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Underlying Paradigms of Community Development: HRD Perspectives

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Abstract- The field of human resource development (HRD) is evolving and the scope is getting wider. Today community development is becoming a popular topic which is explored in the context of HRD. Community development and HRD are two fields which emerged from multiple disciplines, and it is inherently needed to explore by multiple paradigms. This paper aims to present a critical literature review on different philosophical paradigms of community development in the context of HRD. A recent literature review demonstrated that action research is the most popular research method used in community development; hence, action research is discussed from episteme-ological point of view. In addition, critical theory, feminist theory, and race theory were discussed to explore the paradigms in relation to community development and HRD.

Keywords: *community development, HRD, paradigms.*

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Underlying Paradigms of Community Development: HRD Perspectives

Mr. Hasanuzzaman Tushar [α] & Hassan Miushad [σ]

Abstract - The field of human resource development (HRD) is evolving and the scope is getting wider. Today community development is becoming a popular topic which is explored in the context of HRD. Community development and HRD are two fields which emerged from multiple disciplines, and it is inherently needed to explore by multiple paradigms. This paper aims to present a critical literature review on different philosophical paradigms of community development in the context of HRD. A recent literature review demonstrated that action research is the most popular research method used in community development; hence, action research is discussed from episteme-ological point of view. In addition, critical theory, feminist theory, and race theory were discussed to explore the paradigms in relation to community development and HRD.

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I. Introduction

The field of Human Resource Development (HRD) is relatively young in academia as well as in practice and, it has been struggling to define its boundaries from the beginning (Woodall, 2001).The term HRD was first defined by the Harbison and Myers in 1964, as a broad field that includes the development of individual, social and national level. They define HRD as "the process of increasing the knowledge, the skills, and the capacities of all the people of the society…" (as cited in McLean& McLean, 2001, p.320). But this wide scope of HRD was soon narrowed and started mainly to target on the context of business organizations (McLean, Kuo, Budhwani, & Yamnill, 2006).

Swanson (1995) defined HRD as "a process of developing and / or unleashing human expertise through organization development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance" (p.20). According to this definition the primary function of the HRD is improving performance and the main functions involved in HRD is an organizational development and training and development. In other words,it isonly addressed HRD in corporate business point of view.

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But in the late 1990's and in the beginning we started to see the HRD discipline broadening its terrain again with the global definition proposed by McLean and McLean in 2001. McLean and McLean (2001) studied different HRD definitions used in different parts of the world and highlighted that there are significant differences in defining the term HRD in different parts of the world. Based on their studies, they have formulated a global definition for HRD.

Human Resource Development is any process or activity that, either initially or over long-term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation, or, ultimately, the whole humanity (McLean & McLean, 2001, p. 322).

II. Methods

This paper presents a literature which focuses different paradigms of community development in the context of HRD. The articles and books were gathered and searched from university physical and online library, and Google scholar search engine. Key words used includes: Community development, Human resource development, community development and HRD, Social development and HRD. The majority of the sources used for this paper are publications after the year 2000, but few sources which seem to be important were included even though those were published before 2000.

III. Review of Literature

The above mentioned definition of HRD by McLean & McLean (2001) has changed the lens of viewing HRD for researchers and practitioners again. The boundary of HRD has moved from business or organizational development to include community development and national development. McLean (2006) argues that many developing nations use HRD concepts to address their community and national development issues for a long time, even though the institutions running those programs does not realize, what they are actually practicing is related to HRD. Due to the lack of research done in community development in the context of HRD, the researchers and practitioners have failed to explicitly acknowledge the HRD interventions in community development. But today the use HRD

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interventions to address various community related issues like; illiteracy, women's empowerment, poverty, child health issues are becoming more common. And HRD research communities are starting to focus their research onthose interventions (McLean, Kuo, Budhwani, Yamnill & Virakul, 2012; Kim, 2012).

a) What is Community Development?

