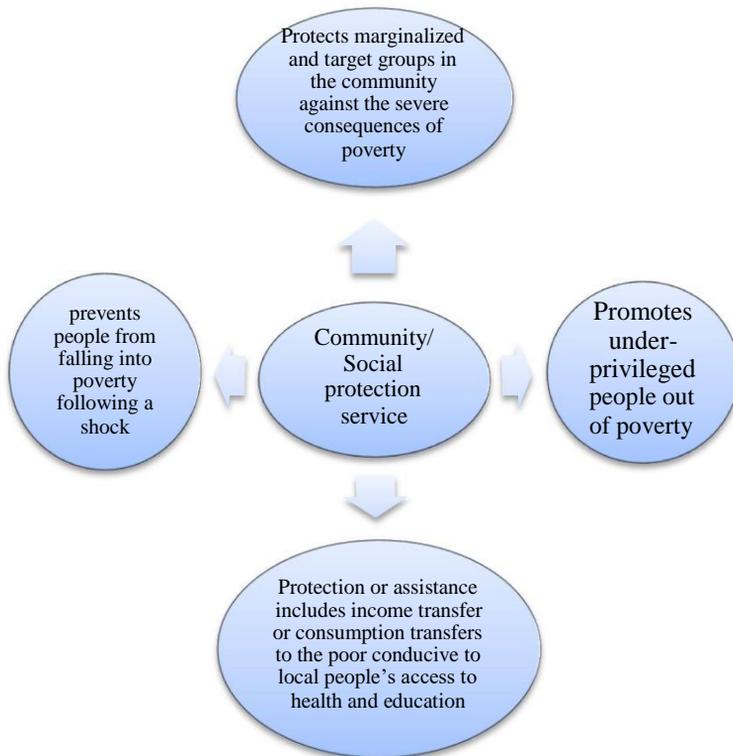


Figure 1: Social protection promotes community empowerment

[Source: Self-devised by author]

It is now widely recognized that besides its safety net function, social protection also increases the income of deprived people either by

securing a minimum income or employment generation, or via insurance or subsidies. Social protection schemes include cash transfers or cash payments like micro-finance, allowance and monetary aid for work, and these payments are delivered through banks or through savings and credit cooperative agencies, they also foster the financial inclusion of the poor in the community.²⁰ In Bangladesh considering that social protection schemes often target female-headed households and designate women to receive the micro-finance or transfers, the potential of these schemes for enabling women's economic empowerment is highly considerable.²¹ Social welfare and protection policies and programs increase local people's access to resources, enhance their skills, and increase their participation in the labor market and social networks not only help to more effectively and sustainably reduce rural poverty and vulnerability but also foster their economic empowerment. Social protection is conceived as all initiatives that provide cash or food transfers or other services to the poor; protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks; and enhance the social status and rights of the excluded and marginalized groups in the community.²²

Community Ownership Based Financial Organization, Social Business and Community Empowerment

People having socio-economic, mental and physical strength with the help of other professional knowledge and philosophy of self-help approach are capable enough to accelerate their local socio-economic growth and development by establishing financial organizations like cooperative society and business, NGOs, community banks, socio-economic development entities etc. Forming self-help groups and cooperative society and organizing entrepreneurs with the same aims, thought, ideology and economic expectations are very functional to establish community ownership based financial organizations. Financially solvent community stakeholders' cooperative investment enhances ownership and partnership of company and profit leads comparatively permanent downstream economic partnership and development which in the long run leads to community empowerment. Micro-financed based NGOs and banking activities encourage the spirit of savings and forming joint funds. Active and spontaneous participation of local people in community based socio-economic organizational functions, trade and business operations opens the new horizon of social network, knowledge sharing, building leadership and motivating entrepreneurship, promoting management skills and socio-economic bondage and liability.²³

