**The mediating role of Social Entrepreneurship in upliftment of S**ociety **– A Theoretical Perspective**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Social entrepreneurship is the buzz word in India and around the world. The concept of social entrepreneurship has the best combination of social service and entrepreneurship. This combination makes it most attractive and so unique in nature. Usually entrepreneurship is related to economic activities without considering social benefits. The concept of social entrepreneurship rising in India and around the world has helped in serving the society in more meaningful manner than ever before along with living the spirit of entrepreneurship with its fullest. As the definition of social entrepreneurship itself clarifies that its fine combination of entrepreneurship and societal gains. In recent times, the concept has taken new identities and shapes, and has been accepted among wider areas. This paper is a detailed study to understand the role of social entrepreneurship for the upliftment of the society, including the conceptual framework and process of social entrepreneurship. This research paper also includes the various challenges faced by social entrepreneurs and puts forwards its recommendations to improve the overall situation of social entrepreneurship/entrepreneurs in India.*

***Key words-*** *Social entrepreneurship, Social Innovation, Social needs, social entrepreneurs, economic entrepreneurs, social upliftment.*

 **INTRODUCTION**

A country’s economic development is totally depend upon the growth of entrepreneurship and more the entrepreneurship is grown, infrastructure as well as all the indicators of development has also grown. India also understood the importance of entrepreneurship and worked a lot in the overall development of entrepreneurship. The very basic aspect of overall development, including social development, can be contributed to the detailed development of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is all about taking business risks and handling uncertainties. The entrepreneurship has many other types as well; it is divided on different traits and criteria, one of the criteria being Social. This type of entrepreneurship is very unique in nature and has different blends of components. The prime objective of social entrepreneurship is to have social benefits along with the economic benefits. In a nutshell, social entrepreneurship fills the gap which is left unattended by economic entrepreneurship.

For a long time, India needs social entrepreneurship, and it stands to benefit even more. By addressing the social imbalance, several social enterprises formed in India are transforming the face of society. Government of India also encourages such initiatives by motivating them and awarding them time to time. There are some examples of social entrepreneurship which clears that touches the very basic of the society. The most prominent example include micro financing, educational institutions, medical institutions etc. The prime objective of social entrepreneurship is to bring changes in the society rather than earning money for themselves.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The present research study is intended to achieve the following objectives.

1. To study social entrepreneurship with its basic framework.
2. To underline the roles and responsibilities of social entrepreneurs in India society.
3. To study the overall contribution of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises in India.
4. To list out the challenges faced by social entrepreneurship in India.
5. To give suggestions to face prevailing challenges for social entrepreneurship in India.

## HYPOTHESIS TO BE USED IN STUDY

The present study is based on the following hypothesis:

**H1** Social Entrepreneurship contributes in the upliftment of society in India.

**H0** Social Entrepreneurship does not contribute in the upliftment of society in India.

**H1** Social Entrepreneurship faces challenges in India.

**H0** Social Entrepreneurship does not face any challenges in India.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology which is applied during the research study is descriptive in nature. The data collection of data is done on secondary basis and the research is strictly done to meet the objectives set previously for the present research. The data and information which is furnished in the study is taken from the various secondary sources. Various reports and studies, books on social entrepreneurship have been refereed in the present research.

##  LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review contains the work already done on the area of research in hand. Literature review is also needed for understanding the nature of the research topic in details so that according to that, researcher can mold his approach for the research topic. The literature review for the present study is as follows-

Daru , Mahesh and Gour, Ashok in their research paper title “Social entrepreneurship - A way to bring social change” (2013) writes that “In the developing world, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) might provide a valid operationalization of social needs. The MDG rfer to the most pressing social problems to be addressed in the immediate future. They include goals such as eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (http://www.developmentgoals.org). In the developed world, opportunities for social entrepreneurs might arise, for example, from gaps in the social welfare system. More empirical studies are needed to map the opportunity space for social entrepreneurs and to examine whether and how the nature of social opportunities affects the entrepreneurial process. Research on social entrepreneurship has grown rapidly in recent years. Given its importance for society and today’s economy, the subject has received considerable attention in different streams of research”