Community development has an extended history and since it was practiced in many countries from along time it would be difficult to trace the origin of the practice (Brokensha & Hodge, 1969). In the United States the concept of community development was first started in the Progressive Era, mainly to involve the member of the community in fighting crimes and maintaining law and order in the society. In 1960s the concept was further broadened by the social activists to address poverty in the country, and at this stage it was incorporated in the national policies. By time community development has further broadened its scope to include: education, health, environment, housing and so on. Today community development is a field that comprises of many other disciplines like; business, organizational behavior, sociology, anthropology and education. Due to this multidisciplinary nature and existence of multiple paradigms the literature isseen in community development has significant contradictions. Community development has a number of definitions and it varies significantly from time to time and from one country to another (Robinson &Green, 2011). Christenson and Robinson (1986)defined community development as "a group of people in a locality initiating a social action process (i.e., planned intervention) to change their economic, social, cultural, and/or environmental situation." (as cited in Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 8). Bhattacharyya (2004) criticized this definition by raising the question; how to define locality in this advanced era of transportation? And, another question he raised is why the term "political" is not mentioned along with other terms like economics and social in the definition?

It seems no definition is free from critics, and no definition could be used as universally accepted definitions for community development. Christenson and Robinson (1986) concluded that there are no clear cut definitions for community development, the position of the person who initiates the program influence his/her way of defining community development (as cited in Bhattacharyya, 2004). Bhattacharyya (2004) argues, if community development is a profession or an academic field there should be some boundaries. Not everything that contributes to community development could be referred as community development. He proposed two conditions that need be constituted something to be community developments, including 1) definite and unique in purpose and methodology 2) universal applicability of scope: means should be applicable to all social formation like; urban or rural, post or pre-industrial.

Robinson & Green (2011) concluded that, community development can be viewed as a process (a method of implementing a change), program (a specific activity like agricultural innovation), outcome (a result of a program like increase employment) or, and as an ideology of action (to change social or economic values of the society).

Community development and HRD both are disciplines that were established based on combinations of a wide range of other disciplines like: anthropology, sociology, psychology and economics. HRD is a field that has been viewed from multiple paradigms (Woodall, 2001; Hurt, 2010) and adding community development or at least a part of community development in HRD adds more paradigms to the HRD filed. The number of researches done by HRD researchers to address community issues is growing. This increases the need of literature that explores different paradigms in approaching community development in HRD perspectives. Hence the aim of this paper is to explore possible research paradigms that could be used to address community development in the context of HRD. This research only discusses some paradigms and we believe there could more applicable paradigms to address this subject.

b) Paradigms

The word paradigm is often described in the literature as the lens or a set of colored glasses that we use to view the reality of our world. The word "paradigm" was in use for a long time, but it gains the attention of the philosophers and academia after the greatly renowned book called "The Structure of Scientific Evolutions" by Thomas Kuhn in 1996. Kuhn defined paradigm as the framework of assumptions that we perceive in our mind when we see the reality of the world. In the academia paradigm is perceived as the set of views that are used by academic disciplines to perceive their world in order to generate knowledge in that particular discipline (Hurt, 2010; Potipiroon, Sritanyarat & McLean, 2006)

In philosophical terms paradigm is associated with multi-level concepts. The first level is Ontology. Ontology can be defined as the way we see our world and what we believe as the reality of the world. The ontological position of the researcher will guide other philosophical levels like epistemology and methodology. Epistemology is the next level, which asks the question of how we perceive our ontological position. In other words ontology is about what we know and, epistemology questions about how we know what we know. Epistemology is about ways that are used to generate knowledge. Johnson and Duberley (2010) described epistemology as "the study of the criteria by which we can know what does and does not constitute

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warranted or scientific, knowledge" (p.10) (as cited in Potipiroon, Sritanyarat & McLean, 2006). Methodology comprises a set of methods and detailed procedures, principles and assumptions used for a particular investigation or a study (Hurt, 2010; Potipiroon, Sritanyarat & McLean, 2006).

c) Paradigms of HRD

HRD is a field that uses multiple epistemologies or paradigms. Hurt (2010) did an investigated using HRD cube, to explore the current paradigms in HRD. His findings revealed 18 different paradigms among just 16 different articles published in AHRD (Academy of Human Resource Development) journals. From epistemological perspective post positivist and interpretivist paradigms were identified more common paradigms. And the critical theory was also noticed, but it was less frequent than post positivist and interpretivist approach. Another key finding shows that HRD researchers were using theory, research and practical perspectives to analyses their research. But most researches were focused on practical perspectives, then just research and theory. Hence HRD is considered as a field which hasmultiple paradigms and often there could be contradictions amongst the paradigms, which leads to ambiguity.

