

## EMPOWERMENT POOR COMMUNITIES WITH THE STRENGTHS - PERSPECTIVE IN EMPOWERMENT THEORY

Ardent Kloee Titu Eki<sup>1</sup>, Christina Ngadilah<sup>2</sup>, Yansestina Erlince Eky<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Flinders University alumni, Eke Tetus Foundation, Indonesia

<sup>2,3</sup> Health Polytechnic Ministry of Health Kupang, Indonesia

Email: ardenttitueki12@gmail.com, christinangadilah62@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

*Empowerment is one of strategies to alleviate poverty. Poverty is something that does not stand alone, but is formed from various aspects concerning humans, especially economic, social, environmental which will affect their lives. This paper will discuss the importance of strengths-perspective as a new paradigm in social work in the empowerment program to achieve the expected goals of solving the problem of poverty. This paper will use literature studies such as books, articles, and other sources relevant to the topics discussed. This study show that the principle of strengths-perspective is very much needed in an empowerment program. Strength based approaches not to replace another theory that has been used for a long time, in compiling and analyzing, social policy or programs empowerment of poor communities.*

**KEYWORDS** Empowerment, Poor Community, Strengths-Perspective.



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### INTRODUCTION

Eradicating extreme poverty for everyone everywhere by 2030 is an important goal of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, global poverty continued to decline to more than 8 percent in 2018. The latest report after Covid-19, the global poverty rate increased again to 9 percent more in 2020, thereby slowing poverty alleviation by about three years. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and other crises has increased the number of people experiencing poverty (WHO, 2023). Poverty is something that does not stand alone,

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but is formed from various aspects concerning humans, especially economic, social, environmental which will affect their lives. One of the policies taken, to overcome poverty is empowerment. Empowerment aims to enable poor people to recognize and increase the strengths and potential they have so that they can escape from situations of poverty. Empowerment also provides opportunities for poor people to have the power to access resources of life and control of their own lives.

Empowerment is a key concept in social work. Empowering practices give the silenced voices of our society a better chance of being heard. As people become empowered, they can gain control of their lives and find ways to act in society (Törrönen et al., 2013).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This paper analyzes the application of theory to the field of practice, and several evidence-based arguments as well as discussing and debating various theories as input for social work. Method of this article was prepared with using literature review or documents, namely in the form of books, articles, news or other types of writing related to the strengths-perspective approach in social policy.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Through this essay, I will choose and demonstrate one Social work theory and apply it to one field of practice. The social work theory which I have chosen is the strengths perspective/empowerment approach. Whereas the field of practice which I have chosen is on the issue poverty. First of all, I will briefly describe about the definition of the Strengths perspective/empowerment approach. The strengths perspective theory claims that individuals have particular skills and strategies for coping with difficulties and it is vital for social workers to work with and for client strengths. Generally, this theory implements that rather than viewing people in relation to what is going wrong in their lives, the strengths perspective and empowerment approach rather takes a more positive edge in that the social worker's inspiration is to work towards urging and encouraging change through the unequivocal support of their client's capacities (Dunk-West, 2018). There are however some similarities to other approaches in social work such as the solution focused, problem-solving and also the narrative approaches in that they all share the same thing in common which is to disconnect the person from the issues or problem they face (Healy, 2022). The idea of strengthening is regularly referred to as being vital. It is significant to note however that social workers do not empower people. Or maybe, social workers work to help with individual's empowerment through working close by their clients, reliably attempting to comprehend the client's battles and difficulties, pushing against obliging social structures and sharing data that helps with advancing changes. Furthermore, what is fundamental to empowerment approaches is the understanding that there is unequal conveyance of force which brings about sabotaged people (Levinson, 2010). Social workers from this viewpoint should thusly work close by the clients in coordinated effort. The idea of co-teaching infers

that the clients and social workers show each other what they think about the introducing issue and about the persecution confronted. These hypothetical positions are helpful in the problem saturated areas inside which social work can happen in light of the fact that the attention on issues and work with impeded populaces makes the word related peril that specialists will concentrate a lot on the shortcomings of the customers and issues and neglect to recognize the qualities and strengths they have. Furthermore, the strengths perspective/empowerment approach respects two main points: the force of the self to mend and right itself with the assistance of the environment or surroundings, and the requirement for a partnership with the trust that life may truly be something else. In a strengths perspective approach, how social workers experience their fellow human beings is very crucial. They should connect with people as equivalents, without differentiating and discriminating anybody. I will now explore a little bit about the influences on the progression of the strengths perspective/ empowerment approach and how it has historically been situated in social work.

