



**THE ETHICS OF PRO-POOR POVERTY POLICY : A CRITIQUE OF THE
NEO-LIBERAL IMPERATIVE AND THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF POVERTY
ERADICATION IN UGANDA**

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Abstract

Since the early 1990s, Uganda has been cajoled by the IMF and World Bank to pursue a neo-liberal approach to development as opposed to a liberal development *modus operandi*. However, in theory the World Bank has pursued a liberal, rights based approach to poverty reduction policy but in practice, it has implemented a neo-liberal, market centric approach to poverty reduction. This is the reason why pro-poor poverty reduction in Uganda is more of rhetorical than practical. This paper critiques the epistemological pre-suppositions characteristic of the ethics of the current pro-poor poverty policy in Uganda. The fundamental premises of this critique are; Can the views of the poor in Uganda influence poverty policies given their asymmetrical disadvantage? Who knows the views of poor? Do the elites interpret the views of the poor as they are or as they think them to be? Do the poor have poverty knowledge or poverty opinion? Are some of the views of the poor simply adaptive preferences? What constitutes poverty knowledge as opposed to poverty opinion? Is it ethical to eradicate poverty using opinion riddled poverty policies? Is it ethically sustainable for poverty policies to persistently aim at integrating women in poverty eradication interventions while largely giving lip service patriarchal power relations that asymmetrically disadvantage them.

Key words: Ethics , Pro-Poor, Poverty policy, Epistemology , Uganda , Neo-liberal imperative, Poverty eradication.

Introduction

The 20th century was characterized by a very fundamental paradigm shift as regards the conceptualization of development. This paradigm shift is evidenced by the transition from economism to human development. Accordingly, development was no longer envisaged in the development of things but rather people became the actual ends of development. Under the human development paradigm, the poor are no longer development patients but rather active participants in the development discourse. Even IMF and World Bank who were vehement implementers of economism in Africa for decades were also 'swept off' their feet by the new paradigm shift. In 2000, the World Bank published its famous series of publications titled; 'Voices of the poor' and lured Sub-Saharan African countries to seek the voices of the poor in the formulation of Poverty Reduction Strategy papers (PRSPs). As a measure intended to adhere to the World Bank's call, Uganda carried out a series of Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) which culminated into Uganda's ambitious Poverty Reduction Strategy paper called; The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) as well as The Plan For the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA). The UNDP and some civil society Organizations have categorically applauded the PEAP and PMA as rights based poverty eradication policies because they are informed by pro-poor perspectives. This paper will critique the rhetoric that is evident in these policies.

The Neo-liberal Imperative : A discourse Situation

The 18th century witnessed a prominent intellectual paradigm shift from liberal development economics to a neo-liberal development economics especially with the ascendance of Adam Smith's '*magnum opus*' titled, *The Wealth of Nations*(1776). Liberal development economists such as David Ricardo and John Maynard Keynes in addition to Mercantilist philosophers had given the state a central role as far as the stimulation of economic growth and development is concerned. Under the influence of positivism, Adam Smith challenged the statecentric inspired economic growth and development and instead advocated for 'The invisible hand' as an economic law that would propel economies towards prosperity and development. In order to promote development with in a state according to Adam Smith's Invisible Hand, individuals should be given the liberty to act greedily, gluttonously and ravenously. This would *repercussiously* stimulate growth in addition to lifting the poor from poverty through a trickling down effect.

While neo-liberal reforms have certainly affected workers in the West, it is in Africa where they have had most impact. Neo-liberal policies seek to reduce state control over the national economy in favour of private capitalists - the so-called 'free market'. These policies have been most widely applied in Africa for the simple reason that they are the policies promoted by the International financial institutions (IFI's), the World Bank, IMF and WTO. Many African countries are chronically broke. They must regularly borrow money to finance the public sector and to service their existing debt. The IMF is willing to provide loans but with a series of 'conditionalities' attached. These are neo-liberal reforms which must be carried out under the terms of the loan. The IMF deals are known as Structural Adjustment Programs and are very rarely welcomed by the government which implements them, never mind the ordinary people who are affected by them. Even where they have been rigorously enforced the SAP's have generally failed to show the predicted benefits such as increased foreign investment - Uganda being a good example².

In the 1970s Milton Friedman and the Chicago School of Economics spear-headed an intellectual revolution that would ensure a pragmatic implementation of Smithian neo-liberalism. The school rejected the argument that states were failing to realize economic growth and meaningful development because of market failures. They opined that the greatest enemy to development and economic growth stimulation was state interference. Therefore if this sad trend was to be reversed, the market(invisible hand) should be left to be self regulating and self-equilibrating in order to promote meaningful economic growth as well as distribute opportunities for wellbeing with in a state. Thus under the neo-liberal stance of the Chicago School, the state should ensure an incredibly minimal control of development- precisely, it must give way to the invisible hand as far as development is concerned. In other words neo-liberalism is "a programme for destroying

² Africa, neo-liberalism and anarchism, http://struggle.ws/africa/accounts/chekov/neo_article.html, accessed on 12-Februaury-2012

collective structures which may impede the pure market logic''³. According to Williamson, under neo-liberalism :

The function of the nation-state is shifting from the formulation of national policies to the administration of policies formulated through supra-national institutions ... Governments are undertaking restructuring and serve the needs of transnational capital not simply because they are "powerless" in the face of globalization ... Rather, power as the ability to issue commands and have them obeyed, or more precisely, the ability to shape social structures, shifts from social groups and classes with interests in national accumulation to those with interests in new global circuits of accumulation ... Hence, far from the "end of the nation-state"..... we are witness to its transformation into "neoliberal states"⁴.

The proposals of the Chicago school ultimately culminated into the "Washington consensus"- a series of IMF and World Bank neo-liberal policy reforms that aim at streamlining economies in the third world to stimulate growth and development. The policy proposals under the "Washington Consensus" have also culminated into the stringent implementation of Structural adjustments programmes(SAPs) such as retrenchment, privatisation and ultimately New Public Management(NPM) in Sub-Saharan African Countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana and Malawi.

The SAP's often impose harsh conditions which cause huge suffering amongst the poor and include changes that would never be accepted by the ruling class in the powerful countries since the reforms cause sudden, large changes for the worse in many people's lives. This sudden deterioration of standards of living often leads to instability and violence borne out of the desperation of the masses⁵.

According to this New Public Management neo-liberal philosophy, the public sector must be run like the private sector in order to minimize resource wastage and duplication that were characteristic of the Old Public Management(OPM) under liberal economics. According to Stiglitz, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank.

The Washington Consensus policies....., were based on a simplistic model of the market economy, the competitive equilibrium model, in which Adam Smith's invisible hand works, and works perfectly.

