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Social Entrepreneurship: A Step towards Sustainability

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Abstract: *Sustainability and technology are two very closely related terms and both of them have a very crucial effect on society and the scope of implementing one's own idea can be efficiently explored by entrepreneurial practices. With this paper, a consistent effort has been made to express social entrepreneurship as a stepping stone towards the attainment of social goals and to assure sustainable development. The scope of sustainable engineering as well as green technology being an added factor for the same has also been explored.*

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Policy Entrepreneurs, Program Entrepreneurs, Business Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, Sustainable Engineering, Green Technology, Social Innovations, Futuristic Approach to Present Day Trends*

I. INTRODUCTION :CONCEPT OF GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Improvement is the sole purpose of our existence. Every human being wants to uplift his standard of living and enhance his scope of development. But in order to move towards a prosperous future, we generally encounter several problems in the form of resource deprivation, natural calamities, societal drawbacks, inefficient government policies and many more. Henceforth, in spite of all the prevailing obstacles, we strive towards a sustainable future, keeping all the factors in close consideration.

Sustainability is our key to quality development. It can be further classified into various categories. The important forms of Sustainability are Environmental Sustainability, Economic sustainability and Social Sustainability. Though all the three categories look entirely distinguishable, they are interrelated and can be mapped into each other's domain for the matter of convenience in terms of research and development.

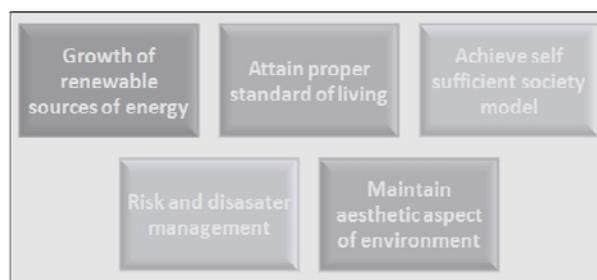


Fig 1 – Features of Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is the one the fastest growing domain which has a major focus on conserving environment to shape a better future. Environmental sustainability lays emphasis on the above features. Social Sustainability and Economic Sustainability are deeply attached to Environmental Sustainability. We as human beings cannot imagine a world devoid of the physical environment. We are totally dependent on the various forms of environmental resources (natural or manmade) in numerous ways. Consequently, attaining environmental sustainability helps in contributing to the overall progress of people and their society, thereby leads to social sustainability. The viability of economy clearly depends on environmental resources and service flows, so economic sustainability depends on environmental sustainability as well. Let us take an example of hydro

power plant for analysis. When a plant is set up, it utilizes the most important natural resource which is water as its basic raw material. Then under proper utilization of different resources and man-made technologies, the plant is constructed and it starts functioning. This plant not only helps the people to use electricity, but also provides employment, and helps the society to modernize and develop. Also setting up a power plant enhances the economy and boosts the financial growth of a country. Thus, through this example, it is clear that sustainability is the solution for complete growth in every dimension of our life.

A. Present Day Challenges

There are many activities which are causing a serious threat to the prospects of sustainability which are listed below. An urgent action is required when the things you regard highly are under threat of loss or destruction. Henceforth, *Social Entrepreneurship* can be the solution to our problems.

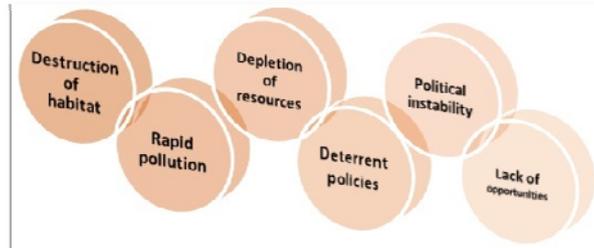


Fig 2 – Threats to the Prospects of Sustainability

II. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social Entrepreneurship is a highly debatable term. It has caught the attention of researchers, academicians and practitioners in the recent years and they have been working on better exploration and articulation of this term. But still there is no exact definition of Social Entrepreneurship. In general, Social Entrepreneurship can be termed as a phenomenon which accomplishes a social mission through a successful enterprise.