IV. Paradigms of Community Development

Unlike HRD, community development is a field that solely concentrates on the general well-being of the community. It mainly concerns with practical knowledge than just theories. Hence the paradigms that need to see community development could be different then HRD. We have discussed some of the paradigms of community development under two main headings of action research and critical theory.

a) Action Research in Community Development

Action research is a commonly used method is social sciences, and it is used as the main research strategy in community development also (Ledwith, 2011). From several textbooks that were written in the field of community development, it is common to see a chapter or a section discussing about action research. In researching HRD concepts in community development also, action research is recognized as an ideal model (McLean, Kuo, Budhwani & Yamnill, 2006). In fact, most of the community development related researches appear in the AHRD journals are action researches. Example: Development of K-12 Educational System in Kyrgyzstan, Knowledge management in a community setting using action research: A case study of Lumpaya Community (McLean, Kuo, Budhwani & Yamnill, 2006).

Action research primarily aims to solve an existing problem or to bring improvement to a situation. In action research, the researchers get closely involved in the community where the research operates. It is also referred as "participatory research" or "participatory action research". Action research promotes participation in the research process by the stakeholders and tries to suggest actions that could lead to a better condition for the stakeholders; it could be in terms of satisfaction, sustainability, justice or any other aspects. The basic three component of action research is 1) action 2) research and 3) participation (Greenwood & Levin, 2006; MacLeod, 2014).

In HRD and community development action research could be used to improve the condition of the community by applying HRD to community development efforts (Budhwani & McLean, 2012). Those who initiate in action research are mainly scholar-practitioners, who deeply care about bringing betterment to the world (Reason, & Bradbury, 2001).

Epistemology in action research: The Traditional positivist approach of acquiring knowledge treats human experience separated from knowledge. It demands objectivity and using controlled experimentations. "Action research rejects the notion of an objective, value-free approach to knowledge" (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire, 2003, p.13). Greenwood & Levin, 2006 affirmed that "social knowledge can only be derived from practical reasoning engaged in through action. As action researchers, we believe that action is the only sensible way to generate and test knowledge"(p.6). Action research is not just about bringing positive change to the society but, it can also view as a strategy to acquire practical knowledge. In action research since the researcher is a part of the research problem objectivity or bracketing is denied. Hence the action research model is largely criticized by the conventional positivistic social scientists, and it is often referred as unscientific and invalid. The field of science also emphasizes acquiring knowledge through thinking (individual rationalism) instead of knowing by doing. More recent schools like critical theory and pragmatism emphasized the importance of acquiring knowledge through experience then just thinking. These schools have stressed the social component of interpreting knowledge which becomes a key part of action research also.

Today it is believed that the positivist, the modernist worldview of western civilization is reaching a stage where it is no longer useful. The world is shifting its paradigm of viewing the universe. Today a new worldview is emergent as systematic, holistic, relational, feminine, experimental. That is a participatory worldview, where it is believed reality is a "co-creation that involves the primal givenness of the cosmos and human feeling and construing" (Reason, & Bradbury, 2001, p.7).

Pragmatism and action research: Pragmatism philosophical view mainly questions about the usefulness of

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knowledge in the practical world. The knowledge is considered true only if it works in the real world. William James (1950) categorized knowledge into two types; "knowledge of acquaintance" and "knowledge about". Knowledge of acquaintance could be acquired from experience and actions. Knowledge about is the knowledge that acquired from systematic objective thoughts, and which seek the underlying principles behind the knowledge of acquaintance. In pragmatic epistemology the researcher or the investigator should have close contact with the research phenomenon and face-to-face interaction with the subjects to reflect on their actions, in order to achieve knowledge of acquaintance, which then will be converted to knowledge about (Cooke & Wolfram, 2005).

Phenomenology and action research: A phenomenological view closely aligns with the pragmatic and humanistic philosophy of action research. In phenomenology the researcher intends to explore the lived experiences of the participants in order to get an in-depth explanation of the phenomenon in real life context. Phenomenology does not seek universal or generalizable truth, but its attempt to explore the individual reality as experienced in day to day life. Experiences that are taken for granted are explored to understand the emotions associated with it. In other words, it tries to bring unconscious to conscious. In-depth interviewing is used as a main research method in phenomenology. Researches that aim to explore the social phenomenon like; discrimination based on gender, race, age phenomenology could be used within the action research model (Thawornphun & Manunpichu, 2006).