³ Pierre Bourdieu, The Essence of Neo-liberalism, <http://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu>, accessed on 20-2-2012

⁴ Robinson, W.I. 2001. "Social Theory and Globalization: The Rise of a Transnational State", in Theory and Society .Volume 30, Number 2, pp.166,173

⁵ Africa, neo-liberalism and anarchism, Opecit.

*Because in this model there is no need for government — that is, free, unfettered, “liberal” markets work perfectly — the Washington Consensus policies are sometimes referred to as “neo-liberal,” based on “market fundamentalism,”*⁶

Neo-liberalism as a Negation of Pro-poor poverty Policy

The understanding of development in terms of economic growth stimulation (economism) has greatly been challenged by the conception of development in terms of human functionings and capability enhancement (Human development) in the 20th century. It must be noted that the human development paradigm has a Human Development Index that radically challenges economic growth centered measurement yard stick characteristic of World Bank Global Development Index. The daunting challenge posed by the human development paradigm has lured the IMF and World Bank to tactfully and perfunctorily inculcate human development concerns with their Washington consensus poverty policy packages to development countries. Since 2000, the World bank have come to terms with the thinking that the views of the poor are very central if the world is to realize meaningful poverty reduction. In fact it has advised its neo-liberalized economies in Africa for example, to take the views of the poor very seriously in the designing of poverty reduction policy packages.

We need to bear in mind that the human development paradigm is virtually at total variance with neo-liberal development paradigm of the IMF and world bank because it treats the human person not as development patients but as active participants in the development discourse. The human development paradigm advocates for the highest level of participation i.e. empowerment⁷ where as neo-liberalism discriminately ‘empowers’ the greedy to instinctively and avariciously take over the stimulation of economic growth with the futuristic perception that their avarice will benefit the poor. In addition unlike the human development paradigm that aims at giving the state a central role of ensuring that the poor are empowered out of poverty through pro-poor poverty policies, the neo-liberal paradigm forcefully evicts the state out of the supervision of economic development hence rendering it a development spectator. This is a serious dis-connect at least and a contradiction at most.

After decades of the neo-liberal development and poverty eradication experiment, it is clear that neo-liberalism worsened poverty levels and inequality in the world. While

⁶ Joseph Stiglitz. 2002. Globalization and Its Discontents. Allen Lane/Penguin Books: 2002, p.74

⁷ There are different levels of participation. The **first** and **lowest** level of participation is called **information**(we will keep you informed). The second level is **consultation**(We will inform you, listen to you, and provide feedback on how your inputs have influenced our decisions). The third level is called **involvement** (We will work with you to ensure your concerns are considered and reflected in our final decisions). The **fourth** level and **highest level** of participation is called **collaboration**(We will incorporate your advice and recommendations to the maximum extent possible) and the last but highest level is **empowerment**(We will implement **what you decide** to the maximum extent possible)(MACAE/TIRI(report), Implementing the Pro-Poor Poverty Eradication in Uganda, 2010).

world poverty has fallen faster in the past 50 years than the previous 500, it remains a fact that a quarter of the world's population - 1.3 billion - live on less than a dollar a day. Except in China and India, poverty has increased throughout the world, including the advanced capitalist economies of the North, for the past two decades⁸.

Neoliberalism was intended to break the relative economic stagnation that bedevilled organized capitalism. This, however, has failed to come about: The period between 1980-2000 witnessed an average growth in BNP per capita of 33%, compared to an average of 83% between 1960-1980. In sub-Saharan Africa, a site of stern structural adjustment programmes, GNP per capita increased by 36% between 1960 to 1980; between 1980-1998, it decreased by 15%. It is a general feature throughout the world, with the exception of East Asia and in particular China, that growth rates were higher in the era of organized capitalism than in the neoliberal era⁹.

Today the world is deeply unequal. The ratio of the income of the richest fifth of the world's population to that of the poorest fifth had risen from 30:1 in 1960, via 60:1 in 1990, to 74:1 in 1997. Between 1994 and 1998, the richest 200 people in the world more than doubled their net worth: from USD 440 million to USD 1.042 million - the latter sum being equivalent to that of 41% of the world's population. Indeed, the capital Bill Gates, the Walton Family of Wal-Mart fame and the Sultan of Brunei were worth the combined national income of the 36 least developed countries of the world. Increasing inequality is not just a North-South phenomenon, but also increasingly a feature internally in the advanced economies: in Britain, between 1977 and 1997, inequality in distribution in income - measured by the Gini coefficient - rose by a third¹⁰.

The Neo-Liberalism Regime and Poverty Reduction in Uganda

Under the guidance of the IMF and World bank, Uganda has painstakingly pursued an ambitious neo-liberal economic transition under President Yoweri Museveni since the early 1990s.

.....neoliberal reforms have targeted the reshaping not only of the economy but also of the society and culture. The reforms aim at the emergence and consolidation of 'market society' (free-market, capitalist social relations), which includes a corresponding set of moral norms of behaving and relating to each other (homo economicus, self-interest, individualism, utility maximizing behaviour, instrumental rationality, low other-regard, transaction-based relations, money). Extensive interviews in Kampala and eastern Uganda suggest that since the onset of liberal economic reforms (liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation), face-to-face

⁸ Alf Gunvald Nilsen. 2007. Restructuring The Political Economy Of Capitalism: Neoliberalism And Accumulation By Dispossession, PhD Thesis, University of Bergen, 2007, p.100

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

*rural trade practices have been characterised by higher levels of 'malpractice' and a change in their form. These malpractices include deception, intimidation, theft, collusion, corruption, and various manipulations regarding price, quality (e.g. adulteration, incorrect assessment) and quantity (weighted scales)*¹¹.

The Poverty Eradication Action Plan(PMA)

By 1992, 56% of the population of Uganda was found to be trapped in absolute poverty as evidenced by the first comparative data on poverty reduction. By 1998, approximately 44% of the population could not meet their basic needs, i.e. food, shelter, clothing, health and education. By 2000, this figure had dropped significantly to 35%. This reduction has been attributed to the improvement of the incomes of the poor due to the good economic performance of the country as well as the pro-active poverty reduction policies of the government. The most significant of these Policies are the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) that was developed by government in 1997 and revised in 2002, and the PMA of 2000¹².

The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) represents the Government of Uganda's Comprehensive modernization or development framework. Under this plan, poverty eradication forms the fundamental objective of the government's development strategy. Uganda hopes to reduce the proportion of the population living in absolute poverty to below 10% by the year 2017. It was assumed by the government that the least success achieved by development policies, such as the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and the Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA), had mainly been brought about by the total exclusion of the perspectives of the development beneficiaries at the level of policy formulation, analysis and implementation. This has lured both local and international development actors to caution government against ignoring the participation of the development beneficiaries and this fundamentally explains the overtures by government to review the PEAP¹³.

