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# Social Entrepreneurship – An Emerging Value based Alternative Leadership in Business – Lessons for Indian Management Education

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## **Abstract**

*Against the back ground of economic crisis, environmental disaster, poverty, inequality and socio-political violence, the social entrepreneurship is emerging as a socially responsible alternative to the traditional business practice and leadership. The paper is an attempt to find the relevance of the concept and practice of social entrepreneurship in India in the present social, and economic scenario. The study has taken up few cases to explain how social entrepreneurs functioning at various fields to bring about radical changes in India. The paper also highlights how some leading Management Institutes are contributing to the development of social entrepreneurships through their curriculum. The study concludes that the social entrepreneurships can come up in the way it should create impact in the society only if management education is realigned for the training and orientation to the right direction.*

*Key Words: social entrepreneurship, system of management education, social commitment .*

## **Introduction: The Concept of Social Entrepreneurship**

In this work, an effort has been made to trace the evolution of philosophy and practice of social entrepreneurship on the basis of information gathered from secondary sources. Subsequently the issues related to inclusion of social entrepreneurship in higher education particularly in management have been analyzed.

The concept of social entrepreneurship means different things to different people and researchers. One group of researchers refers to social entrepreneurship as not-for-profit initiatives in search of alternative funding strategies or management schemes to create social values. A second group of researchers understands it as the socially responsible practices of commercial businesses engaged in cross

sector partnerships. And a third group views social entrepreneurship as a means to alleviate social problems and catalyze social values.

## **Social Domain of Social Entrepreneurship**

The essence of social element in social entrepreneurship is to creatively combine resources to address a social problem and thereby alter existing

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social structures. In this context it is imperative to clarify certain misconceptions. As it is generally thought the social entrepreneurship is not necessarily, different from entrepreneurship in the business sector as the latter is associated with the profit motive and the former is an expression of altruism. Although social entrepreneurship is often based on ethical motives and moral responsibility, the motives for social entrepreneurship can also include less altruistic reasons such as personal fulfillment. While the profit motive might be "a central engine" of entrepreneurship in business, the social entrepreneurship has a social aspects too. (Mair and Marti 2006)

### **The entrepreneurial element in social entrepreneurship**

Researchers have focused on the personality of the social entrepreneur, the particular behavior or process involved or the social opportunity in order to emphasize its entrepreneurial nature and thus differentiate it from other phenomena. A popular early stream of research has focused on the personality of the social entrepreneur. According to studies following this approach, the social entrepreneurs are characterized by very special traits (Drayton, 2002), special leadership skills (Thompson, Alvy, & Lees, 2000), a passion to realize their vision (Bornstein, 1998), and a strong ethical fiber (Drayton, 2002). Despite the ongoing momentum of research aimed at identifying distinctive entrepreneurial individual differences, we are skeptical about whether this approach will elucidate key differences between the social entrepreneurs and other actors. Building on a behavioral tradition in entrepreneurship, we argue that examining the set of activities underlying social entrepreneurship as a process may be a more fruitful approach. A number of researchers have emphasized the entrepreneurial process, i.e., "how" entrepreneurs act as a way of differentiating between the social initiatives and social "entrepreneurial" initiatives (Dees, 1998). Finally, a recent stream of research has focused on the "social value creating" nature of the opportunities entrepreneurially discovered and exploited in order to distinguish social entrepreneurship from other entrepreneurial phenomena (Guclu, Dees, & Anderson, 2002).

After reviewing the observations of various scholars on fundamental aspects of social entrepreneurship, it can be said that the Social entrepreneurs basically play the role of change agents in the social sector, by:

- Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value),
- Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission,
- Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning,
- Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand, and
- Exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.

In other words, a social entrepreneur is someone who recognizes a social problem and uses entrepreneurial principles to organize, create, and manage a venture to make social change. The social Entrepreneurship aims at developing a sustainable business model, at the same time, tries to help persons at the Bottom of the Pyramid (Bop). In a nutshell, the social entrepreneurship can be defined as a mechanism to create human capacity in the social sector.