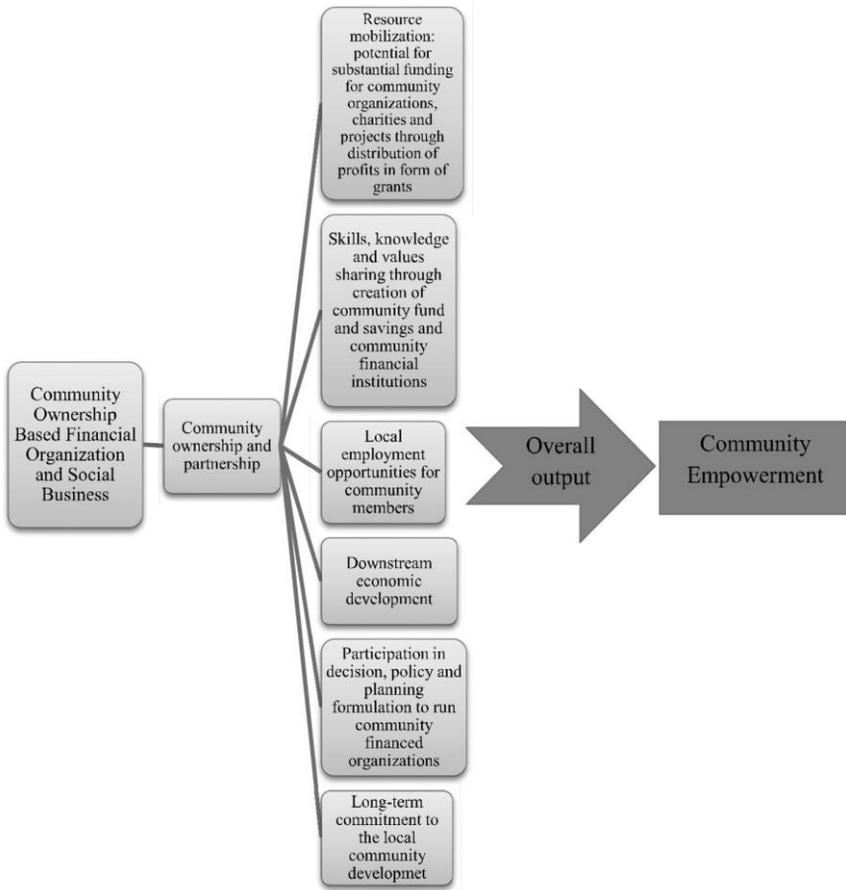


Figure 2: Community empowerment as an output of local investment and mutual interaction within organizational activities in community ownership based financial organizations.

[Source: Self-devised by author]

Local organizational activities with the help of external experts and investment ensure the maximum use of community based resources and mobilize them to promote local economic growth and development. Social business is another type of community based cooperative financial activities is non-loss, non-dividend, and self-sustainable economic process which is convenient for building local unity, mutual cooperation, mutual dependency, belongingness and functional relationship. People, from different levels in the community with similar economic aims, thought and expectation, get together and decide to invest their resources under common umbrella and unitary economic process and unity run

financial activities and initiate social services for the protection of their community and those activities are considered as community based social business. Community based social business opens the door for community members to invest their properties by removing the opportunities of maximizing individual wealth and ensures social and economic sustainability. It is a new order of business where principle amount is invested and paid back and profit is kept in reserve for reinvestment for its further expansion. Social business creates new economic order, opportunities, employment, poverty free community and people are offered to involved in mutual interaction within the same economic process and activities where social bondage, mutual dependency, we feeling, community sentiment are generated among community members. People share skills, knowledge, thought and values under their partnership and ownership in common organizational activities.²⁴

