

THE SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

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The Entrepreneurial Perspective

Social Transformation and Sustainability: Leveraging the Entrepreneurial Spirit Through Social Entrepreneurship



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Introduction

'Be The Change You Wish to See and Co-create The Future Together'

Social sciences have a very critical contribution to make in the practice of entrepreneurship. Social sciences look at innovative business behaviour which brings about change and benefits society. This symbiotic relationship between social sciences and entrepreneurship is the progenitor of what we know as social entrepreneurship.

The social entrepreneurship ecosystem around us encompasses entrepreneurs and leaders as well as institutions, universities, start-ups and businesses. This ecosystem and the people who populate it are driving change and leveraging the entrepreneurial spirit to push systems - traditional and modern processes towards a more sustainable future. This new ecosystem supports a new model for social change, combining the best business practices and principles with values of dedication and compassion to serve the underprivileged, the economically and socially disadvantaged people and build a more equitable society and an environmentally friendly planet.

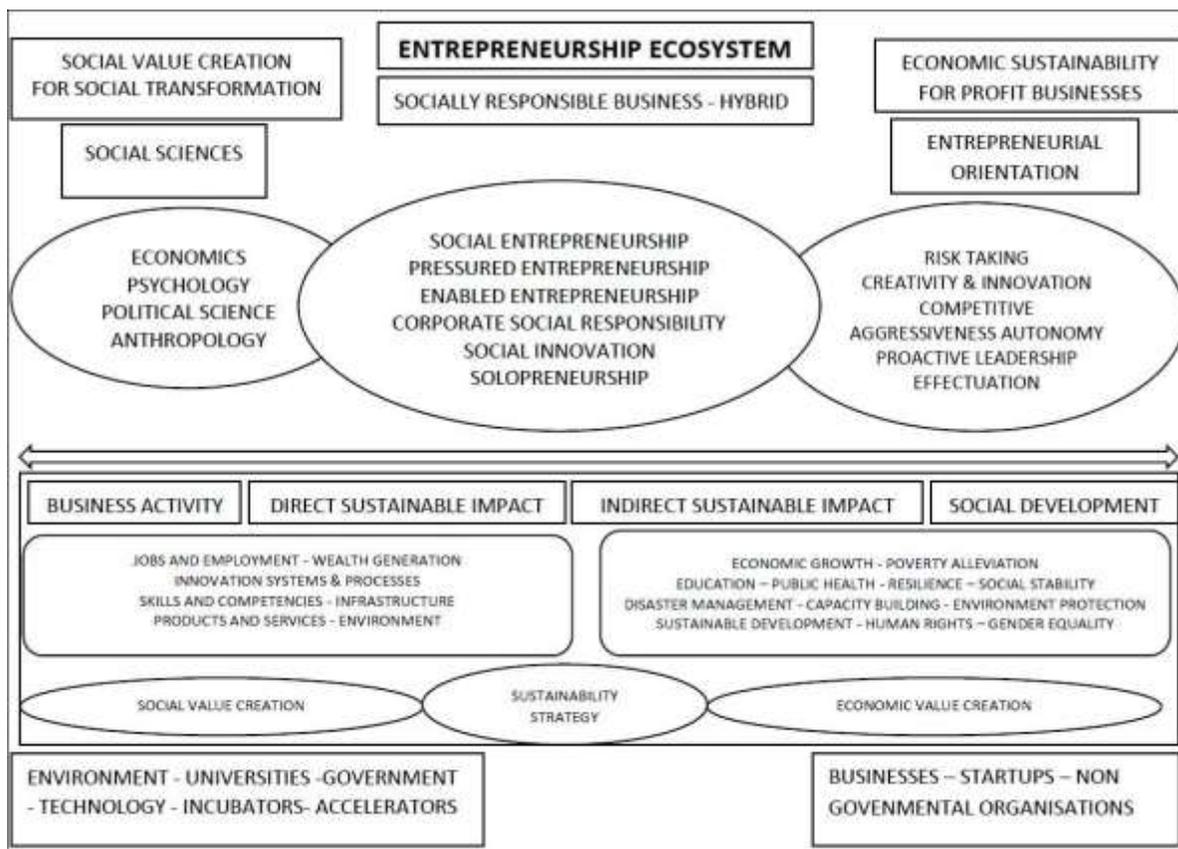
Alongside the movement for social change which impacts more than 700 million lives, the technology-centred innovation revolution is resulting in job creation, economic resurgence and improved health and stability. Entrepreneurship has spurred technological, economic and social development, creating and sustaining financial inclusion and upliftment. Entrepreneurship has also improved the quality of life all around and is universally recognised as the catalyst for driving and sustaining the momentum for growth.