Earnest and Young in their report title “Social entrepreneurship-Emerging business opportunities” (2014) states that “Creating value for society in many countries the role of the government in the socio-economic domain is shifting towards privatization of public responsibilities. As a result, charities receive less public funds and social entrepreneurship is gaining momentum worldwide. Research in the fields of activity of social enterprises in Europe shows that social entrepreneurs focus on social services, employment & training, the environment (including cleantech and bio-systems), education and community development.1 hence, the increasing number of social enterprises may result in widespread gains for public budgets. The attractiveness of social enterprises as employers is increasing as well. The number of FTEs working in Dutch social enterprises increased by 12% between 2012 and 2014.2 Young professionals in particular, value the reputation of social enterprises above traditional companies that strive for profit maximization only”

A report title “Young Social Entrepreneurs in Canada” prepared by Canadian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship (2003) states that “Social entrepreneurship is characterized by an emphasis on ‘social innovation through entrepreneurial solutions.’ Socially entrepreneurial activities blur the traditional boundaries between the public, private and non-profit sectors, and emphasize hybrid models of for- profit and non-profit activities. Cross-sectoral collaborations are implicit within this model, as is the development of radical new approaches to address long-standing and complex social/economic problems. In the last decade, both the concept and practice of social entrepreneurship have been embraced in the U.S. and Britain. Subsequently, significant organizational and institutional resources have materialized in both these countries to encourage and support nascent social entrepreneurs and their activities.”

Singh, Partap, Dr. in his research paper title “Social Entrepreneurship- A growing trend in Indian economy”(2012) underlines that “Social entrepreneurship is the recognition of a social problem and the uses of entrepreneurial principles to organize create and manage a social venture to achieve a desired social change. While a business entrepreneur typically measures performance in profit and return, a social entrepreneur also measures positive returns to society. Thus, the main aim of social entrepreneurship is to further broaden social, cultural, and environmental goals. Social entrepreneurs are commonly associated with the voluntary and not-for-profit sectors, but this need not preclude making a profit. Social entrepreneurship practiced with a world view or international context is called international social entrepreneurship. A well-known modern social entrepreneur is Muhammad Yunus, founder and manager of Grameen Bank and its growing family of social venture businesses, who was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 2006”

Report by Swissnex India title “Social Entrepreneurship in India- Unveiling the unlimited opportunities” (2015) underlines that “Social entrepreneurship in terms of operation and leadership could be applicable to nonprofit organizations as much as for-profit social enterprises although in terms of activities and legal entity they are very different.” Models for social entrepreneurship in India are Social for-profit enterprise, non-profit and hybrid model, which are discussed in detail in the following sections. In addition to the above-mentioned models, other ways of creating impact in India are through philanthropy and through Corporate Social Responsibility. India has been regularly receiving global philanthropic money. Recently there has been a rise in local contributions from wealthy individuals with short and long-term vision. A new breed of high-net-worth individuals from the corporate sector is looking at investing philanthropic money in the form of grants and impact investments. Currently strategic philanthropy in India is still at a nascent stage.”

MEANING OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“Social entrepreneurship is the process of recognizing and resourcefully pursuing opportunities to create social value for society. Social entrepreneurs are innovative, motivated for resolving social issues, resourceful, and results oriented. These entrepreneurs exist in all kinds of organizations: large and small; new and old; religious and secular; non-profit, for-profit, and hybrid. Such organizations comprise the ‘social sector”

## SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Social entrepreneurs are those entrepreneurs who basically undertake social entrepreneurship. They have all the traits of economic entrepreneur, except the motivational force they have which is derived from social inequalities and social insufficiencies. Social entrepreneurs are the people who undertake any social problem or short coming and convert that into a solution cum product. They aim for non-personal profits rather than a profit, the primary objectives of their existence is to serve the society rather than earning profits. They also innovate; their innovation is referred as “Social Innovation”

**‘**Social entrepreneurs are not content to just give a fish or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionised the fishing industry.’