Uganda has been hailed as an economic shining example, success story and the "development darling" of Africa by many international donors¹⁴. Despite successes in certain sectors and the adoption of an official Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)

¹¹ Jörg Wiegratz, 2010, The Cultural Political Economy Of Embedding Neo-Liberalism Uganda :An Analysis Of Changes In Moral Norms And Trade Practices In Rural Markets Since 1986. PhD, University of Sheffield, Department of Politics.

¹² Plan For the Modernisation of Agriculture(PMA), 2000, p.2 &4

¹³ Ibid, p.3

¹⁴ David Craig and Douglas Porter. 2006. Development Beyond Neo-liberalism? Governance, Poverty Reduction and Political Economy, New York: Routledge, p.56

sponsored by the World Bank (WB), the poorest of the poor in Uganda have not necessarily experienced 'poverty eradication'. Sustained growth in the country has averaged 7.8% since 2000, and official World Bank statistics say that as a result of this economic growth, poverty declined from 56% in 1992 to 31% in 2006¹⁵. It must however be noted that :

Positive statistics are so often used by the international financial institutions (IFIs) to inflate their current projects and to play up the successes of neo-liberal reforms to serve their own gain. The focus on economic growth and its 'success' in Uganda has resulted in ignoring massive human rights violations being committed by the Ugandan government on its own people (with development overtaking peace-building) and the impact that conditional aid has actually had on the poorest of the poor. Loan debts will be paid by the poor and not the human rights abusing government who borrowed it through structural adjustment programs that guarantee the international community will continue to have a hand in Uganda for decades to come¹⁶.

Gendered Poverty in Uganda

According to the African Forum and Net Work on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), "Uganda is listed by the UNDP and World Bank as one of the poorest and highly indebted countries in the world. 38% of its population lives on less than one dollar a day (2003), and 20% (or over 7million people) are chronically poor"¹⁷. Women constitute the poor of the poor in Uganda because they are disadvantaged in terms education access, and income security. The limited opportunities available to women can be attributed to their low social status as compared to men. Women have generally been estranged from decision making, have a high work load, and more unfortunately, they lack not only access but also control over productive resources such as land. Although some women have been able to move into the public sphere, many have failed to escape from the poverty trap due to limited empowerment and more particularly the prevalence of the attitudinal stance that they are fated for the private sphere. Women in Uganda spend a lot of time in the private sphere, tilling land they do not control, caring for men, children, the elderly and sick.¹⁸

¹⁵ World Bank. September 2008. Uganda: Country Brief. Development Results.
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/UGANDAEXTN/0,,menuPK:374947~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:374864,00.html>, accessed on 2-04-2012

¹⁶ The other side of assistance: The neo-liberal agenda in Uganda,
<http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/the-other-side-of-assistance>, accessed on 20-April-2012

¹⁷ AFRODAD Report , Macroeconomic Policy Options in Sub-Saharan Africa: Linking Poverty reduction Strategy papers (PRSPs) and the Millennium development Goals, The case of Uganda, April , 2006,p.1

¹⁸ PMA 2000, p.9

As far as agricultural production is concerned, women are involved in subsistence food production while the men are involved in more commercially lucrative activities like rearing of livestock, fishing and cash crop production. Patriarchal, intra-house relationships are very inimical to women emancipation from poverty. Despite the availability of income security in the household, the quality of life of the women and children has continued to be an emaciated one in many areas of Uganda. Unlike men, women have generally not actively participated in community decision making due to refusal by husbands, discrimination, little empowerment and lack of time. In situations where women head households, they have been able to lift themselves out of poverty to a large degree as compared to their married counterparts who are constrained by unequal power relations within the household. However, in some cases, their assets such as land have been taken by male in-laws after the death of their husbands, a scenario that has rendered them very vulnerable to poverty¹⁹.

Neo-liberalism and the Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture(PMA)

The PMA is a holistic poverty eradication framework that is enlightened by the PEAP. It is reflective of the adjustments in PEAP in terms of inclusion of multi-sectoral poverty reduction interventions and more particularly the consideration of the perspectives of the poor as the benchmark for sustainable poverty reduction. The PMA is also informed by the pillars of PEAP that include, but are not limited to, increasing the incomes of the poor, improving the standard of living of the poor, and good governance. The PMA states that there is no way of lifting the poor out of the poverty menace without the modernisation of the subsistence production, which the majority of the poor practice. It is assumed that this will not only increase farm productivity, but also raise a surplus which the poor can sell at the market in order to have guaranteed income security²⁰.

The PMA is premised on the argument that since 85% of Ugandans depend on agriculture, it is imperative to transform the agricultural sector through the modernization of the natural, physical, financial, human and social capital assets of the farmers. It is assumed that this will save the farmers from the poverty menace. The policy also reiterates that although Uganda has subsistence, semi-commercial and commercial farmers, the subsistence category constitutes 70% of the entire farming community that is trapped in a rudimentary agricultural production that is largely responsible for their lack of food security and income security²¹.

Uganda National Development Framework(NDP)

The revision of PEAP has ushered in the National Development Plan, a neo-liberal policy oriented towards economic growth and devoid of human development and the perspectives of the poor. According to the National Development Plan:

The overarching policy of the NDP will intertwine economic growth and poverty eradication. Policies and strategies will be

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ PMA 2000, p.vii

²¹ Ibid, p.vii, p.viii &p.30

focused towards achieving accelerated and sustainable growth in the priority areas, creation of gainful employment and socio-economic transformation for prosperity. Increasing incomes beyond the subsistence level and stimulating growth requires sustained orientation of Government expenditure and interventions towards the effective resolution of the most binding constraints Attention to these areas will have impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, productivity, household incomes and overall economic development²².

Despite being devoid of pro-poor perspectives the National Development Plan(new PEAP) aims at transforming Uganda from a predominantly peasant low income to a middle income country within 30 years. It is envisaged that the country will graduate to the middle income segment by 2017²³.

Uganda's Poverty Policy and the Perspectives of the Poor

The Ugandan PMA just like the PEAP policy framework on which it is enlightened conceives poverty reduction in terms of the provision of basic needs and therefore is challenged by the Senean notion that what is important is not the consumption goods and services but rather the enhancement of capabilities to be and do. The PMA claims to be informed by the perspectives of the poor; however it is not clear how these views are to be harmonized with the modernization paradigm in the policy frame work.

The Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture purports to eradicate poverty by “transforming subsistence agriculture to Commercial agriculture”²⁴. It seeks to re-orient subsistence farmers from producing predominantly for household consumption to producing for the market. In order to achieve this the policy argues that farmers must be commercially oriented. The PMA envisages that agricultural modernisation in Uganda will lead to poverty eradication in addition to a profitable , competitive , sustainable and dynamic agricultural and agro-industrial sector.²⁵

The Policy presupposes that the transformation of the subsistence farmer will ensure that the farmer is producing more for the market without compromising household food security, that the farmer has access to information on market prices, the farmer lives on a well planned farm, manages his farm activities without degrading the environment, has record keeping skills and is willing to adopt new technologies.²⁶

Therefore, one of the basic assumptions of the PMA is that in order to modernise the agricultural sector, it is imperative to modernise the rudimentary subsistence production in which the majority of the farmers are involved .This, it is assumed, will not only stimulate growth but will also

²²Uganda's National Development Plan (2010/11 - 2014/15, P.43

²³ Ibid, p.38

²⁴ PMA 2000, p.vi, paragraph 4

²⁵ PMA 2000, P. 27, para.1 &2

²⁶ Ibid., para.4

enhance trickle down effects such as employment opportunities arising from technologically sophisticated industrialisation .Consequently, the subsistence farmer ceases to exist as he/she is transformed into a commercial farmer who produces substantially for the market. Precisely, the PMA is fundamentally situated on the polemic that there is no way of eradicating the poverty of the agricultural farmer as well increasing growth in the agricultural sector without modernising the agricultural sector and hence the subsistence farmer who is using rudimentary tools and techniques of production.²⁷

In order to support the poverty eradication envisaged by the PEAP, the PMA purports to facilitate sustainable rapid and broad based economic growth²⁸ by maintaining macroeconomic stability, especially low inflation, maintaining liberalised markets for domestic and external trade and an open and transparent regulatory and policy framework for the private sector. According to the PMA, Uganda has already liberalised the key markets of trade and foreign exchange, coffee marketing and the financial system, and is committed to maintaining liberal markets. The PMA recognises that open trade policies are essential in the promotion of poverty reducing economic growth.²⁹

The PMA further explicates that:

In order to promote the private sector as the fulcrum as far as production and commercial activities are concerned, the government has since 1987 liberalised tax, trade and investment regimes. As a result the agricultural sector has witnessed the liberalisation of agricultural input trade, domestic and export produce marketing and processing, removal of restrictive and non-restrictive barriers particularly on agricultural inputs as well as the abolition of taxes on agricultural exports. Consequently government monopoly institutions such as; Coffee Marketing Board, Lint Marketing Board and Produce Marketing Board have been disbanded and replaced with private sector regulated bodies. In addition Corporations like Uganda Tea Growers Association and Uganda Seed Project have been privatised.³⁰

The Private Sector as a Fulcrum Agricultural Modernization

The PMA is bereft with a fundamental contradiction; on one hand it purports to empower local authorities to be at the forefront of decision making on agricultural issues but at the same time it argues that government will relinquish responsibilities such as supplying and producing planting materials, provision of credit to farmers, provision of subsidies to the private sector.³¹The fact that the private sector is motivated by competition and profit maximization makes one question, whether the profit maximization ruses of the private sector will not at best disempower and *vulnerablelise* poor women who are disadvantaged in terms of education, land control and access and credit access. Government is supposed to be accountable to the people who vote leaders into power, but the private sector is not necessarily accountable to the people. Isn't it obvious that giving the private sector the discretion to control the provision of credit and subsidies will consequently push poor and in

²⁷ PMA 2000, p.vi, p.vii, para.1&2, p.1,para.1, p.3,para.4, p.4,para.3, p.5, para.1, p.17,para.2, p.27, para.2, p.28,para.3

²⁸ Ibid, para.3

²⁹ Ibid,p.34 , para.3 & 4

³⁰ PMA 2000, p.35,para.1&2

³¹ PMA 2000, viii & x , Para.13 & 18

particular poor rural women to the bottom on the poverty ladder? It must be noted that even the PMA recognizes the dangers of agricultural globalization as exemplified by the following:

*The WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AOA) and the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) have significant implication to our capacity to access global markets and to benefit from the impact of globalisation of world trade. Uganda has to build the requisite capacity to understand, interpret and negotiate appropriate trade policies and create incentives for Ugandans to maximise the benefits and minimise the losses that might arise from the globalisation.*³²

The Ethics of Engendering the Causes of Poverty

The PMA argues that poor farmers stated that poverty was caused due to ‘‘low production-crops , livestock and fish catch. They were unable to(i) provide sufficient food for the household throughout the year; (ii)unable to supply basic household essentials or to afford education and medical costs; and (iii)sometimes forced to sell assets such as land, livestock and produce meant for household consumption, in order to meet basic household needs’’³³.Below is a table on page 11 of the PMA, that highlights the causes of poverty as cited by the poor in the Uganda Participatory Poverty assessments project findings of 1999.

Table 1 Ranking of causes of Poverty (UPPAP,1999)

FACTOR	% OF RURAL SITES
Lack of access to markets	63
Poor health	58
Lack of education and skills	58
Excessive alcohol consumption	54
Ignorance/lack of information	54
Lack of access to financial services and capital	42
Large Families	42
Insurgency(rebels and rustlers)	38
Idleness and laziness	33
Lack of Cooperation	17

The table below is flawed because it does not provide a gender disaggregated analysis of the causes of poverty. In addition the table does not explain the causes of poverty according to vulnerabilities such as age, disability, marital status to mention but a few. It is not clear whether large families for example where male headed or female headed, it is not clear whether most of the idle and lazy folks were women or men. One wonders why this particular obscurantist analysis was selected. It is unethical to propose pro-poor interventions on such a wanting analysis.

Secondly, it is so surprising that despite the fact that the PMA points else where that land access and control is a major cause of poverty, the table above does not address land as an issue. This

³² PMA, 2000, p.xii, para.28

³³ Ibid,p.11,para.3

gives the impression that perhaps the respondents depicted in the table below were males who did not have land problems in patriarchal land tenure system.

Hickey rightly argues that "...the overall aim of the PMA is to transform subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture and the primary beneficiaries will be those "economically active" and "progressive" farmers with existing assets and good links to both agricultural extension agents and the local government agents"³⁴. He further urges although the views of the poor were incorporated in the PPAs, it is imperative he argues "to differentiate between participation and influence. It must be noted that political Elites in Uganda determine the formulation and implementation of pro-poor poverty policies and paradoxically tend to frame the poorest people as responsible for their enduring malaise and thus re-direct poverty policies accordingly"³⁵. No wonder the UHRC contends that the PMA is relevant to the economically active and has no strategy for the abject poor thus useless to this vulnerable³⁶. Therefore the fundamental set back of the PMA³⁷ as an engendered poverty eradication tool is envisaged in its situated ness in a poverty reduction agenda that is targeting some of the poor in addition to being virtually blind to structural injustice and hence unequal power relations that infringe on equal access to productive resources especially land.

