Visions of a More Sustainable Future of Work for the Underserved

JoAnn Rolle

Medgar Evers College, City University of New York, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For generations, humanity has experienced socioeconomic disparities that are yet unresolved. Although education and training have transformed some individuals in society, they have not addressed the broader issues of sustainable employment for many underserved communities. Governments, corporations, policymakers, and numerous stakeholders have continued to address the problem, yielding disappointing results. Growing inequality in society continues to be a major concern. Vertical inequalities between the poor and the rich and horizontal inequalities between various groups of society have remained high for centuries. This chapter focuses on a variety of individual elements that outline the current challenges to humanity in an unequal society that certain communities continue to face, citing an unsustainable environment. Inequality and degradation negatively impact the future of work. Efforts continue to advance the future of work as a progressive, stable, and welcoming environment without the need for underserved communities to be marginalized.

"Struggle is a never-ending process. Freedom is never really won, you earn it in every generation." Coretta Scott King

"The future of work and entrepreneurship for the underserved is a struggle for humanity." J. D. Rolle

INTRODUCTION

Many areas shape the future of work. Recently, the focus has been on the impacts of the adoption of technologies and the augmentation of work tasks. However, that's not all. The future of work is also defined by five significant dimensions defined by the International Labor Office. These dimensions are job creation, job quality, social protection, wage and income inequalities, and social dialogue and industrial relations. These are considered integral elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2020 (2020)).

In the context of social protection, poverty and the poor have been with us for generations. In some cultures, there is no escape from class or the class system. In some cultures, race establishes a pseudo-class system by the historical and socioeconomic conditions that surround work and/or the lack thereof. It is no surprise that racism and poverty continue to plague the economy, especially for the majority who are poor.

The greatest share of the world's wealth has long been in the hands of a few men. None of this is new or surprising. What was surprising to us when we looked at the global data was that the middle class is shrinking—due not to gains of the bottom class, but to more gains of the upper-income class (Rolle et al., 2019). The income growth continues to be tilted to the upper-income class; hence, a greater share of aggregate income to the upper-income class indicates the share going to the middle to lower-income classes is falling. The share for middle-income households decreased from 61% in 1971 to 51% in 2019.

The increase is because middle-income families are more dependent on home equity as a source of wealth, whereas upper-income families have personal assets and business equity that provides a larger share of their wealth (Pew Research Center, 2020).

How then do we channel more of the lower- and middle-income class workers into jobs and/or entrepreneurial ventures that are more equitable and sustainable? How do we begin to take the gains from technology and use them as a force for equity? How do we transform informal economies into formal economies? Where do we start? There are many ideologies, abstract thoughts, and political strategies that have been executed in the past, yet for many demographics, such as Blacks in the U.S., the income and subsequent wealth gap are greater now.

In *A Handbook of the Future of Work and Entrepreneurship for the Underserved*, which posit different observations in different regions, a compelling one is in the beginning of chapter one, Social Innovation Strategies to Transform Slums Into Successful Neighborhoods in Latin America, by Mariano Bernardez. Bernardez and a team of researchers demonstrate that socioeconomic gains of the underserved can be achieved and as such the study is worthy of further review and discussion. Bernardez's work focuses on "nanoeconomics" and Roger Kaufman's Mega-planning, both of which have promising demonstrations of societal progress and success. They refer to their model as "The City Doctors framework, which organizes the goals and interventions around the neighborhood or city and its stakeholders." Their work suggests that bottom-up strategies starting from analyses within households are more powerful and provide more sustainable and equitable work and venture-based solutions for the future.

The focus of this study is to use these cited papers to examine the work presented, along with the use of other secondary sources, to determine sustainable socioeconomic and income gains for the underserved.

Hence the focus of this chapter is a brief examination of several related works. We intend that the review yields prospects for possible replication globally and as such produce sustainable socioeconomic and income gains for the underserved. As many of the world's most densely populated areas are in cit-

Related Content

Feature Reduction for Support Vector Machines
Shouxian Chengand Frank Y. Shih (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 870-877).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/feature-reduction-support-vector-machines/10922

Data Quality in Data Warehouses
William E. Winkler (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 550-555).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/data-quality-data-warehouses/10874

Text Mining for Business Intelligence
Konstantinos Markellos (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1947-1956).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/text-mining-business-intelligence/11086

DFM as a Conceptual Model for Data Warehouse
Matteo Golfarelli (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 638-645).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/dfm-conceptual-model-data-warehouse/10888

Biological Image Analysis via Matrix Approximation
Jieping Ye, Ravi Janardanand Sudhir Kumar (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 166-170).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/biological-image-analysis-via-matrix/10815