Social Sciences and Entrepreneurship - Merging Perspectives

Social Sciences as an academic discipline is vast and varied, embracing domains as diverse as anthropology, economics, political science, psychology and sociology. The discipline explores everything from economic dynamics and unemployment aspects to what makes people happy. It examines human behaviour and investigates how people interact, behave, develop culturally and how they influence everything around them.

Merging business creation and activity perspective (entrepreneurship) with societal (social sciences) development perspective and bringing about a unique symbiotic relationship between the two, impacts the larger environment. The impact of this relationship is evident in economic growth, poverty alleviation, education, social stability, public health, human rights, governance, capacity building, enterprise development, gender equality and environmental sustainability. These perspectives and the establishment of symbiotic relationships significantly influence business activity.

Integration Framework – Merging Perspectives



Business activities could be for purely philanthropic reasons, hybrid or commercial objectives. The conclusive insight from this discussion is how everything comes together to establish the sustainability equilibrium. On one end of the spectrum the purpose of social sustainability is social value creation; on the other is economic sustainability leading to economic value creation.

Social entrepreneurship while combining the social sciences and societal development perspective with entrepreneur activity perspectives purposefully operationalises sustainability strategies both ways. Commercial methods support social initiatives and organisations doing well by doing good.

***SOIL- Sustainable, Organic, Integrated Livelihoods** work towards supporting community employment and implementing sustainable low-cost solutions to sanitation issues/ challenges.*

***Ben& Jerry's ice cream** is well known but what is not known is that this business proactively promotes social progress using profits for doing good.*

***Shea Radiance** is the result of creating a solution for a youngster's eczema-prone skin by making soap with shea butter. This experiment has transformed into a unique product line for hair, skin and body.*

Social Entrepreneurship - Driving Change

Social entrepreneurship is therefore a practical mechanism of discovering and implementing solutions for cultural, social or environmental problems using business, combined with innovation and technology as means to achieve meaningful change and socially conscious objectives. At its core, social entrepreneurship is about bringing together some of the best business practices and innovative systems with the best of human and social values. This is synergy in its most useful and meaningful form.

Leh Livelihood Initiative

Three-quarters of the population in Leh, India's second-largest district, is spread thinly over 112 villages. Farmers here perpetually face the challenges of a fragile ecosystem in a high-altitude area. The Tata Trusts' Leh Livelihoods Development Initiative functions on multiple levels that involve researching the needs of each area, working out scalable solutions, and implementing them in collaboration with government and local bodies. The initiative focuses on improving the quality of life of 3,300 small-scale farmers living in 30 villages in the Leh district. Areas for intervention include water resources development, protected farming, horticulture development, fodder cultivation, value chain development of apricots, crop diversification, artisans' skills development, high-tech farming, infrastructure development and capacity-building programmes, among others.

In the not-too-distant past entrepreneurs used to be enterprising, business creators who sit up and operated businesses for one reason- to make money. Today with the discovery of social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial motivations have shifted focus from profit margins to social responsibility. Social Entrepreneurs are guided by how their initiatives benefit their social causes. They typically engage in independent socially supportive ventures while entrepreneurs engage in for-profit businesses that fund projects and programs to support social issues.

The Social Perspective in Entrepreneurial Initiatives

Social Entrepreneurship is about entrepreneurial initiatives aimed at exploiting opportunities to achieve social value. It involves diverse sectors such as innovation, technology, public policy, community development, social movements and non-profit organisations

There is a focused reference to the social perspective in entrepreneurship activity which is exemplified through the creation of social value and the mitigation of social problems.

Coastal Salinity Prevention and Mitigation

Over the past 30 years, Gujarat has faced serious environmental issues due to the indiscriminate extraction of groundwater. Underground water aquifers have been affected, leaving over 1,500 coastal villages with water unfit for consumption. The use of saline water for irrigation has also led to a decline in agricultural yields and decreased soil fertility, rendering land unsuitable for future cultivation. In an effort to resolve this environmental issue the Coastal Salinity Prevention and Mitigation initiative (also known as Kharash Vistarotthan Yojana or KVY) aims to develop sustainable models and enhance the livelihood resilience of 75,000 households across 525 villages in coastal Gujarat

Social entrepreneurs are essentially change-agents who explore and create new opportunities to achieve social objectives. In this context, it is pertinent to note that social entrepreneurship processes are impacted by the same set of internal and external forces.