Results Discussion

The mentioned self-help initiatives make sure of generating some domains in community people which promote community empowerment like participation, leadership, organizational structures, problem assessment, resource mobilization, and links with others, the role of inside and outside agents, and programs management, knowledge sharing, and social capital and so on. Sense of community is the core outcome of self-help approach. The exploration and utilization of local resources are key issue that makes community members confident and dynamic. Social networks and mutual bondage are visible in community driven group activities through continuous and involvement local socioeconomic development programs. Community created development culture and practice enhance and establish the key organizational domains of community empowerment in community members like sense of partnership and ownership, improves local participation, increases problem assessment capacities and skills, enhances the ability to 'ask why the problem is raised', develops local leadership, builds empowering organizational structures, improves the ability to maximize utility through resource mobilization, strengthens links to other organizations and people, creates an equitable relationship with outside and inside agents, and increases control over programme management. The importance of community development practice is that the approach provides a more systematic means for community empowerment in a self-help driven and controlled programme context. These are the above six programs initiated, managed and controlled by local community have

been discussed logically in this study and how these programs promote community empowerment domains through mutual activities of community members are also discussed logically under the philosophy of self-help approach. Community resource identification through social mapping, community study guide-line and community survey help to explore local wealth, build confidence and strengthen sense of belongingness.

Table 1: Comprehensive Model of Community Empowerment through Community Activity

Partnership Based Local initiatives Based on Self-help Approach	Strategies/ Techniques	Processes/Intervening Outcomes and Empowerment Domains Achieved by Community Members through Mutual Cooperation and Interaction	Ultimate result
Community Resource Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social mapping - Community study guide-line - Community survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring wealth - Building confidence - Strengthening sense of belongingness 	
Community Institution Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer agency - Social club and association - Cultural club - Cooperative society - Community development committee and welfare club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizing members under an umbrella - Gaining altruism and unity - Building communication skill, leadership and sharing information - Building and mobilizing social capital as unity and power 	
Human Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and training - Career and entrepreneurship building related counseling and guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring quality, knowledge, awareness and skill of community - Enhance efficiency, competence, and understanding of change agent. 	
Community Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local management, supervision and control over community clinic - Community health team - Floating health services <p>raise knowledge and awareness among community members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved communication and linkages with source of health care - Financial incentives for seeking health care - Increasing decision-making capacity of community members during health risk and emergency - Bringing appropriate care closer to community doorstep - Funds to cover costs - Provision of equipment and supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building infrastructure capacity to deliver health services - Promoting management skill - Reducing health disparity <p>knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation for change - Building problem solving capacities - Enhancing healthy community - Reducing health risk - Health awareness - Availability of health services and easy access - Social network - Community resource building through health institutions - Increase understanding and capacity of addressing health problems 	

Source: Source: Self-devised by author on the basis of secondary data and their logical analysis

**Table 1(Continue): Comprehensive Model of
Community Empowerment**

Community Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving staff availability, capacity and attitudes through training and supervision - Reducing health disparity among riches and poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information sharing on good practice and habit - Equalization of health services among community members 	
Community Ownership Financial Organizations and Community based Social Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financially solvent community stakeholders' cooperative investment and ownership in form of micro-finance based NGOs - Application of Social Business, Investment by all earning members of families of communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community ownership and partnership - Downstream economic development - Long-term commitment to the local community - Local employment opportunities - Creation of community fund and savings - Resource mobilization - Potential for substantial funding for community organizations - Charities and projects through distribution of profits in the form of grants - Entrepreneurship building - Maximum use of resources as reinvestment - Employment and income generation - Involvement of community members in substantial economic and cooperation as social capital 	
Community Welfare and Protection Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social assistance, - Cash transfers - Allowance directed towards enhancing community's health and nutrition - Access to financial services (savings, credit) - Social insurance schemes accessible to under-privileged groups in the community. - Social protection schemes coupled with development interventions and financial services to increase people's access to productive assets, employment, and infrastructure (i.e. subsidies, public works, cash transfers, asset transfers). - Training and micro finance, allowance, security of basic need fulfillment, emergency protection against natural disaster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Policies and other measures that promote people's membership in rural organizations; their legal empowerment; and change in intra-household bargaining power, gender roles and discriminatory practices. - Rehabilitating and facilitating disadvantaged groups - promoting equal opportunities and social justice - Involving under privileged groups in the process of empowerment 	