In simple terms “Social entrepreneurs Identify and relentlessly purse opportunities to create sustainable solutions to social problems continuously innovate, adapt, and learn act boldly, not constrained by resources currently in hand, and hold them accountable for-

**ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA**

Social entrepreneurship in India has wider scope than economic entrepreneurship. The need of social entrepreneurship in Indian context is a very vital as well, as most of the products and services are focused at the higher end customers and the people who have limited means are deprived from their needs due to lack of resources. Social entrepreneurship takes cares of this deprived section of market and provide goods/services to them at their terms and conditions. Following are arguments which cement the needs for social entrepreneurship in India and places like India all over the world. Following are the contribution made by social entrepreneurship in India-

1. Social entrepreneurship focuses on deprived/weak section of society, India has over 27 crore people living under such conditions. So social entrepreneurship becomes relevant and it is needed the most for uplifting this section of people.
2. Social entrepreneurship sees social benefits as primary and profits as secondary. This helps in getting great products/services on quite affordable prices.
3. Social entrepreneurship address the social problems, such problems may include illiteracy, girl child abuse, financing, health, potable water etc. Social entrepreneurship helps in meeting these social problems by capitalizing the local resources and applying entrepreneurial principles. In that case we need social entrepreneurship, so that we can minimize the impacts the social problems.
4. Social entrepreneurship also innovates like any other branch of entrepreneurship, but this innovation is slightly different. This innovation is termed as social innovation, as they are focused upon the social problems. The social innovation is nothing but finding out the most innovative and unique solution of social problems.
5. One of the most important needs of social entrepreneurship is towards bottom of the pyramid. This bottom of the pyramid referred to the people who have minimalistic income, but high acceptance for social innovations. There are many social enterprises who have prepared their products and services for bottom of the pyramid as well. Social entrepreneurship is the only way to fulfil the needs and demands for bottom of the pyramid, this argument is the strongest for the existence of social entrepreneurship in India.
6. Social entrepreneurship like any other economic activity provides employment the people having basic skills. This also makes social entrepreneurship needed in Indian context as India has the maximum number of people unemployed and this problem can be solved by social entrepreneurship effectively.

## SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

1. In Maharashtra, Zero Miles is building multiutility drinking water centres to bring people together for community development.
2. Aadhan builds classrooms — and a host of other spaces — from discarded shipping containers.
3. Traditional Indian crafts and artistry can benefit greatly through access to online and urban markets via social enterprises.
4. Ziveli is such a social enterprise, bringing the kauna craft-work of Manipur to the world.
5. Divya Rawat is using mushroom cultivation as a way of curbing migration and providing livelihoods to people in Uttarakhand. This is also helping repopulate many ‘ghost villages’ in the state.

The majority of this social entrepreneurship is focused on rural and semi urban areas. As the need for social entrepreneurship is growing, the social enterprises are growing as well. The social entrepreneurship has a wide area of coverage from cottage industry to village produced goods, farm produced to handicrafts etc. Social entrepreneurship is also spreading over education and health sector as well to provide cheap education and health care to people. It is also a way to uplift the way and conditions of living of people.

## BASIC TRAITS OR CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP-

The basic traits or characteristics of Social Entrepreneurship help to deal with social issues or problems in more innovative manner. The traits of social entrepreneur not only address the problems of society but also solving those problems. Following are the traits of social entrepreneurship.

1. Social Entrepreneur has a risk tolerance capacity, because social entrepreneurship also involves uncertainties and problems that are encountering during the process of setting up of social enterprises.
2. Social Entrepreneur is a visionary. He has a vision to imagine the future and also finds solution to problems through his imaginary sight.
3. Social entrepreneurs are the leaders. The social entrepreneurship provides a proper direction for others in order to achieve the set goal.
4. Another unique feature of a social entrepreneurship is the creativity. Social entrepreneurship provides creative solutions to social problems.
5. Creation of social values is another trait of a social entrepreneur. This trait makes the social entrepreneurs different from economic entrepreneurs. The social entrepreneurs focus on creating social value rather than economic value. The social values that are created by them will be reflected in the form of social benefits.
6. Social Innovation is a part of social entrepreneurship. In order to provide solutions to the prevailing social problems, social innovation is unique solution.
7. Social
8. Social entrepreneurship is primarily focused on non- personal gains sometimes referred as social gains. This is the trait which defines social entrepreneurship, as economic entrepreneurship only focuses on personal gains and profits by exploiting an opportunities in the market, unlike social entrepreneurship.
9. Social entrepreneurship must not be confused with social work at all, as it has profit motives too. But the profit comes secondary rather than primary like economic entrepreneurship.