According to the Participatory Poverty Assessment conducted in Kigusa Village, Mutere Sub county(Uganda) old women identified the causes of poverty as the lack of ; markets, poultry diseases, diseases, water(unsafe water), unemployment, soil exhaustion, single headed families(widows)(*banamwandu*), lack of land(shortage of land), mosquitoes. The old men on the other hand pointed out the causes of poverty as follows; poor prices of markets for agriculture produce, soil exhaustion, lack of land(shortage of land), diseases, water, famine³⁸. Note how the issue of patriarchy and the control of land is disguised here and see how it manifests again in the views of the poor in the same report as exemplified by the following quote:

*'Men said that land is the major asset base in their lives. They said that they use it to grow crops, which upon harvest they feed on and or sell to get money. At times they sell land off to solve their problems. One elderly man said that children are also assets. According to him, he produced many children and educated a few, his daughters got married to rich men so he doesn't regret because they meet his needs. Coffee plantations were also regarded assets. Rich people with houses in Kigusa Trading Centre construe them as assets from which they derive rents on monthly basis. Men reported that land is still under ownership of clans. This had led to fragmentation of land making it difficult for individuals to own sizeable plots land. Therefore those who afford it have to hire land at 20,000/= - 25,000/= for one a period of one year. Poor widowed women were worried about their lack of land to pass on to their sons. According to one widow: we women do not have land to farm and yet most of our children are boys'*³⁹

³⁴ Sam Hickey. 2005. The Politics of Staying Poor : Exploring the Political space for poverty reduction in Uganda, World Development, Vol.33, No. 6, p.1001

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Uganda Human Right Commission, 7th Annual Report, 2004, Chapter 13

³⁷ PMA Eludes Uganda, New vision, Tuesday, 26th September, 2006

³⁸ Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, Participatory Poverty Assessment, II(PPA II); cycle III reports, Submitted by Samson Opolot, Joyce Nairuba, Martha Mugala, July 2002, p. 20 also available on <http://www.finance.go.ug/docs/Kigusa%20Muterere.pdf>, accessed on 8th March 2012.

³⁹ Ibid, p.19

The quote above explicates that patriarchal land tenure structures are a burden even to poor male farmers, however one wonders why the lady chosen in this particular text was interested in having land to pass on to her sons instead of the daughters. This raises the issue of adaptive preference and that need to engage it the participatory poverty assessment .It is obvious that women are socialized by the patriarchal society to be ‘cultural dopes’ instead of conscientious objectors. This purports to perpetuate the patriarchal structures like the ones related to land access and control. Unfortunately, the so called participatory assessments do not indicate how this problematic was engaged and surmounted and how it impacted on the so called views of the poor especially as regards the explication of the causes of poverty. Is it useful to purport to eradicate poverty through privatization and commercialization of agriculture amidst a gendered social scenario of discriminatory land acquisition and control, secondly, is privatization and commercialization a view of the poor? If not ? Why weren’t the poor consulted on this particular issue. In addition, how can the privatization and commercialization of agriculture help women who can not even control their sexuality. The Kigusa report further reveals that;

“Limited land undermines household agriculture and affects women’s ability to improve their incomes; the small land cannot allow them to cultivate both food and cash crops for them to sell! Matters are compounded by the fact that the land belongs to the men and they have the last word when it comes to its use or disposition. One of the women observed that they were always reminded that the land does not belong to them. The women access the land by doing most of the farming for feeding the family and, in some cases, selling the surplus, which enables the family to purchase other commodities. But the entire control is in the hands of the man. Land is either inherited or bought and custody always bestowed to male kin. Even if the woman bought land, her male kin control it. Culturally the children belong to the man and so does my body said one woman. To which a man emphasised: the woman belongs to me because I bought her. I can even chase her off my bed if she behaves in an unwanted manner. Alluded to here, is the lack of control women have over their sexual rights. Once bride price is settled, which is however not always the case, women are expected to provide unquestioned sexual services to their husbands. For example, during this exercise, another man chipped in: ‘by the way what else would she have come to do in the home’”⁴⁰

Table 2 showing Gender resource and control matrix in Kigusu

Gendered Resources and Access and Control matrix⁴¹

	Resource	Access		Control	
		M	W	M	W
1.	Farm implements like Hoes, Pangs, Axes	?	?	?	
2.	The bed which represented sexuality, children	?	?	?	
3.	Kitchen/household utensils like cooking pans, food, plates	?	?		?
4.	Land	?	?	?	
5.	Shelter/house	?	?		?

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.27

⁴¹ Ibid

6.	Bicycle	?	?	?	
7.	Radio	?	?		?

NB: M =Men and W =Women

Unresolved Epistemological Questions in The PMA

According to the World Bank, “.... most part international human rights law does not-and cannot-provide detailed prescriptions for action . Building on the normative frame work established by international human rights , detailed antipoverty programmes must be developed , through participatory processes, at the national and local levels”⁴² .The *tandembility* of the PMA and PEAP with the capability approach to poverty eradication needs to be critically assessed and tested from the grassroots beneficiaries .

“It is well documented that the poor frequently experience social exclusion, isolation , alienation , discrimination and inequality . This feeling of being looked down upon often arises from a combination of economic deprivation and socio-cultural factors , such as ethnicity , colour , religion , social hierarchy and gender . Poverty not only arises from lack of resources-it may also arise from a lack of accesses to resources , information , opportunities , Power and mobility . As the UN Committee on Economic , Social and cultural rights observes : ‘Some times poverty arises when people have no access to existing resources because of who they are , what they believe or where they live. Discrimination may cause poverty just as poverty may cause discrimination’”⁴³

Apparent in the poverty discourse is the argument that policies such as the PMA that result from participatory poverty Assessments are in tandem with human rights and gender justice because they are based on the solicitation of the views of the poor . However the definitions of a PPA are also indicative of the fact that the views of the poor form part of the perspective of PPAs. Let us look at two definitions. Narayan defines a PPA as:

*“....an iterative , participatory research process that seeks to understand poverty from the perspective of a range of stakeholders and involve them directly in planning-follow up action. The most important stakeholders involved in the research process are poor men and women. PPAs also include decision makers from all levels of government, civil society and the local elite, thereby uncovering different interests and perspectives and increasing local capacity and commitment to follow-up action. PPAs seek to understand poverty in its local social , institutional and political context. Since PPAs address national policy, Micro level data are collected from a large number of communities in order to discern patterns across social groups and geographical areas, and across social groups specificities.”*⁴⁴