Source: Self-devised by author on the basis of secondary data and their logical analysis

Community institution building program like volunteer agency, social club and association, cultural club, cooperative society, community development committee and welfare club organize members under an umbrella which forms altruism and unity among community members and under the mutual activities of common institutions they share information and mobilize social capital which enhances the process of empowerment. It is evident that education and training, career and entrepreneurship building related counseling and guidance turn community people into human resource which ensures quality, skill, efficiency and competence and enhance the level of understanding and knowledge of the members. Community based health services like community clinics deliver health services to doorstep of grassroots members of the community. It is introduced, executed, and controlled by community themselves and external financial and technical supports are utilized and appreciated. Community-driven health services encourage members to participate actively in decision making that affects the design, delivery and quality of local health services. Community people's active and spontaneous participation in community based health programs management, decision making, implementation and evaluation ensure their empowerment. Community welfare and protection services like social assistance, cash transfers, allowance, Social insurance, subsidies, public works, asset transfers rehabilitate and facilitate disadvantaged groups and promote equal opportunities and social justice and involve underprivileged groups in the process of empowerment. Building community organizations and launching social business are essential elements in the process of community empowerment. Financially solvent community stakeholders' cooperative investment enhances local partnership and long term commitment to downstream economic development, generates local employment, mobilizes resources, promotes Charities and projects through distribution of profits in the form of grants, encourages community entrepreneurship and ensures the maximum use of resources as reinvestment in social business and this interactive activities of community members in the long run make people empowered.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. Some of the articles did not explicitly state that analysis of data adhered to the concepts of community empowerment and self-help approach is relevant. Some online and printed articles and books I studied didn't match with the concepts of my study which took much time to analyze and reach my study goals. It was

very difficult to analyze and identify a strong association between mutual activities of self-help based teamwork and different components of community empowerment. Considering English-language publications rather than other language based publications was another restriction of this review process. The validity (that is, risk of bias), reporting and applicability of the mentioned programs in this study should be addressed and verified properly. But, because of its secondary data based review it was not possible to verify its biasness and applicability at the field level whether the initiatives promote community empowerment or not.

Conclusion

Community empowerment strategies are effective measures to empower a community. Through community engagement, community participation, community development and capacity building, people are able to identify their potentials and discover their abilities, participate in group discussion and activities, engage in implementation of important projects and can empower themselves so that they can overcome difficult social situations through action and programmatic intervention. Community empowerment enables people to initiate actions based on their day-to-day experiences which creates a chain where the empowered individual in turn helps others to empower themselves by sharing experiences and forming partnerships. Community empowerment is a mean for the community to broaden their networks and meet new and influential people. An empowered community can influence the social and economic aspects of a country to seek their rights. Community self-run and self-controlled programs having external professional and expertise guidance and technical support are essential assets for community development because of their direct participation and proximity at the grassroots. When people are empowered, they rediscover their abilities and potential and also bring small community projects to national level. They develop new skills such as community service skills, leadership skills for some, and managerial skills, develop empathy, broaden networks, form partnerships and bring about social cohesion. When a community is empowered, people feel free to act within the society and at the same time associate a sense of belongingness to it. Through community participation and capacity-building, they rediscover their own potential and gain confidence. They also feel worthy of the community, for the help they are providing - to make a change.