Enabled and Pressured Entrepreneurship – Borne out of the need for Social Innovation during troubled times

Something interesting is happening around us, a consequence of the after effects of pandemic-related disruptions. While livelihoods were lost, large-scale reverse migrations took place and people took desperate measures to stabilise their lives and that of their families, there was visible evidence of people resorting to makeshift business creation and operationalisation under pressure. Many also went back to the basics and utilised long-forgotten skills to set up small ventures in the absence of stable incomes.

Pressured Entrepreneurship and Enabled Entrepreneurship activity became a reality when individuals started offering cooking, tailoring, nursing, repairing and stitching skills to anyone who needed them. Individuals who lost stable jobs picked up their lives by joining delivery aggregators, taxi operators, vegetable vendors and milk deliverers to neighbouring communities. Farmers, for example, came with their produce to gated communities in the cities to persuade people to buy from them.

Social Entrepreneurship Characteristics Facilitating Social Innovation

Environmental factors such as the appropriate social and political climate facilitate social innovation. Political, cultural and economic volatility also impacts social entrepreneurship

activity. Internally, mindsets, competencies, personality traits, experience and education can also influence the quality of social entrepreneurship processes.

Social entrepreneurs are oriented the same way as any other kind of entrepreneur. Factors such as tolerance to ambiguity, low-risk aversion, sense of control over destiny, degree of freedom, creativity and innovativeness as well as inherent characteristics describe the entrepreneurial orientation in individuals, which when combined with social concern and community awareness can influence the social consciousness of entrepreneurs.

Kshamata Foundation - Simple ideas, Successful Businesses & Sustainable Livelihoods

Kshama Rangan of Kshamata Foundation aims to make a lasting and effective change through research-driven innovative programmes in sustainability, capacity building, women empowerment, rural development and inclusive community growth.

Differentiating Social and Commercial Entrepreneurship

Some parameters that can provide insights into this differentiation are a market failure, vision and mission, resource mobilisation and performance measurements. These parameters can be differentiators for entrepreneurs who are either socially inclined or profit-inclined.

In this context, entrepreneurs are also identified as opportunity seekers, where social entrepreneurs seek opportunities to create social value which is an activity influenced by sustainability issues. On the other hand, commercial entrepreneurs are also seekers of opportunities for creating economic value. The term 'corporate social responsibility' manages to bridge the gap by combining the creation of economic value with a benefit for society.

An important perspective gained from this kind of differentiation is that the social component in entrepreneurial activity encompasses the unique ability to identify innovative solutions for specific social problems. Innovation, therefore, is the key driver in all forms of social entrepreneurship.

Social Innovation Initiatives That Bind Social Benefits with Entrepreneurship

Social Innovation cannot be restricted to social entrepreneurship or social economy, rather it is liberated from the clutches of any specific sectoral limitation while opening up to other critical areas of society.

Social innovations are tackling and managing challenges in education, employment, environment, energy supply, transport, mobility, health, social care and poverty reduction by leveraging entrepreneurial behaviour. Social Innovations and Social entrepreneurship are

increasingly responding to social demands that are traditionally not addressed by existing entrepreneurship activity and are focussed on vulnerable sections of society.

Subsequently, current dynamics, post-pandemic, have thrown up important themes such as empowerment, human resources, gender equality and diversity, governance, economy and equitable wealth distribution, demographic changes, migration and quality of governance that social entrepreneurship is actively seeking to address and change.

Social Emancipation through Kalpavriksha – Entrepreneurship Ecosystem at JAIN University

Dr. Chenraj Roychand is a true social entrepreneur. Jain University's Chairman and Chancellor gave a clarion call to all stakeholders to strive for a better sustainable future for all. Dr. Chenraj's vision of a better quality of life for all stakeholders which is achieved through entrepreneurship aims to create an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem- Kalpavriksha in the academics domain, where entrepreneurial mindsets blossom, Solopreneurs innovate and apply unique solutions to social problems, entrepreneurial behaviour becomes a way of life and ultimately Kalpavriksha – The entrepreneurship Ecosystem promotes entrepreneurial action to uplift the lives of the underprivileged and the disadvantaged

The Social Element in Social Entrepreneurship

The Social entrepreneurship phenomenon is not limited to an explicitly legal or economic context alone. It covers critical societal dimensions such as social change, social impact and corporate social responsibility.

