Empowerment Based on Social Entrepreneurship: Presenting a Grounded Theory (A Case Study of the Headquarters for Empowering Female Householders at Tehran Municipality)

Mahdi Kermani  
PhD Candidate in Economic Sociology and Development, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran,  
Mohammad Mazloom Khorasani*  
Professor of Sociology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran  
Hossein Behravan  
Professor of Sociology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran  
Mohsen Noghani Dokhtebahmani  
Associate Professor of Sociology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran  

Received: 17 March 2014 Accepted: 17 June 2014

1- Introduction and Statement of the Problem
Female householders, especially those who lack access to sustainable revenue resources, face serious problems for fulfilling the responsibilities associated with household issues. In such a situation, looking for solutions which guarantee continuous and sustainable improvements in the economic conditions of poor female householders has resulted in an increasing attention to the other two foundations of the current study, namely empowerment and social entrepreneurship.

Accordingly, the main aim of this study is to investigate the factors affecting the success of patterns which are based on Social Entrepreneurship to empower female householders. In addition, this study aims to present solutions for improving the performance of such patterns (with emphasis on the case under study).

2- Theoretical Framework
Empowerment is a conceptual structure which is used in many fields of study. It is mostly described as a process through which individuals are guided by themselves or with the help of others in order to gain more control over their lives. One of the most popular models regarding the empowerment of women is Longwe’s (1991) five-level model. The five levels proposed by Longwe are welfare, access, conscientization, participation and control. Bennett (2002) has also proposed a quite pervasive theory about social change with the aim of sustainable poverty alleviation. Kabeer (2003) employs the triplet of agency, resources and achievements in his theory on empowerment.

A comprehensive review of the empirical and theoretical background related to the

* Corresponding Author: mmkhorasani@um.ac.ir
concept of empowerment reveals the fact that different approaches may be considered for advancing empowerment plans. Social entrepreneurship has the potential to be one of the effective tools in this regard.

3- Research Methodology
The main research method of the current study is Grounded theory. Grounded theory as it is today was first introduced by Glaser and Strauss (As cited in Fram, 2013). From a noetic perspective, grounded theory has roots in the symbolic interaction theory (Health & Cowley, 2004). In grounded theory, the relatively concrete observed themes convert into more abstract categories through continuous sweeps between the stages of data collection and their analysis based on a systematic method (Suddaby, 2006). This procedure is to a large extent carried out independent of the existing theoretical ideas (Goulding, 2005).

The data for this study have been collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and analysis of the existing documents. Moreover, the daily notes of the researcher in different sessions and field visits were used as side sources which were quite useful at times. In order to analyze the qualitative data in the analyses based on grounded theory method, the data were coded according to the pattern proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). This pattern includes three stages, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

4- Results
In order to address the research questions, the first step was to extract primary concepts through open coding of the interview transcripts. Based on the definition proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), open coding is an analytical procedure through which certain concepts and their dimensions and characteristics are explored in the data. At the end of this stage, 52 conceptual subcategories were determined. Axial coding is the second stage of the process proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) in which the main categories are formed by relating the subcategories based on their characteristics and dimensions at different levels. The reason for this naming is that the codes are placed around the main conceptual axis of the category. As a result of this stage, a total of 19 categories were identified. The third stage which is selective coding includes the process of integrating and revising the grounded theory which is accompanied by the selection of a central (core) category. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasize, the central category represents the main ground of the research which is to a large extent abstract, although it has risen from the research. The central phenomenon identified in this stage was empowerment based on social entrepreneurship as an organizational approach. Finally, the paradigmatic model of the research including the cause and effect conditions, underlying conditions, interventionist conditions, strategies and consequences of the central phenomenon under study has been presented and the grounded theory of the study has been narrated.
5- Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, social entrepreneurship was identified as an organizational approach which has proved to be effective in fulfilling the responsibility of the organization to empower a specific social group (female householders). In spite of differences in goal-setting and consequently varieties in results from different experiments within the framework of social entrepreneurship models and more specifically, patterns based on social entrepreneurship for empowerment, the general spirit of the findings from such experiments is very much similar. Moreover, many of the aspects of the organization under study are in accordance with what has been said in theoretical discussions about the characteristics and necessary activities in the field of social entrepreneurship. In general, it could be said that in practice, a large portion of the achievements resulting from goal-settings, plans and actions has led to what has been referred to as social effectiveness by researchers and theorists in the field of social entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Empowerment, Social Entrepreneurship, Female Householders.

Reference (In Persian)
References (In English)


12. Massetti, B. L. (2008). *The social entrepreneurship matrix as a “tipping point” for economic change.* Presented at the First International Conference on Social
Entrepreneurship, Systems Thinking, & Complexity. Adelphi University, New York, the United States.