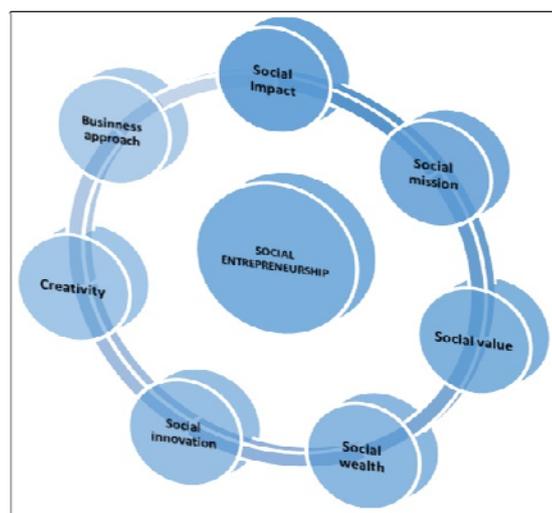


Fig 3 – Attributes of Social Entrepreneurship

The following figure incorporates the various attributes of Social Entrepreneurship which are interrelated with each other. From the figure, it can be deduced that the Social Entrepreneurship is about creating a social impact through a social mission, which consists of a social value and enhances social wealth. To achieve this goal, a social entrepreneur chooses a path of social innovation through proper business approach to attain sustainability.

A. Important Categories

Basically, social entrepreneurs are categorized into three kinds, based on their roles and working environments: *policy*, *program*, and *business entrepreneurs*. At the macro level, social entrepreneurs could help to formulate and implement policy; at

the community level, they could help to solve specific local problems and at the business level, they could use their business skills to address social issues.

Policy Entrepreneurs

Objective: The objective of policy entrepreneurs is to implement and expand successful local programs into large scale national programs.

Process: At global level, they can influence policy makers through multilateral aid-agencies. At the national level, implement the strategy of adopting ideas that have been successful in other place. At the local level, influence other types of social entrepreneurs to be effective through a policy environment.. At local level, influence other type of social entrepreneurs to be effective through a policy environment.

Growth: In developing countries, policy entrepreneurs should be trained with proper expertise and knowledge and their number should be increased so that they can help to fight numerous social problems.

Program Entrepreneurs

Objective: Program entrepreneurs play an integral part in designing and implementing innovative programs to reduce the prevalent challenges. They are funded by development partners, national governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Process: Program managers implement their entrepreneurial skills to address local problems with global ideas. Local authorities, elected officials, and leaders act as an initiator to bring about effective changes at the primary level as they have the capability to identify innovative solutions.

Growth: Youth leaders are the new game changers in development process. They actively engage in community affairs. They have a high level of commitment, and are well connected through information and communication technologies and actively participate in solving development problems. If they are provided with requisite skills, recognition, and support, these individuals can become proficient social entrepreneurs, and transform the society through collective action.

Business Entrepreneurs

Objective: To apply the principles of business development to social problems is another important way of tackling the challenges of social problems in developing countries.

Process: **Business** entrepreneurs use business principles to implement social innovations. They can be categorized into three types. First category encompasses business leaders who are extremely successful in their area of expertise and bring their business acumen to bear in solving social problems - for example, a successful engineer who set up a mechanism for electrification in rural areas at minimal or no cost. The second category views poor people as potential consumers of their products and services. Recent attempts by corporations to devise strategies that combine business objectives with social concerns are good examples of social innovation within the business sector. The third category of social business entrepreneurs is a section of poor people, who have different levels of income, resource, social capital, and entrepreneurship. Some of them have become business-oriented social entrepreneurs with little financial training.

Growth: Microfinance programs are an efficient solution for vulnerable and poor people to organize themselves and develop their own businesses, thus addressing their own social challenges in innovative ways, creating an environment for social entrepreneurship among poor people so that they can connect themselves with financial markets and can transform poor societies.

For example, the private schools that have emerged in the slums of India, Kenya, and Nigeria in response to poorly run government schools indicate that poor people can address their own social needs.

B. CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) - A Boost to Social Entrepreneurship

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a crucial strategy which incorporates core business methodologies to address social and environmental impacts of businesses. It is a distinguishable term from social entrepreneurship but still shares important links with it. CSR embraces all related terms such as philanthropy, corporate sustainability and business responsibility. CSR can act as a catalyst for social entrepreneurship through collaboration, partnership; or through putting a basis for creating a social mission organization. Based on the above relationship, a concept has been framed to advance and accelerate the development of CSR.