In true senses, social entrepreneurship enables the societies and people for taking up the challenge to uplift the living standards of theirs. Social entrepreneurship is not purely social work; social entrepreneurship earns profits by their tools/products offered to societies.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS TOWARDS INDIA SOCIETY

The responsibility of any entrepreneur is highly and prominent in nature, but when it comes to social entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurs, they are inevitable for social up liftment. The roles and responsibilities of social entrepreneurs are given as under with reference to India society-

1. Social entrepreneurs have the capacity to influence the society by their unique product/service aimed at the social upliftment.
2. Their role begins with identifying the social problem which concerns everybody rather than certain sect of people in society. So identifying an appropriate social issues/problem is very important.
3. The biggest role of social entrepreneurs is pursuing them to make fundamental changes, which will reflect in overall society.
4. Social entrepreneurship depends upon social innovations. The challenge is to create such innovations which can resolve the social problem completely by using minimum resources.
5. Social entrepreneurs have the role to reach at the remotest corner of country for targeting the social sections, which are deprived to basic facilities.
6. Social entrepreneurs provide employment as well with their unique approach. Providing employment to people having minimum skills and qualifications is biggest responsibility of social entrepreneurs.
7. One of the important roles which social entrepreneurs have to play in India society is to make visible changes in societies with social balancing approach.
8. Social entrepreneurs have to make the society’s inequalities go away using positive methods.

With changing time and dimensions of society, the needs and requirements are also changing along with it. Social entrepreneurs have to be in tune with changing societies. These changes and developments are within reach to few and away from a lot, this difference has to be fulfilled by the social entrepreneurs and that is their greatest role.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA-

Social entrepreneurship, like any other branch of social entrepreneurship also faces challenges. All the challenges are either controllable or non-controllable, but all the challenges are manageable. Social entrepreneurship is slightly and somehow fundamentally distinctive to economic entrepreneurship, so are the challenges of social entrepreneurship. In India particularly social entrepreneurship is subjected to many challenges. Some of the prominent challenges faced by social entrepreneurship in India are given below-

1. **Confusion with social work**- Social entrepreneurship is mostly in India is confused with social work, hence it is unable to make a mark as an individual entity in India. This is starting of challenge for social entrepreneurship.
2. **The problem of creativity**- The next problem which is faced by social entrepreneurship is lack of creativity regarding thinking great ideas for betterment of society and earning profits as well. This fusion is very hard to think and implemented particularly in India.
3. **Arranging finance**- One of the challenges for entrepreneurship in India remains lack of financial sources. The social entrepreneurs offering a unique product and set of services make it even harder to get financial aid from the established financial institutes.
4. **Shortage of talented/dedicated workforce**- This is a very unique challenge faced by social entrepreneurship exclusively. Generally people get into jobs to get a handsome salary and perks, but with social entrepreneurship this becomes a bit hard. Under these condition it is very hard to get people to work for the firm.
5. **Setting and communicating value objectively-** The important challenge of social entrepreneurship is to setting and communicating values clearly. Usually what happens is, value may differ from society to society based upon their exclusive needs.
6. **Enriching the individuals-** The most prominent and visible challenge before the social entrepreneurship is to enrich people from their current place of standing by making positive and substantial opportunities. This poses a different type of challenge for social entrepreneurs.
7. **Lack of an ethical framework- S**ometimes they adopt a less ethical way of conducting their business. This challenge is very rarely visible yet exists in some extreme cases in India. Since society to society the ethical parameter shifts.
8. **Lack of evidence**- Unlike economic entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship has fewer evidences of changes they have pioneered in society. Such changes are very hard to keep a track of, as people move from one place to another frequently for several reasons.
9. **Lack of Planning and appropriate structure-** Lack of planning is very crucial and it is normally the cause of failure of social enterprises. The proper and adequacy of infrastructure including the training, finance, consultation, and research are not in place for social entrepreneurship in India.