### **Distinguishing Features of Social Entrepreneurship**

For the social entrepreneurs, the social mission is explicit and central. This obviously affects how the social entrepreneurs perceive and assess opportunities. Mission-related impact, not wealth creation, becomes the central criterion. Wealth is just a means to an end for the social entrepreneurs. For the business entrepreneurs, wealth creation is a way of measuring value creation and this makes them to market discipline which determines in large part whether they are creating value. If they do not shift resources to more economically productive uses, they tend to be driven out of business. Markets do not work as well for the social entrepreneurs (Dees, 1998). Mair and Marti (2006) argue that the main difference between entrepreneurship in the business sector and the social entrepreneurship lies in the relative priority given to social wealth creation versus economic wealth creation. In the business entrepreneurship, social wealth is a by-product of the economic value created (Venkataraman, 1997); while

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for the social entrepreneurs the main focus is on social value creation.

While a number of authors have emphasized the not-for-profit nature of activities as a distinctive feature of social entrepreneurship, Mair and Marti (2006) argue that the social entrepreneurship can take place equally well on the for-profit basis ; whether social entrepreneurs choose the not-for-profit or the for-profit vehicle, often depends on the particular business model and the specific social needs addressed.

An additional distinctive feature of the social entrepreneurship lies in the limited potential to capture the value created. The social entrepreneurs who address basic social needs, such as food, shelter or education, very often find it difficult to realise economic value because the customer often are unable to pay even a small part of the price of the products and services provided (Seelos & Mair, 2005a), although they are willing to pay.

### **The Global Scenario**

The social entrepreneurship as a growing force has filled the spaces left by state. The social entrepreneurs particularly in Europe and South America are working more closely with public organizations at both the national and local levels.

A brief narrative of some of the well-known social entrepreneurship initiatives from all over the world is given below :

The modern form of the corporate based social entrepreneurship starts with Michael Young who between the 1950s and 1990s created more than sixty new organizations worldwide, including a series of Schools for Social Entrepreneurs in the UK.

The Grameen Bank, founded by Professor Muhammad Yunus in 1976, has changed the life of millions in Bangladesh. By bringing financial services to the poor, particularly women, the bank helps them establish profitable businesses to fight poverty (Yunus, 1999). The venture was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

Jeff Skoll, a noted philanthropist and eBay's first president established the Skoll Foundation in 1999 to

help people continue or expand their work for the social change in various parts of the world. The Skoll Centre for the Social Entrepreneurship at the Said Business School at Oxford University supports the social entrepreneurship.

Sekem, created by Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish in 1977 as a social venture, is today a multi-business. It not only creates economic, social and cultural value but has also had a significant impact on Egyptian society. It was instrumental in reducing pesticide use in Egyptian cotton fields by 90% and has created institutions such as schools, a university, an adult education center and a medical center (Seelos & Mair, 2005a).

The Institute for One World Health (IOWH), founded by Dr. Victoria Hale in 2000, is the world's first not-for-profit pharmaceutical company and develops drugs for neglected diseases. It has challenged traditional assumptions within the industry that seemed incompatible with providing medicines to those most in need in developing countries. It has redesigned the whole value chain of drug development and delivery (Seelos & Mair, 2005b).

Tri Mumpuni, the founder of an NGO named 'IBEKA', which made electricity reachable to the people of the villages of Indonesia. Generating energy in the small scale is the most promising approach for serving such a large population. She and her husband established IBEKA with the aim of generating electricity in their village. IBEKA's model avoids the major environmental danger caused by large scale hydropower projects. IBEKA advocates for community ownership of each micro-hydropower system allowing community members to share in the planning, design, operating and funding of their local project. The community benefits from the access to electricity and from rural development programs funded with the general revenue. The NGO introduced electricity in villages for the people with the cooperation and participation of the people. As a result More than 60 rural communities across Indonesia have gained control of electricity generation.

Another notable social entrepreneur is Mimi Silbert, founder of the Delancey Street Foundation. Delancey Street rehabilitates former felons and drug addicts and teaches them to live productive and crime-free lives. Everyone who enters Delancey Street spends

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up to four years in the facility earning at least a high school diploma and training for a particular occupation. Delancey Street is 65% funded by the businesses operated by its graduates, including Delancey Street Moving Company and Delancey Street Restaurant. By taking former criminals off the street and giving them a fresh start, Mimi Silbert helps to end the cycle of crime that can often last a lifetime.

