

Chapter 19

Genesis and Development of Social Entrepreneurship in India

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ABSTRACT

Societies world over are urgently seeking innovative approaches to address persistent social problems of health care, poverty, child labour, literacy etc. These problems not only persist but also have increased in intensity and complexity. Thus, there is furor for innovative entrepreneurial approaches that can create more social value with limited resources. These approaches need to leverage better on resources to enhance effectiveness through creative partnerships by raised expectations, performance and accountability so as to achieve more sustainable social impact. What business entrepreneurs are to the economy, social entrepreneurs are to society? They may, like business entrepreneurs, be interested in profit, but their emphasis is on social change. While the challenges in the social sector are many, the potential and opportunity for social entrepreneurship to be a powerful force for social value creation has never been greater. Through grounded research and in depth contextual analysis, this chapter focuses on India's genesis and development of social entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

The word social entrepreneurship has given a new dimension to the way of doing business. Social entrepreneurship is the perfect phenomenon that suits to the present and future issues in this world. It is an amalgamation of the social concern of an entrepreneur towards various issues of the society that are around and business instincts like creativity, innovation and strategy. Along with its increasing popularity there is no doubt uncertainty about what exactly a social entrepreneur is. As a result, all sorts of activities are now being called social entrepreneurship. Some say that a more inclusive term is all for the good, but authors argue that it is time for a more rigorous definition (Roger & Osberg 2007). However, in simple terms we can say that social entrepreneurship is a combination of concern for society and business acumen. But, then business is not with the society, but with the issues that are of concern to the society.

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Today there is a dire need for new solutions for the societal problems which needs different approaches and entrepreneurial spirit. The works of the governments and other philanthropic organisations are not just enough to solve the present social needs of our ever growing and expanding big societies. The paths of the social entrepreneurship may be new but the mission is not new. There existed social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs look for better means of solving the societal issues. Social entrepreneurs are considered as the catalysts for social change by protecting social values, working for safeguarding these social values in the future also by new methods and means (Baporikar, 2016). During the process the social entrepreneurs exhibit accountability towards society at large.

BACKGROUND

Peter Drucker argues that social entrepreneurs “...change the performance capacity of society” (Gendron, 1996, p. 37) while Henton, Douglas, Melville and Walesh (1997) write about ‘civic entrepreneurs’ as “...a new generation of leaders who forge new, powerfully productive linkages at the intersection of business, government, education and community”. Social entrepreneurs are reformers and revolutionaries with a social mission. They make basic changes to the way things are done in the social sector. The social entrepreneurs provide distinctive solutions for some new and some old problems. Social entrepreneurs see the world in a different manner. They give and provide sustainable improvements to the present day problems. So, what business entrepreneurs are to the economy, social entrepreneurs are to society? They may, like business entrepreneurs, be interested in profit, but their emphasis is on social change. They are often self-driven, creative individuals who exploit new opportunities, question accepted norms, and refuse to give up until they have remade the world for the better (Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skillern, 2006). According to Schumpeter (1975), social entrepreneurs are very innovative and ought to be innovative as they are on the mission of providing new methods of solving problems that were holding the society since some time. Many at times it is said that social entrepreneurs are a special breed of people providing different solutions. But, the journey of social entrepreneurs is not a smooth one. Social entrepreneurship can shortly be described as a construct that bridges business and benevolence by applying entrepreneurship in the social sphere (Roberts & Woods, 2005). Where traditional entrepreneurship involves the identification, evaluation and exploration of opportunities in order to gain personal or shareholder wealth, social entrepreneurs recognise, evaluate and exploit opportunities that results in social value (Certo & Miller, 2008; Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006).

Defining social entrepreneurship seems like a monumental task just because of the sheer number of definitions proposed by authors. Dacin, Dacin and Matear (2010) have identified no less than 37 different definitions to social entrepreneurship. A common denominator across all definitions however, is an underlying drive among social entrepreneurs to create social value through innovation (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Lepoutre et al., 2011), personal characteristics, the operating sector, processes and resources used and the social mission (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010). Social Entrepreneurship is the creation of viable socio-economic structures, relations, institutions, organizations and practices that yield and sustain social benefits (Fowler 2000). Social entrepreneurship is emerging as an innovative approach for dealing with complex social needs. With its emphasis on problem solving and social innovation, socially entrepreneurial activities blur the traditional boundaries between the public,

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