⁴² World bank report 2000 , Voices of the poor : Can any one hear us

⁴³ Paul Hunt , Manfred Norwak , Siddiq Osman Human Rights and Poverty Reduction Strategies, A discussion paper prepared for the Office of the High commissioner on Human Rights, 2002,p.17, <http://www.fao.org/righttofood/Kc/downloads/vl/docs/AH177.doc>, accessed on 28-4-2012

⁴⁴ Narayan D. (et al).2000.Voices of the Poor: Can you hear us? Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000

According to the Department for international development⁴⁵ –UK:

“A participatory poverty Assessment is an instrument for including the perspectives of the poor people in the analysis of poverty and the formulation of strategies to reduce it Its purpose is to improve the effectiveness of actions aimed at poverty reduction. PPAs are generally carried out as policy research exercises, aimed at understanding poverty from the perspective of poor people and what their priorities are in terms of actions to improve their lives. PPAs can strengthen poverty assessment processes through: broadening stakeholders involvement and thereby increasing general support and legitimacy for anti-poverty strategies enriching the analysis and understanding of poverty by including the perspectives of the poor ; providing a diverse range of valuable information on a cost effective rapid and timely basis , and creating new relationship, between policy makers , service providers and people in poor communities.”

It must be emphasised that Uganda’s participatory poverty assessments espouse the views of the poor, civil society, government , UNDP, World Bank among other stakeholders. Therefore since the perspectives of the poor form part of the views of the entire poverty stakeholders, it is important to ask the following epistemological questions; who determines what ultimately constitutes participatory poverty policy? Elites or the poor, how are adaptive preferences issues handled? How do you differentiate between poverty knowledge and poverty opinion? Therefore as Hickey points out it is the elite who determine what ultimately constitutes policy and thus it is no wonder that the PMA aims at transforming agriculture from subsistence to commercial instead of confronting the patriarchal land tenure system that allocates land with a gender biased *modus operandi*. According to the UHRC “...although the PEAP involved a consultative process , a number of concerns expressed during the process have been ignored .The final document is dominated by economic imperatives and fails to recognise human rights as cross cutting and hence should be built on all sectoral programmes”,⁴⁶. In addition the UHRC argues that the draft PEAP had committed government to a rights based approach which however disappeared in the final document⁴⁷.

Uganda’s Participatory Poverty Assessments: A Gendered Epistemological Analysis of PPA1 And PPA2

The Uganda participatory Poverty assessment project came up with two reports. According to PPA2 . “Limited access to land or land shortage ranks second among the most frequently cited causes of poverty. This was not given prominence in the first PPA. Evidence showed that households, particularly in the middle and poorest categories were not accumulating land. Instead, they have seen their land ownership decreasing significantly as a result of problems linked to large families, insurgency, commercial farming, evictions, migrations and gender inequalities. *Large families* also featured as an important cause of poverty in themselves, as well as being a factor behind land shortages”,⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ Karen Brock , An Introduction to Participatory Poverty Assessments , IDS , University of Sussex, on www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/research/ppa/ppareader.pdf, accessed on 7-3-2012

⁴⁶ Uganda Human Rights Commission , 7th Annual Report , 2004:Chap.13

⁴⁷ Sam Hickey ,Opcit.

⁴⁸ MFPED Report(December 2002), Depending the Understanding of Poverty , PPA II, p.xii

It should be noted that , “...Investigations of peoples’ asset base and livelihoods in PPA2 reveal that lack of control over productive resources by women remains one of the root causes of poverty. Women can not control livestock and other productive resources. Yet they are responsible for meeting family needs. They also explained that they lack control over land, the crops their labour produces from it. They also complained bitterly of men wasting time and family resources drinking. Women are “overburdened” and this affects their productivity. In many sites, women were alleged to have *more* family responsibilities now than in the past, for example, being responsible for paying for costs of schooling, when this used to be unheard of. Women headed households are often poor because in-laws take land and assets when a husband dies, claiming that these revert to the man’s clan, leading women in some sites to recommend that men should be legally obliged to make wills and to leave land to their wives”⁴⁹.

It is evident that the problem of unequal power relations in relation to accessing land as a productive resource featured prominently in the second PPA report by which PEAP2 is greatly enlightened. However, the fact that PEAP 2 is virtually silent on confronting the unequal power relations in land access is indicative of how the patriarchal land tenure relations are perpetuated by the economism discourse in PEAP 2(spearheaded by the IMF and World bank). Gita Sen argues that “...there are both conceptual and institutional challenges to engendering poverty reduction strategies and programmes. Gender systems , structures and biases and forms of oppression and subordination work at multiple levels , and are both powerful and resistant to change. Anti-poverty strategies and programmes often attempt to sidestep gender systems”⁵⁰. This he argues impinges on the formulation , implementation and impact of anti-poverty strategies or policies⁵¹.

The Human Rights versus the Basic Needs Understanding of Poverty in PPA 2

According to PPA2, “...The basic definition of poverty that emerged universally from discussions with local people in the 12 sampled districts confirmed earlier findings in the 1998/1999 PPA that poverty is *a lack of basic needs and services such as food, clothing, beddings, shelter, paraffin, basic health care, roads, markets, education, information and communication*. In addition, the lack of opportunities for survival and employment, and having limited or no productive assets such as farm tools and land emerged strongly in the definitions of poverty. The dimensions of *powerlessness, social exclusion and ignorance and lack of knowledge* were particularly drawn attention to by the poorer people within the communities as key definitions of poverty”⁵².The report is silent on whether there was a critical discourse on whether food, clothing, shelter, education and health care are needs and not human rights. The discourse on needs and rights presupposes that the poor have knowledge as opposed to opinion about these issues. The fact that the basic needs discourse of the WB and IMF is imposed on the poor without a genuine critical discourse is inimical to the emancipation of the poor towards equal resource access.

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Gita Sen, Engendering poverty Alleviation: Challenges and Opportunities , in Shakra Razavi(ed).2000.Gendered poverty and Well-being, Oxford: Black well Publishers Ltd, p. 272-273

⁵¹ ibid

⁵² MFPED Report(December 2002), Depending the Understanding of Poverty , PPA II, p.xii p.10

The empirical assessments presented above categorically explicates that the views of the poor form part of the views of the entire stakeholders involved in the formulation of the PEAP2, this creates an epistemological problematic as regards who ultimately determines what constitutes poverty policy and in particular who ultimately determines whether the views of the poor should be integrated in poverty policy. This is one of the issues that necessitates an hermeneutic critique. Apparently , evidence shows that the PEAP must be presented before the joint boards of the IMF and WB who ensure that the frameworks are in tandem with Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) guidelines before it is approved as the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). In addition, the interest of the UNDP and Civil society constitute a very powerful block and hence the views of the poor are competing from an asymmetrical disadvantage.