Paul Polak's innovative approach has already helped 17 million people escape poverty. His strategy is to develop tools that even the world's poorest can afford (often using micro credit) and that will help them earn more money. To foment this revolution, Polak launched Windhorse International, a for-profit based in Denver, in 2007.

### The Indian Scenario

There are good number of people and organizations in India who have significantly contributed in upholding various social causes by way of undertaking different social entrepreneurship ventures. In this section a few of such persons and organizations with outstanding performance and brilliant promise have been highlighted:

Amul was set up in 1946 and its full form is Anand Milk- producers Union Ltd. The Brand Amul is a movement in dairy cooperative in India. The management of the brand name is done by the Gujarat Co- operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF) which is a cooperative organization. Amul is located in the town Anand which is in the state of Gujarat and it has set up itself as a model for the development of rural areas.

Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) Amul is India's largest marketing organisation of food products. It is a state level apex body of milk cooperatives in Gujarat which aims to provide remunerative returns to the farmers and also serve the interest of consumers by providing quality products which are good value for money.

Amul has around 2.9 million producer members and the total capacity for handling milk is around 13.07 million liters every day. The brand's capacity for milk drying is around 647 Mts. each day and its capacity for cattle feed manufacturing is about 3740 Mts. each

day. Amul is the biggest brand in the pouched milk sector in the world and in India, it is the biggest food brand. Amul's range of products includes milk, ghee, milk powders, curd, ice cream, paneer, cream, chocolate, cheese, butter and shrikhand.

Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad is a women's organisation. It was started in 1959 with 7 lady members with a borrowed sum of Rs. 80/- at Girgaum in Mumbai. Only women could become the members of the organisation. The turning point of the Institution was in 1966 when it was registered under both the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950 and also registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860. The organization got the recognition from Khadi & Village Industries Commission as a village industry. The objective of the Institution is to provide employment to the ladies for empowering them to earn decent and dignified livelihood. Shri Mahila Griha Udyog has a wide range of papad, khakra, vadi, masala, atta, bakery products, chapati, appalam and detergent which are quite popular in the market.

Since founding the Social Work and Research Centre in 1972, Bunker Roy has been living in Tilonia, a village in one of India's largest, driest and the most famous state, Rajasthan. Better known as the Barefoot College, the centre has trained two generations of villagers without any formal paper qualifications to become health-care workers, solar engineers, hand-pump mechanics and teachers in their communities.

Over the last twenty years, the Aravind Eye Hospital, established in 1976 by Dr. Venkataswamy in India, has offered eyecare services and cataract surgery to cure blindness at a very small fraction of the cost of such services in the developed world.

Founded by Arbind Singh in 1995, *Nidan* builds profitable businesses and 'people's organizations' that are led by assetless and informal workers. A range of cooperatives, Self Help Groups (SHGs), trade unions, and individual and community businesses launched by *Nidan* have positioned unorganized workers as legitimate competitors in globalizing markets of India. *Nidan* works in Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi and Rajasthan. *Nidan* taps into the wealth of the poor—primarily their numerical strength—and then aggregates them into economies of scale. This process of 'collectivizing' generates social capital,

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representation and 'voice' for the unorganized poor which they then leverage to launch their own businesses and shift policy to be recognized as wealth-creators. (Social Entrepreneur of the Year India 2008)

While watching a Spanish film with his friends in 1996, Brij Kothari, the founder of Planet Read hit upon the Same Language Subtitling (SLS) idea. Using the simple tool of Same Language Subtitling (SLS) on popular song-based television programs, Planet Read is sharpening the literacy skills of an estimated 200 million 'literate' or 'neoliterates' who have weak reading and comprehension skills, despite having attended at least primary school. By superimposing subtitles on visuals in the 'same' language as the audio, Brij ensures that reading becomes a byproduct of the entertainment already watched by the audience. A joint venture of Planet Read and IIM Ahmedabad, SLS has combined the tremendous reach of India's national broadcasting agency, Doordarshan, with the enormous appeal of film songs, to give lifelong reading practice to early literate persons. (Social Entrepreneur of the Year India 2008)