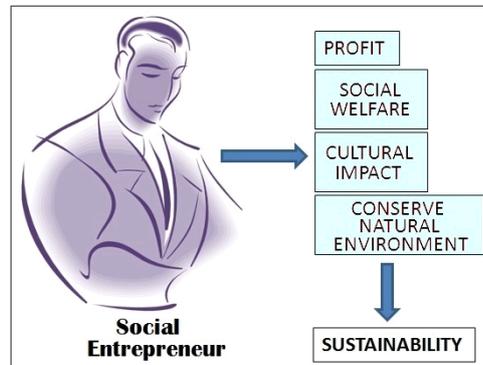


Fig 4 – The Perfect Nexus

CSE enables the companies to an entrepreneurial mindset and cultivate an entrepreneurial environment that enables fundamental organizational transformation. Thus, CSE is gaining imperative in recent years, and play a pivotal role in sustainability.

III. SUSTAINABLE ENGINEERING

We are living in a world where our resources are limited and the fact that they are being depleted at an exorbitant rate worsens our situation. For example, with increase in population and increase in transport vehicles, fossil fuel is being utilized at an exponential rate which will affect our sustainability in the future. This serious situation demands alternative sources of energy and for that purpose sustainable engineering is the major principle to be implemented. Sustainable Engineering is a process to design and operate systems which utilize the present resources and energy at an efficient rate such that it does not hamper the present ecosystem and create a sustainable future which is efficient to meet their own needs.

A. Targets at Focus

- Contribution towards sustainable society and future
- Comply with legislation and code
- Efficient and effective utilization of resources
- Risk Management
- Meet the challenge of sustainability

B. Green Technology

Fig 5 – Characteristics of Green Technology

It is an important subset of Sustainable Engineering. It will help to achieve the desired targets. Green Technology is the amalgamation and successful implementation of the various advanced technologies such as Environmental Science, Green chemistry, Environmental Monitoring and Sustainable Energy Generation to conserve the natural resources and shape a sustainable future. Fig 5 represents the important features of Green Technology.

1. Growth of Green Technology

There are several organizations and events which have achieved great heights of accomplishments in their contribution towards a greener world. *World Bank*, *UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)* and *Global Environment Facility* have developed new approaches in industrial processes and launched Sustainable development programs. *Earth Charter* is another civil society which is working rigorously towards this noble cause. *The World Engineering Partnership for Sustainable Development (WEPSD)* has achieved huge success through redesign engineering field and solving critical environmental problems using new technologies. *Greenstock* is the yearly event held in New York, which displays one of the greatest innovations in Green Technology. *The Social Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Alliance* (the Alliance) is a network of 15 organizations in Australia that works towards the development of economy through diverse approach to social enterprise.

2. Green Industry Concepts for Social Enterprise

Minimize energy and resource consumption, emission of greenhouse gases, discharge of waste, pollution and accidental hazards

Install highly efficient and eco-friendly machineries and equipment's. For example-CO₂ sensors and low emitting materials such as VOC sealants, carpets, composite woods etc..

Provide expert guidance to other enterprises, researchers and practitioners on ecological topics such as clean technologies, energy efficiency etc..

Foster high environmental awareness in employees and local community and promote eco-tourism

IV. INDIA – A PERFECT MODEL FOR ANALYSIS

India is one of the fastest growing countries in the globe. After numerous economic reforms, there has been a positive reflection on the GDP growth. Social entrepreneurship has witnessed a drastic growth in the past decade.



Fig 6 – Difficulties Faced by Indian Social Entrepreneurs

Both men and women have started successful social enterprises to transform the lives of more than 400 million poor residents of this country. But, the sad part is that still there are more than 430 million people who are below the poverty line and struggle on a daily basis to get proper health care and food. Social entrepreneurship is the perfect solution to overcome this grave problem in India, but even social entrepreneurs face a lot of difficulties to successfully execute their social mission.