It is no wonder therefore that although the findings of the poverty assessments reveal that hierarchical gender power relations are inimical to the right of the poor to access and control land as a productive resource, the PMA aims at transforming agriculture from a subsistence modal to commercial modal. This lures one to question whose interest this serves? How can a policy commercialise agriculture under a gendered tenure system will lead to further discrimination of poor women? Were the poor consulted before this anti poor section of the PMA was formulated? Certainly not. Therefore it is sound to deduce that the private sector oriented PMA will at best integrate women into the policy and will at least alter the patriarchal social structures that endanger the rights of women to control and access productive resources such as land.

Stella Mukasa categorically opines that "Engendered justice is hindered by the current legislation which are a consortium of gender related barriers in accessing justice with in the substantive laws mainly related to gender biased laws which are overtly discriminative; and gender neutral laws where discrimination is veiled and seems to be corrected through laws that are protective of specific concerns of men and women. Examples of gendered biased laws include the Land Act whose professed co-ownership clause has not received parliamentary consensus and thus women continue to be deprived of security of tenure as a key ingredient to economic independence".⁵³

Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler(2003) argue that "...this clear, constant and distinct gendered land tenure pattern reflects the system of part lineal inheritance and patrilocal residence patterns that characterize much of Uganda tenure relations. These systems imply that women's rights to land are not secure as men's. Without secure rights to land, women's ability and incentives to participate in income-enhancing economic activity (as targeted by pillar 3 of the PEAP). Women are unable to participate fully in agricultural activities , particularly market-oriented activity , and are frequently unable to plant trees or income generating crops and do not share in the income generated from such crops . Evidence shows that the type of land rights enjoyed by women will affect the wellbeing of children especially girls, in addition to its impact on productivity (as targeted by pillar 4 of PEAP). The security of tenure provided to women, the poor and vulnerable not only affects their ability to engage in livelihood-promoting economic

⁵³Stella Mukasa , A Desk Review of Gender and Access to Justice in Uganda ,Nordic Consulting Group , from Justice Law and Order Sector , Sector PEAP Revision Strategy Paper , FY 2004/2005-2006-2007 , on http://www.finance.go.ug/peap_revision/downloads/jlos.pdf, accessed in 5-4-2012

activity , but also their social and economic status and often their collective identity ; their access to public services , the incentive to make investments and use resources sustainably, and their ability to self-ensure and/or access financial markets as well as diversifying their incomes (as targeted by all pillars of PEAP)’’.⁵⁴

In their view ‘‘The most vulnerable category of women under this lackluster usufruct tenure system are widows with little access to labour , divorcees and female-headed households whose husbands have abandoned them. Legal provisions for gender equity in property rights need to be revisited . Most importantly the new land Act includes a ‘family rights land clause’ that is a step towards increasing control over land by women as it strengthens the obligation of the husbands to get the consent of their spouses before selling or mortgaging land . Recent discussion and rejection of a possible co-ownership clause implies that in the short term female dependent on land access for their livelihood need protection against possible abuses of their usufruct rights and the rights to the proceeds of crop production’’.⁵⁵

Nadia surmises that ‘‘...contemporary land tenure relations in the Ugandan social locale exhibit diversities that reflect cultural, economic, political and social contradictions resulting from increased commodity production and the penetration of and integration into global capitalism. The transformation processes demonstrates the resistance of males to support women in respect to land tenure relations’’.⁵⁶ The persistence of this status is a fundamental set back for the rights based approach to poverty eradication as an effective and sustainable policy frame work and therefore calls for efforts to reinvent the hypothetical gendered power relations as barriers to equitable access to power and productive resources.

Under the private sector motivated PMA it is no wonder that the poor continue to be evicted from their land, for example;

...’’In August 2001 , the government of Uganda deployed its army , the UPDF , to evict over 400 families with a population of over 2000 people in order to create a 9.6 square mile space for a Germany investor Newmann Kaffe Groupe locally registered as Kaweri Coffee Plantation ltd. These people were not compensated by the government and many of their children could not go back to school because their parents had lost the means of livelihood to sustain them . The people sought redress with the UHRC

⁵⁴ Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler , SOCIAL PROTECTION IN UGANDA; Facilitating the Process of Mainstreaming Social Protection into the PEAP , Phase II Report: A Vulnerability Issues Paper , October 2003, p.34 , on http://www.finance.go.ug/peap_revision/downloads/finalSocDev.pdf , accessed in 5-4-2012

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Winnie Bikaako and John Ssenkumba , Gender , Land and Rights: Contemporary Contestation in Law Policy and Practice in Uganda , from L. Muthoni Wanyeki , 2003. *Women and Land in Africa: Culture, Religion, and Realizing Women's Rights*, Zed Books p. 276

*but were not helped because it does not resolve matters pertaining to land*⁵⁷.

In addition, “In Kapchorwa District, about 700 Bennet families, living in a gazetted land for a national park, were evicted by Government. The Bennets comprise one of the most marginalised and socially excluded groups of people, who have lived all their lives in the forests of Mountain Elgon” Further, in the district of Kibaale, there are land conflicts related to ethnicity. Ethnic Kiga agriculturalists (the Bafuruki), are locked up in bitter land wrangles with the indigenous Banyoro, who feel the Bakiiga should not till their land. Under such the major culprits are the poor women, unfortunately the new public management discourse explicit in the PMA purports to integrate Uganda in the Global economy of structural adjustment and it is no wonder that right of the poor women to access and control land is simply given lip service.

The Hornsleth Pig Project in Uganda as an Epistemological Challenge to the Voices of the Poor

In 2006, there was a serious debate raging in the Ugandan media about The Hornsleth Village Project. This was a project whereby a Danish artist gave some peasants in Mukono pigs on the condition that they disowned their names in favour of his names⁵⁸. **Kristian Von Hornsleth**, has been rubbished⁵⁹ by many people including even those who should know better as satanic⁶⁰ after all he has pornographic pictures on his website⁶¹. Whether he is aware of it or not Kristian has exposed the hypocrisy and erroneousness of the neo-liberal globalization development agenda⁶² that claims that the views of the poor are equally important in determining National poverty policy, when the truth is that globalization and its so called New public management agenda takes precedence over the views of the poor. The fact that poor women and men can change their names for a mere pig shows the asymmetrical relations that exist between the views of the rich and poor, elite poor peasants and fundamentally the vulnerability that crowds the entire scenario. It is cynical for any one to claim that the PEAP

⁵⁷ Action Aid International Uganda, Annual Report 2003, p.20

⁵⁸ Hornsleth Village Project Uganda, **We want to help you, but we want to own you!** <http://www.hornslethvillageproject.com/>, accessed on 27-04-2012, also see, Villagers change names for Pigs, The New Vision, Tuesday, 5th September, 2006

⁵⁹ Hornsleth, you are a disgrace to humanity. You are in no way helping the poor people of Mukono; you are simply advancing, a burning desire to be the 'king' of actually ignorance and stupidity. May God judge you for your harsh deeds. You remind us of colonialism but in a new and ruder form. There is no way you are helping; just fulfilling your stupid and selfish desire. You certainly got the attention that you so much crave and for you to even think of using the ugandan flag is a disgrace for us Ugandans who, poor as we may be are happy and content. You are modern day Idi Amin. SHAME ON YOU. **JULIET**, from Emergent Chaos, on http://www.emergentchaos.com/archives/2006/11/the_kristian_von_hornslet.html, retrieved on 8th March 2012.