Notes and References

1. Glenn Laverack. 'Using a 'Domains' Approach to Build Community Empowerment.' *Community Development Journal*, 41.1, 2006, pp. 4-12
2. *Ibid.* pp. 8-12
3. John Anderson. 'Self-help and Independency: The Political Implication of a Continuing Tradition in African Education in Kenya.' *Oxford Journals: AFRICAN Affairs*, 70.278, 1971, pp. 47-67
4. E. Nel, T. Hill & T. Binns. 'Development from Below in the New South Africa: The Case of Hertzog.' *Eastern Cape Geographical Journal*, 163.1, 1997, pp. 57-64
5. M. N. Hussain & M. Alauddin. '*Introduction to social work methods.*' Dacca: Anwari, Publication, 1970, pp. 12-34
6. John L. McKnight & John P. Kretzmann. '*Mapping community capacity.*' Chicago: Northwestern University: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, 1992, pp. 7-20
7. M. Moore. '*Community Capacity Assessment: A Guide for Developing an Inventory of Community-level Assets and Resources.*' Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department, 1994, pp. 32-38
8. Anne Marie Golla, Anju Malhotra, Priya Nanda, & Rekha Mehra. '*Understanding and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment.*' Washington DC: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), 2011, pp. 1-12
9. Rodney M. Goodman, Marjorie A. Speers, and others. 'Identifying and Defining the Dimensions of Community Capacity to Provide Basis for Measurement.' *Health Education Behavior*, 25.3, 1998, pp. 258-278 doi: 10.1177/109019819802500303
10. Michael Bopp & John Bopp. 'Welcome to the Swamp: Why Assessing Community Capacity is Fundamental to Eco-health Work.' *Eurohealth*, 1.2, 2004, pp. 24-34
11. Anu Kasmel & Pernille Tanggaard Andersen. 'Measurement of Community Empowerment in Three Community Programs in Rapla (Estonia).' *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 8.3, 2011, pp. 799-817
12. M. A. A. Qayyum. *Short Text Book of Community Medicine & Public Health*, Dhaka: Shahin Medical Book Center, 2011, pp. 32-44
13. Ronald Labonté & Glenn Laverack. *Health Promotion in Action: From Local to Global Empowerment*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 1-78

14. Simeen *Mahmud*. 'Increasing Voice in the Health Sector in Rural Bangladesh: Is There a Role for Citizen Participation?' *The Bangladesh Development Studies*, XXIX .3 & 4, 2003, pp. 67-97
15. M. Rezaul Islam and W. Jason Morgan. 'Agents of Community Empowerment? The Possibilities and Limitations of Non governmental Organizations in Bangladesh,' *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, 12.4, 2012, pp. 703–725
16. S. Rahman. 'Development, democracy and the NGO sector theory and evidence from Bangladesh,' *Journal of Developing Societies*, 22.4, 2006, pp. 451–473
17. M. Rezaul Islam and W. Jason Morgan. 'Non-governmental Organizations in Bangladesh: Their Contribution to Social Capital Development and Community Empowerment,' *Community Development Journal*, 47.3, 2012, pp. 369-385
18. A. S. Asnarulkhadi. 'Community Empowerment towards Achieving Sustainable Development.' *Cities in the 21st Century: Urban Issues and Challenges*, edited by S. N. S. A. Rashid, A. Edris & N. Ahmad, Serdang: UPM Press, 2002, pp. 221-31
19. Robert L. Hawkins, & Katherine Maurer. 'Bonding, Bridging, and Linking: How Social Capital Operated in New Orleans Following Hurricane Katrina,' *British Journal of Social Work*, 40.6, 2010, pp. 1777 – 93
20. Rebecca Holmes & Rachel Slater. 'Social Protection and Gender-A Life-cycle Approach: AusAID Pacific Social Protection Series: Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Protection in the Pacific. Canberra: Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), 2012, pp. 8-17
21. Rebecca Holmes, & Nicola Jones. 'Gender and Social Protection in the Developing World: Beyond Mothers and Safety Nets,' *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, 36.4, 2013, pp. 585–586
22. D. Narayan & M. F. Cassidy. 'A dimensional approach to measuring social capital: Development and validation of a social capital inventory,' *Current Sociology*, 49.2, 2001, pp. 59-102
23. Robert D. Putnam. 'Bowling alone: America's Declining Social Capital,' *Journal of Democracy*, 6.1, 1995, pp. 65-78 doi:10.1353/jod.1995.0002
24. Muhammad Yunus. *Building Social Business: The New Kind of Capitalism that Serves Humanity's Most Pressing Needs*, New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2011, pp. 7-23