A. An Emerging Class– Female Entrepreneurs

With severe social problems prevailing in India, there is a dire need for women's participation. But the troubling figures are stating a reverse story. Currently, only 39% of Indian women are formally employed, compared to 81% of Indian men and 71%

of Chinese women. Indian women's participation in different domains of enterprise will enhance productivity and growth and also help to reduce the gender-based inequalities and social pressures. In the UK, a recent survey found, 39% of social enterprises have a woman leader, compared with only 19% of SMEs and 3% of FTSE 100 companies. The global research agrees that social enterprise has a higher proportion of female leaders than traditional commercial enterprises. According to a report by the Asia Development bank (*India Social Enterprise Landscape Report*, 2013); India's social enterprise sector is extremely diverse and thriving. 50% of India's population is under the age of 25, and 65% are under 35, so supporting the emergence of a new generation of young women social entrepreneurs will be an important investment in the future. They will inspire other women for years to come and support more sustainable and inclusive growth.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR	COMPANY	MISSION	IMPACT
Supriya Nikumbh Bhairavi Shevade	GREENDROPS	Create a profitable business by installing vertical gardens at apartments	Create more oxygen, reduction in energy consumption and pollution, temperature regulation and decorate building
Jay Rege Jothsna Rege	PAADUKS	Create environmentally positive value of an up-cycled product by making sandals from scrap tyres	Design eco-friendly, affordable and durable footwear and use the profits to provide better healthcare for the mochis and their families and education for their children
Rajeev Kher	SHRAMIK	Manufacture clean and portable public restrooms for un-served settlements, slums and similar such applications	Spread awareness about sanitation via various camps in villages and small towns in India
Amit Tandon	VENTANA	Develop technology for conversion of waste plastics to petroleum fuels similar to diesel and gasoline	Provide better and efficient alternative to renewable resources
Shweta Foulger Rashi Goel	GREEN OK PLEASE	Promote organic, eco-friendly products that are sourced from local, small and marginal producers and sell online	Sell Indian products which have a lower environmental impact and give healthier options for people living in India through education and products
Gautam Prakash, Kamal Raj And Kuldeep Dantewadia	REAP BENEFIT	Work in the field of solid waste, water and energy to bring measurable and quantifiable benefits through interventions in attitude and behavior	Develop low cost interventions which have a measurable impact

Fig 7 – A few of notable Emerging Entrepreneurs in India

B. Success Stories

There were some legendary social entrepreneurs who have transformed the world by providing better health care services, reducing poverty, setting up affordable housing, promoting educational programs, etc. Even at present there are great Social

Entrepreneurs who have created history through their social mission. There are some successful entrepreneurs in India who are striving towards a sustainable future through green innovation (refer Fig 7).

V. ROLE IN FUTURE FOR PROGRESSIVE GROWTH

In future, the emerging model comprising of comprehensive programs for development of social innovation and entrepreneurship needs to be scaled up and mainstreamed. Social entrepreneurs and their innovations for reducing poverty can enhance large-scale public-sector poverty intervention program with improved effectiveness. Social entrepreneurship is mainly limited to the elite class who has surplus resources, but it can also spread and promote in the rural areas to initiate interest in rural volunteers. If special emphasis is laid on local entrepreneurial talent, they will be nurtured towards betterment. For that purpose, the field of social entrepreneurship must reach out to the 'invisible' social entrepreneurs whose talent remains unnoticed and unpolished. Entrepreneurship conferences, like the *Skoll World Forum*, can encourage participation from these 'invisible' social entrepreneurs in developing countries. India needs a better regulatory framework, funds for local ventures, smoother taxation policies, creation of multiple investment bodies, innovative investment vehicles like *UK's social impact bonds*, the creation of a separate index like *Singapore's Impact Investment Index (IIX)*. Another progress path can be attained through education programs where skills related to social innovation and entrepreneurship may be mainstreamed.

VI. CONCLUSION

Social entrepreneurs are individuals with business insights who are on a social mission and who can provide new approaches needed to hasten the process of social development. Creative and logical business approach of social entrepreneurs when combined with efficient technologies of sustainable engineering brings about positive transformation in the existing social and environmental problems. In spite of varying problems in different dimensions, social entrepreneurs are successful in formulating and implementing a perfect solution to their problems. They need proper support, funding and mentoring to shape their dreams.

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