V. Critical Theory in Community Development

The philosophical research paradigm, critical theory, is a social theory which typically emerged out of the Marxist convention and developed through the work of various Marxist theorists, mainly three leading theorists (i.e. Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse) of the Frankfurt School (Germany) in the 1920s (Cranford, 2010; Hurt, 2010; Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Swanson, 2005). According to Kincheloe & McLaren (2002), critical theory is originated not only from Marxist philosophy, but also philosophy from Kant, Hegel, and Weber and later on modern critical theory has been drawn by the second generation of Frankfort School scholars namely the work of Jurgen Habermas. However, most of the critical theorists agreed upon that critical theory is the systematic critique of society and culture to define visible and invisible inequality or domination in order to eliminate it and bring the change and intensify the emancipation of the human being. Critical theorists believe that all knowledge is driven by political power and value, including art, business, science and engineering, which is moderately unseen to us. They also believe that capitalism generates injustice, domination, and oppression (Swanson, 2005), where critical theory focuses on discovering these oppressions from community, society, and culture and finding a way to overcome it.

In community development, critical theory is inherently required in order to determine whether development is needed. The community is built under few important attributes including a group of people, common interest (e.gnorms, values, or knowledge), and politics where communities could be healthy or unhealthy or mostly in between. The reasons behind unhealthy community are prejudice, unconsciousness, domination, oppression, and name a few which results in the conflict between each aspect in the community. Oppression in the community can be found in many forms, i.e. discrimination, gender inequality, social injustice, masculinity, and name a few. Gradually, critical theory introduces numerous subsets of approaches in order to eliminate the conflict of the community and carry on its development, e.g., feminist theory, race theory, queer theory and liberation theory. The critical theory researchers use the participants' involvement in the community through the aforesaid approaches not only in order to data collection, but also they come up with ideas to get rid of the oppression which results in the development of the particular community.

Critical feminist theory: Historically, women are dominated, abused, oppressed, and victimized by social conventions. Mostly, these conventions are socially constructed by men. Therefore, a feminist theory developed which is a part of the critical theory and drove to the same perspective. Lorber (1997) stated that feminist theory emerged out of feminism into a theoretical or philosophical field where gender inequality (equal opportunity for both men and women) is the core objective. Aguinaga, Lang, Mokrani, & Santillana (2013) elucidated that feminism arose precisely as a political challenge to the effects of an andro-centric discourse, traditionally presented as scientific and universal, but which has systematically undermined other knowledge and has gained domination in a number of areas – including women's bodies and speech, the mainstream arguments of medicine and psychoanalysis, as well as philosophy and anthropology" (p. 41). Frisby, Maguire, & Reid (2009) spelled out that "the terms of domination and subordination that reflect gender inequalities (that are always interceded by other indicators of difference such as class, race, sexuality, and nationality) impact every woman, man and child in multiple ways on a daily basis" (p. 14). Though the feminist theory is originated from feminism, but it is not about only to elevate the female voice, it's about gender discrimination; where in fact both genders suffer. Thus, feminist researchers have found that the perspective of feminist theory is not

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only to establish equal rights for women, but also it covers all gender groups (Bierema, 2002; Frisby et al., 2009).

Bierema (2002) described knowledge construction that historically, it is constructed by men. As a consequence, the knowledge, experiences, and development of women have been untouched by the social researcher. Nonetheless, the women are the biggest part of a community, so, the progress of a big portion of the community was unnoticeable. In the meantime, a feminist theory emerged out, the social researchers started to raise the voice against inequality, domination or injustice against women underline the feminist research paradigm. Whilst, the language, and ground for raising voice have changed over the years, but the core feminist message remains (Dominelli, 2002). In community development perspectives, women are typically found to be in lead level very less than men. Aguinaga et al. (2013) pointed out that feminist research has focused on the development of the community and the execution of social and redeployment policies through ensuring the equal opportunity for both genders. Although many researchers don't use critical feminist theory paradigm in community development research because of the male dominant community and unbreakable social convention. The community development researchers might conduct the research under this paradigm to investigate the social inequalities and injustice against women or any genders within the community, to gather the lived experience of that oppressed gender who is historically dominated by the construction of a society.