⁶⁰ Hornsleth satanic, says minister Buturo, The New Vision, Thursday, 26th October, 2006

⁶¹ Jude Bukenya, Hornsleth Village Project Uganda: A New Form of Colonialism?, on <http://www.ugpulse.com/articles/daily/homepage.asp?ID=538>, also see Buturo suspends Pig Investor, on <http://www.ugaonline.blogspot.com/>, accessed on 23-4-2012

⁶² “We want to help you. But we want to own you”, on http://www.emergentchaos.com/archives/2006/11/the_kristian_von_hornslet.html, accessed on 23-4-2012

and PMA are rights based and engendered because this claim is negated by the premise that these policy frame works and all the views of the poor they entail must be filtered by the globalization cylinder of new public management. It is therefore no wonder that the all structures of power that constrain the right of women to access productive resources such as land have remained virtually unaltered. Therefore inclusion of the poor in PEAP and PMA continues to be used as a scapegoat to appease the private sector ridden globalization conscience.

PMA Epistemology as a Neo-Liberal Writ Large

The PMA recognizes that it can not be operationalised without a special consideration gender issues and without ensuring that all interventions must be gender responsive and gender focused such that both men and women are included⁶³. It also proposes that intervention planning and implementation should carefully consider men's and women's participation, roles and responsibilities and workloads, as well as control of and access to, resources and existing relations that many prohibit participation and benefit⁶⁴. However, this recognition and proposal is negated by silence of the PMA on the fundamentality of engaging patriarchal social structures that curtail equal access and control of productive resources such as land hence engendered poverty eradication in Uganda. There is a need for the PMA to transcend the philosophy of Women in Development (WID) i.e. sensitivity to the integration women's needs in policy interventions to Gender in development (GID) i.e. the transformation of unequal power relations between men and women (gender relations) in order realize equitable and sustainable poverty engagement interventions. The current PMA does not take cognizance of situational gender imbalances and hence gendered power relations will at best trample on the capabilities and functionings of women and thus widen the poverty line between the sexes. It is evident that the IMF and WB have veto power over the country's PRSPs and this leads to a fundamental question, can the monkey be a judge in a case that involves the forest? The reason why poverty eradication policies such as the PEAP and PMA continue to be *economicentric* rather *engendercentric* is that poverty policies are entwined in the economic globalisation ruses of the global financial actors. No wonder the PEAP disguises its self as a poverty eradication frame work yet its language is toned towards poverty reduction thanks to the WB and IMF.

Remigius Munyonyo argues that "...because PRSP are developed in response to the IMF and world bank concessional lending, highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) debt relief, IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) and international development assistance (IDA), they can not meet one of the principles of the rights based approach, that is to say, any development intervention or strategy needs to incorporate the principle of indogeneity, which is premised on the constant search to develop from within by building on what people are and have"⁶⁵.

⁶³ PMA 2000, p.9, para.7

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Remigius Munyonyo, An evaluation of Uganda's poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) using a human rights based approach, paper presented at a two day workshop on a human rights-based approach to development organized by the UHRC at Hotel Africana, Kampala, from 19th - 20th December 2002, p. 3-4

It is possible he argues that “...out of a participatory process the people may suggest proposals for poverty reduction but these may not meet the standards of the joint boards and thus the PRSP may fail to be approved. In addition if the PRSP is to be fully owned by the people, it should at the end of the process, be approved by the same people rather than by the joint boards of the IMF and world bank. He therefore deduces that, apart from emphasizing the principle of participation in development, the PRSP model still focuses on the elements of ‘technocratic development’ whose adverse effects on economies of developing countries can not be overemphasized”⁶⁶.

Secondly, he argues “...the main objective of the PRSPs⁶⁷ is to reduce poverty by focusing on renewed growth-oriented strategy: a strategy which has been adequately criticized as the cause of the development crisis in developing countries. In addition the public actions of PRSP summarized over a period of three years does not take into account the fact that a development process is gradual, and some times, it does not require the time frame within which results should be seen. Even when the process, according to donors, is seen as delaying, the people should be left on their own to gradually move on, because to *know is not to guess*”⁶⁸. The IMF and World bank cannot easily abide by the priority chosen by the people, when in their judgment it is not the preferred one. Therefore a poverty strategy paper may arise out a participatory assessment but must undergo a technocratic assessment which ultimately takes precedence.

Conclusion

Poverty eradication in Uganda is characterized by a conflictual interface between neo-liberal economic technocratic development spear headed by the IMF and World Bank and the human development paradigm that prioritizes the perspectives of the poor in poverty eradication. Despite the hypocritical advocacy for the inclusion of the perspectives of the poor in poverty policies, the World Bank has persistently cajoled the government of Uganda to implement an economic growth approach to development and poverty reduction. This in principle implies that the poor in Uganda continue to be treated as development conduits or patients. The so called views of the poor solicited through participatory poverty assessments have largely remained a paper gimmick bereft with fundamental ethical and epistemological contradictions. In practice the state and the IMF and World Bank (and not the poor) remain the authorities on poverty reduction. The growth that has been accumulated through neo-liberal structural programmes has not had an engendered pro-poor trickle down effect as argued and expected by the World Bank and the government. The Ugandan state remains largely unbothered about the poor and can

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are prepared by member countries in broad consultation with stakeholders and development partners, including the staffs of the World Bank and the IMF. Updated every three years with annual progress reports, they describe the country’s macroeconomic, structural, and social policies in support of growth and poverty reduction, as well as associated external financing needs and major sources of financing. see Uganda Poverty Eradication Action Plan 2004/05-2007/08, August 2004, On <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05307.pdf>

⁶⁸ Ibid

evict⁶⁹ them in thousands from their ancestral agricultural lands in order to promote the neo-liberalism of International Financial Institutions. There is a need to make a paradigm shift from vulture capitalism to venture capitalism- a kind of capitalism where economic growth is not an end its self but rather a means to enhancements of gendered livelihoods of the poor. We need to borrow a leaf from Nordic economies such as Sweden, Norway and Demark that have resisted neo-liberal vulture capitalism by promoting human development with in a venture capitalistic agenda.

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