## SUGGESTED MEASURES TO FACE CHALLENGES EFFECTIVELY-

Social entrepreneurs have to take care and keep note of tiny details to face the prevailing challenges. Although the list of challenges faced by social entrepreneurship is not completed, some other challenges are there apart from the listed ones. The important aspect is how to overcome the challenges which are faced by social entrepreneurship in India. There are few measures are suggested which can be practiced to face the prevailing challenges of social entrepreneurship in India

1. **Proper training and development institutions**- Government must open some specialized councils and institutions for systematic development of social entrepreneurship. Some of the institutions are working in the area of economic entrepreneurship; some must be opened for social entrepreneurship as well.
2. **Inclusion of social entrepreneurship in course syllabus**- One of the most effective way of disseminating awareness towards social entrepreneurship is to include a paper/subject on the same at higher education level.
3. **Creation of mass awareness**- Steps should be taken to make the mass aware towards the social entrepreneurship, so that people do not get confused between social entrepreneurship and social work. Media, social media, other vehicles can be deployed for the same.
4. **Providing infrastructure and basic facilities**- Government and other stake holders must work on the basic facilities to the social entrepreneurship. These facilities can attract people towards becoming social entrepreneurs, thus the spread of social entrepreneurship will increase to multi folds.
5. **Social entrepreneurship development programmes**- Like entrepreneurship development programmes, social entrepreneurship programmes must be organized time to time to help social entrepreneurship. Such organization will help in increasing the overall motivation of social entrepreneurs.
6. **Funding to social entrepreneurship**- If the funding issue of social entrepreneurship is resolved, the maximum level of challenges faced by social entrepreneurship can be managed properly.
7. **Government projects** should be given to social entrepreneurs- Governments of several states time to time plan different programmes for rural and semi urban areas. If the priority of such programme allocation is given to social entrepreneurs, they will flourish in no time.
8. **Awards and public felicitation**- Time to time on proper and prestigious platforms social entrepreneurs must be publically awarded for their exception/distinct contribution as a social entrepreneur.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Social entrepreneurship can change the face of society in India, there have been many such examples and projects which run under the banner of social entrepreneurship and proved to be life altering for people of that neighborhood. The study has the following findings-

1. Social entrepreneurship is a best combination of social service and entrepreneurial skills to look for social problems.
2. Social entrepreneurship has the capacity to socially innovate.
3. There are many examples of social enterprises which are working in India and changing the very face of society in India by their unique offerings, which involves the local expertise to create social values.
4. The growth of social entrepreneurship has reflected upon the employment and infusion of skills among people at the bottom level.
5. The level of education and healthcare has also increased due to social enterprises and their growth in recent times in India.
6. Social entrepreneurship is facing a lot of challenges in India and these challenges are very evident as the growth of social entrepreneurship is very low as compared to the other regions in developed nations. Government is slowly realizing the worth and impacts of social entrepreneurship in India and taking proper actions to increase the aptitude of people towards social entrepreneurship.
7. Since all the social entrepreneurship ventures are set in such areas where economic entrepreneurship do not wish to operate, thus we can say that the social upliftment of those backward areas are made due to such ventures only.
8. The study further underlines that the attitude towards the social entrepreneurship is growing that is despite of all the challenges which they face.
9. Finance has been identified as one of the most important element in the growth of social entrepreneurship in India. Government is making special arrangement for it. Some venture capitalists, angel investors, crowd funding etc. are being used for filling the funding gaps.
10. It also observed during the study that social entrepreneurship is subject to challenge and those challenges can be addressed by proper and substantial planning and measure, which are mentioned in the research paper.
11. The research paper also underlined the roles and responsibilities of social entrepreneurship, which have been duly mentioned using various aspects.
12. The study also underlines and identifies the basic/fundamental traits/characteristics of social entrepreneurship.
13. The future potential of study can also have some suggestions to improve the overall status of social entrepreneurship in India, along with that there are several domain where the research can take place in future.

CONCLUSION

In India especially social entrepreneurship has better prospects as the social problems are at full swing here. Social entrepreneurship is a unique combination of entrepreneurial traits and philanthropy. In social entrepreneurship products and services are designed to make maximum social impact along with making considerable profits for the firm. Here the working area of firm is typically the area/region which are generally ignored by big firm of economic entrepreneurship. In a way the product and service offerings of social entrepreneurship is quite unique and caters the societal requirement better then economic requirements. This is an exact situation of entrepreneurial traits being implemented for a social cause/problem. Other than that all the basic elements of entrepreneurship are similar to its parent entrepreneurship. If the government and other stake holders can work out the challenges of social entrepreneurship effectively, then social entrepreneurship is beyond any doubt is the most important tool which has the full capacity to change the very face of society in India. Social entrepreneurship is contributing in the upliftment of society in India.

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