All through the historical backdrop of the social work profession, the accentuation practically speaking has been on tackling the client's issues. Social work has for some time been depicted as a critical thinking profession (Babbie & Rubin, 2016). Notwithstanding stressing taking care of issues by altering client's shortfalls, historically social work has likewise accepted that the clients possesses qualities, assets and limits that can be used in the change procedure (Dunk-West, 2018). The verifiable pattern of concentrating on shortages proceeded in this approach, with its fundamental supposition that failure to adapt to issues was because of one or a greater amount of three shortfalls: " the inspiration to chip away at the issue in fitting ways; the opportunity, whether of ways or means, to meet or moderate the issue. In spite of the fact that the centre of social work all through history was principally regarding issues with clients and shortages, conspicuous cases of other foci additionally existed (Ferguson & Woodward, 2009). For instance, is the practical or functional approach, which was produced by Virginia Robinson at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social work in the 1930's, was fixated on a brain research of development and was unmistakably not quite the same as the other real approach of that period. The useful approach considered change to be focused in the clients as opposed to the social worker, and a client-social worker relationship prepare in which the client's own particular power for development and decision was discharged. The useful approach was situated in huge part on philosophical points of view underlining human purposive activity, self-realization, human potential and other existentialist understandings of human improvement which tended to view individuals as far as multifaceted nature and potential (Dore, 1990).

In regards to the social work values which has connection to the strengths perspective or empowerment approach, there are core principles or the value base which underpins this particular theory inclination for working with individuals who are poor, mistreated, and derided to strengthen individual versatile possibilities and Empowerment Poor Communities with the Strengths - Perspective in Empowerment Theory

advance natural/basic change through individual and aggregate activity; inclination for social arrangements and projects that make a fair society where equity of chance and access to assets exists. This section of the essay will explore more deeply about the modern/post-modern influences of the theory.

In this first section of the essay, there will be a clarification about the key subjects in postmodern points of view and how these can contribute to the formal base of Social work (Pozatek, 1994). These arrangements of practice points of view have developed in impact since the 1990's, the strengths perspective are established in the earlier theories for practice. By differentiation, while postmodern viewpoints draw on parts of built up practice approaches, they likewise speak to a break with the dialogues and speculations supporting the formal base of Social work practice. The post-modern impact of the strengths perspective theory obliges us to fundamentally analyse the thoughts of advance on which numerous types of well-being and welfare establishments depend in framing and assessing their interventions. Post theories address the humanistic ethos of helping/engaging others. Also essential is that a postmodern point of view contests every single social worker to basically think about the routes in which our practices add to the control and observation of individuals we are looking to give assistance to (Payne, 2020). Through the empowerment theory in the post-modern era, this essentially concentrates on comprehension the local points of interest and complexities, for example, the assorted encounters of individuals from within a community, as opposed to attempting to build a solitary story or account around an occasion or a populace.

In this second part of the essay, I will be applying the strengths perspective theory to a field of practice that I have chosen which is poverty. First of all, I will briefly explain about the issue of poverty from my point of view. According to (Perry, 2002), poverty is a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials to enjoy a minimum standard of life and well-being that is considered acceptable in society. In addition, to comprehend the relationship amongst poverty and living conditions, a multifaceted comprehension of being poor is required. In a sense, the response to the question "what does it mean to be poor?" is direct having money profits underneath the official poverty line for a given family measure. In a more extensive sense, the living states of the poor are hard to gauge, both in light of the fact that yearly money pay is one and only component identified with living conditions, and on the grounds that the poor are entirely heterogeneous. Furthermore, Poverty is one of the primary issues the whole world needs to manage (Midgley & Livermore, 2009). The world is attempting to discover approaches to help those in need and keep them from going in this descending winding toward destitution again. Poverty does not only influence the general population that are experiencing it, yet it influences everybody and every nation. The impacts of poverty add to health issues which results in illness and in addition neglect. These impacts keep the poor in the state they are in. Individuals living in poverty are not able to meet their essential needs. Since they have a constrained wage they get to be ravenous from absence of sustenance. Their appetite thus makes