Social entrepreneurs are called upon to consider new social realities. These social realities are creating social movements that emphasise the value of social capital. Social problems are visualised as potential opportunities for entrepreneurs and start-ups, which essentially create social value.

Entrepreneurs today create viable and sustainable ventures by developing capabilities and gathering valuable available resources that enable maximising the value of these resources. The

key outcome of these engagements is attracting government support, creating awareness about social challenges, and engaging proactively with all stakeholders- thereby, leveraging the heightened social impact of start-ups and entrepreneurship ventures.

734 Coffee and Water works with local coffee estates to fund scholarships for refugees.

Tranquiliti is an entrepreneurial venture in the social domain which is focused on improving, supporting and promoting the mental well-being of young people.

Social Entrepreneurial Orientation

The Social Entrepreneurship Orientation is a multi-pronged construct drawing strength from the much-examined Entrepreneurial orientation elements used to describe commercial entrepreneurial behaviour. The SEO dimensions signify entrepreneurial strategy, are action classified and include proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. Social mission adds further value to these social entrepreneurial orientation dimensions.

Social entrepreneurship is a risky proposition in that it must balance commercial principles with social challenges. However, social entrepreneurship tends to prioritise social concerns over profit-making. The need for social entrepreneurship also arises during periods of crisis as a reaction to exigencies affecting the disadvantaged as well as the underprivileged. The social entrepreneurship domain makes visible unique EO dimensions such as innovativeness, risk-taking ability, proactive leadership, effectual reasoning as opposed to causal reasoning and a specific social emancipation strategy orientation.

Essentially, social entrepreneurship drives social change and sustainability by leveraging entrepreneurial capability and maximising adaptability. Entrepreneurs are increasingly recognising social responsibilities as their obligation but social entrepreneurs are driven by their socially beneficial intentions. Equally, societal trust impacts social entrepreneurship initiatives more strongly.

TranSanta is a community based unique social entrepreneurship venture that brings respect and economic stability to transgender youth.

Books To Prisoners is a social entrepreneur initiative for educating prisoners by encouraging reading habits amongst the prisoners.

Challenges

Social entrepreneurs face multi-dimensional challenges during the entire life cycle of the organisation. Prominent challenges in the management of social entrepreneurship are scarcity of financial resources, leadership challenges, institutional and regulatory dynamics, and other challenges such as impact assessment, a changing socio-cultural environment, and resource mobility.

Unavailability of financial resources, business environment dynamics, scalability dilemma, hybridity, and the characteristics of offerings also form another complex set of challenges for social entrepreneurs. Social ventures face specific challenges related to value creation, value delivery, and value capture.

Hybrid Social Entrepreneurship business models also offer a complex challenge in acquiring and mobilising financial resources. Performance evaluation of social entrepreneurship initiatives is also a perennial challenge especially when there is no standardised framework.

Last but not the least, an important problem that needs to be highlighted is finding a good fit as well as a balance between investor values and social needs.

Future Directions

Prominent and complex issues that can be probed and explored in social entrepreneurship are social entrepreneurs' identity, women social entrepreneurs, and the value of human capital and psychological capital. Future directions can also consider the catalysing effects of social sciences domain elements in leveraging entrepreneurship and innovation opportunities in the social realm.

Aspects such as attitude and behaviour, gender gaps, business models, marketing strategies and entrepreneurial challenges are important influences on social entrepreneurship dynamics. These aspects need a closer examination and quick resolution.

The distinguishing feature of the integration of social sciences dimensions and entrepreneurial orientation elements is that it creates social action that leverages business models and principles to resolve social problems and impact society positively. Social entrepreneurship encourages individuals to innovate and take risks while pushing for change where change is essential. It enables a practical alignment of social sciences with entrepreneurship to identify problems and apply effective solutions.

Crowdfunding, Baking for a cause, Fairtrade goods, Organic Tourism, Educational travel, Crafting for a Cause, Microlending, Sustainable housing, Mentorship for Entrepreneurs, Incubators and Accelerators for the economically disadvantaged, vulnerable communities and youth are uniquely innovative and sustainable entrepreneurship initiatives that will enable individuals and institutions to do good entrepreneurially.