Queer theory: Queer is just opposite of *normal* considered as a stranger. Therefore, queer is not well accepted in the world because of the negative meaning and position against constructive society and culture. The concept of normal is about all dominant ideology (i.e. white, heterosexual, male, female, and name a few), which is all socially constructed phenomena. Society and culture established these *grand narratives* that are so called normal to us. Therefore, we are being taught of these dominant ideologies from childhood by our parents, educational institutions, and culture. And then queer theory arose in the early 1990s, which is derived from the field of critical theory that rejects these mainstream behaviors particularly binary oppositions of gender. Jagose (2004) explained the term queer theory, "focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire. Institutionally, queer theory has been rapidly known as the subject of lesbian and gay, but its analytic framework also includes such topics as cross-dressing, hermaphrodites, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery" (p. 3). Queer theory covers almost all kinds of sexual behavior and sexual identity, generally it is known as a study of gay and lesbian; however it covers a broad field of other gender identity and sexual attraction including homosexual (sexual attraction toones' own sex), bisexual (sexual attraction to both male and female), transgender (trans men and trans women), homophobia (rejection of homosexual), polygamy (multiple wives), polyandry (multiple husbands), group sex (threesome, orgy), bondage (sexual practice with tying up one partner) and name a few. McLean and Sritanyarat (2016) summarized the definition of queer theory from multi-sources by queer theorists that "understanding of deviation from the normative sexual orientation through the study of sexual behavior or activities, identities and attraction to same or opposite gender as a result of expansion of feminist theory and gay or lesbian studies that were derived from critical theory and action" (s. 43).

In community development research, queer theory helps the researcher to understand more about sexual orientation, which might be the guidance for the community leaders and other people in order to get rid of the dominant ideology about sexual identity and behavior.

Critical race theory: The term race is a socio-cultural convention. Gates Jr (1993) emphasized that the theory of race is a biological misleading term, which is commonly used as a *metaphor,* for the reason that the author raised a question, "who has seen a black or a red person, a white, yellow or brown person? And these terms are arbitrary constructs, not reports of reality" (p. 50). There is a common myth about the paradigm of race theory, racism focuses only the black or white issue, in fact it covers all racial groups in a society or nation, including Latino, Jewis, Asian, Native American, LGBTQ, skin color, and few others minorities of a community. Historically, the minorities of a community are being oppressed. Here, the main purpose of critical race theory is to establish social justice and a critique of the socio-cultural convention in the legal system through conducting a study of the intersections between different groups of minorities in the community including gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, nation, and name a few. The critical race theory is a specific collection of principles and theoretical context that involves a connection between race, racism, power, and law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Critical race theory (CRT) has significant implication for developing a community, especially within the minority group and racial inequalities. For example, Cerezo, Mc Whirter, Peña, Valdez, & Bustos (2013) conducted a study underline the paradigm of critical race theory in order to develop and execute of the Latino educational equity project that might increase critical consciousness among the campuses (predominately white institution) and the local communities in Oregon. The researchers have found the concept of CRT has strong potential to increase student's consciousness of multi-cultural experience

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which may help them to contribute to their own local communities.

VI. Implication and Conclusion

Researches that focus on community development are growing in the field of HRD. Yet there is little research which discusses the paradigms to approach community development in HRD context. By exploring different philosophical paradigms in community development, we believe HRD and other discipline researchers will get an idea about the potential community development areas related to HRD. This paper will help the HRD researchers and practitioners to get a better understanding in designing a community development program or conducting a research. Community development and HRD share similar interests in many aspects, however, few studies (Aguinaga, 2013; McLean et. al., 2006, 2012; Wein, 1997) conducted on the similar areas. Instead, most of the HRD research concentrated on commercial contexts. Hence, it is recommended to explore the potential applicability of HRD to the community instead of an individual corporate context. HRD researchers could approach community development under the different philosophical paradigms and those paradigms need to be explored in-depth.

Research related to community development is increasing in HRD research platforms. This change could be mainly due to the paradigm shift that are experiencing in viewing and defining HRD. HRD is moving from performance driven corporate context to the most holistic nature which concern about the development of the communities, nations and the whole humanity. HRD and community development are fields that have multiple paradigms. Each paradigm will provide a different insight into the discipline. The action research model was the most common research model that was used in community development. Action researches aim to bring a solution to a problem and it concerns with the applicability of the knowledge to real-world to make the world better place. Community development has close links to Critical theory, feminist theory and race theory since the primary aim of those theories is to address the oppression faced by minorities. Many community developments are focused on brining equality in the community by addressing the oppressed parties.

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