them to resort to commit crimes such as stealing. Adolescent crime rates are higher in poverty stricken zones. Since they do not have enough money to purchase items to keep themselves perfect and sterile, they are more inclined to have wellbeing issues and maladies. Death is ordinarily the response to these health issues since the poor do not have enough money to purchase medication with which to treat them. Child labour happens from poverty all together for the family to get as much income of money as they can. The child abuse rates in poverty regions are much higher than regions without much poverty issues. Poverty likewise impacts education enormously bringing on scholastic and behavioural issues. There is an extensive cross-disciplinary written documents and substantial formative experience on the connections between empowerment, development, and poverty reduction (Narayan et al., 2002). Income poverty has fallen most quickly in economies that have become powerfully, and the issue of poverty are still high or has expanded in nations with poor development records. Experience likewise demonstrates that development alone is insufficient to guarantee generous and manageable on the reduction of poverty. A critical point of an empowering approach is to diminish imbalance by expanding human capacities and enhancing the dispersion of unmistakable resources, (for example, land or access to capital) (Bachrach & Botwinick, 1992). Such an approach can upgrade the poverty-reducing effect of development actuating strategies and speculations by empowering poor individuals to all the more successfully take part in the business sectors or the markets. The opposite additionally applies. At the point when imbalance is high, the people who are experiencing poverty need capabilities and resources and therefore experience issues accepting advantage of financial open doors. This restricts a general society's potential for development all in all and pro-poor development specifically, and subsequently the adequacy of advancement endeavours.

Empowerment likewise infers more participatory, base up ways to deal with improvement goals (Babbie & Rubin, 2016). There is presently considerable understanding that methodologies giving poor individuals more opportunity to settle on monetary choices improve advancement viability at the neighbourhood level as far as plan, usage, and results are concern. It ought to likewise be stressed that empowerment, in the sense of expanding individuals' decisions and subsequently their flexibility to carry out an action to build their lives, is a great deal more than a way to different objectives; it is a decent in itself and an attractive objective of development. Because societies are formed and ruled by the government, we cannot neglect the fact that the government also plays a major role in the reduction or the increasing rates of poverty in a particular country. Although so, as far, there are no methodical endeavours to put resources into limit working of research foundations and citizen's groups to monitor the performance of the government (Shah, 2013). Then again, where such limit as of now exists, it has been utilized. Long haul ventures are required in such establishments and documented based NGO's and poor individuals' associations to enable subjects to draw in seriously with their government and be Empowerment Poor Communities with the Strengths - Perspective in Empowerment Theory

sources of independent observing information. Through this particular engagement, there can be solutions to put an effort to the reduction of poverty by the government which is through education. (Morley & Coady, 2003). Education is a zone in which extending the contribution of community participants has prompted stamped upgrades—higher enlistments and better quality schools. Cases from around the globe demonstrate that when communities can hold educators, directors, and government authorities responsible through formal institutional systems, members of the community turn out to be more keen on the improvement of schools in quality and additionally ready to submit their own assets to the duty.

This dedication may incorporate shaping associations with outside actors. By this I mean the government of a developing country can build an education relationship with a more advanced country to get their citizens, especially the younger generations scholarships to be able to study abroad. Through this kind of government-education relationships between nations, will result in a good outcome with good quality graduates who can return back to their original country after their studies and start applying the knowledge they gained from studying abroad. This can definitely result in poverty reduction. There has been results for example a powerhouse country like America has been giving away scholarships (USAID) to students of developing countries like Indonesia or The Philippines to obtain a chance to study abroad and come back home to contribute to the development of their countries by applying the knowledge and experiences they have gained from their studies.

The strengths perspective/empowerment theory is applicable to the field of poverty because this theory empowers people to look within themselves that they have what it takes to change their lives, in this case to free themselves from poverty. As opposed to seeing individuals in connection to what is wrong in their lives, the strengths perspective approach rather takes a more positive edge in that the fundamental inspiration is to work towards urging and encouraging change through the unqualified support of their own lives. Such approaches or methods are more intrigued by what will happen rather than what has happened in the past. The strengths perspective theory contends that people have specific attitudes and procedures for adapting to affliction and it is essential for a social workers and future social workers to work with and for the client's strengths. This is with the basic intends that their spirits are not broken by the circumstances that they are currently experiencing which is poverty. But rather there are solutions if all the statements above are applied thoroughly.

## CONCLUSION

Implementation of the empowerment approach in policy or program development will generate added value for especially those policies or programs in cultivating values independence, sustainability, empowerment, resilience, engagement and so on for each target. This theory is to strengthen other conceptuality. Strength based approaches not to replace another theory that has been used for a long time, in compiling and analyzing, social policy or programs empowerment of poor communities (Hill, 2013).

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