Founded by Prema Gopalan in 1994, Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) is building networks of rural 'social businesses' that are co-created by private corporations and women survivors of disasters such as the 2004 Asian Tsunami and the Latur and Gujarat earthquakes (of 1993 and 2001 respectively). With the facilitation of SSP, networks of rural women entrepreneurs have launched retail businesses in renewable home energy products, home groceries and health funds in partnership with BP (previously known as British Petroleum), LIC and others. Working in the disaster-affected areas of three Indian states, SSP has since 1998, launched 8,944 agri and non-farm businesses through savings and group credit products. Further, it has nurtured 1,820 women retail entrepreneurs with a total consumer base of 63,000 families and cumulative earnings of 2.3 crores. It has ensured more than 33 percent income growth per entrepreneur. (Social Entrepreneur of the Year India 2008)

In 2006, the cooperative farming program, Baldev Farms, was the second largest banana grower in South India with 250 acres (1.0 km<sup>2</sup>) under cultivation. Profits from the farm are used for improving the

economic status of the workers and for running the other charitable activities of the foundation.

Nirmal Kumar, a student of MBA course at Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIM-A), a budding social entrepreneur, wants to use advanced technology to create a one-stop provider of basic facilities such as health care, education and entertainment in the village through community information and communication centre. Showing the precision of a corporate strategist, the diminutive student predicts an annual turnover of over Rs 2,000 crore for his centre in 13 years. His aim is to be a globally recognised figure in rural development. Offers for financial assistance to set up the Rs 5-crore centre have already started flowing from overseas financiers. Nirmal has made presentations on his plan to over two dozen IAS officers, banks and venture capitalists. Three professors, including one from IIT, are helping him take his idea from the drawing board to the dust bowls. "I am going to set up a profit-making company that will work in the rural areas. The pilot projects will begin in Chhapra, Siwan and Gopalganj before the experiment is repeated in all Bihar states," says Nirmal who is polio-afflicted a differently abled person. (The Telegraph - Calcutta, March 20, 2007)

27-year-old Kaushalendra, a graduate from IIM, Ahmedabad, chose to sell vegetables on the streets of Patna to fulfill his career dream. The son of a college demonstrator in the nondescript block town of Ekangarsarai in Nalanda district narrates his dream "I have a dream to build Bihar into the vegetable hub of the country. I want vegetables grown in Bihar on dining tables everywhere — from Srinagar to Salem and from Shillong to Surat," The young man has founded a farmers' cooperative, *Samridhi*, which sells vegetables in ice-cooled pushcarts.

The private-public partnership venture, launched about a couple of months ago with assistance from Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) with just one pushcart, has now placed an order for 50 more carts, thanks to a collateral-free loan of Rs. 50 lakh from Punjab National Bank. Nearly 300 farmers have associated themselves with *Samridhi*. ATMA, a government undertaking, is training these farmers in matters relating to high-yield seeds and crop protection.

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"Our aim is to propagate organic farming and use our expertise in marketing to reach the markets not only in India but also abroad so that the farmers of Bihar fetch good return for their produce. In five years, we target to penetrate the vegetable markets in the US, Europe and Japan," Kaushalendra says.

The ice-cooled pushcart vegetables are a hit with customers in parts of southern Patna. Moreover, the pushcart vendor gives the buyers a cash-memo which no other vegetable seller does, as further authentication of the quality and quantity of the vegetables.

"One day," he said with a twinkle in his eyes, "we will be able to build Bihar into a brand... the largest selling brand in horticulture."

*Khazana* started by development organisation Butterflies headed by Rita Panicker, works like a cooperative bank run by street children for street children. According to Panicker the rationale behind this venture is: "If the children have nowhere to put their money, it ends up being stolen or wasted in drugs and gambling." Earlier called a bank, *Khazana* had to drop the formal title due to RBI guidelines which state that only institutions with licences can be called banks. Founded in 2001, *Khazana* has 405 members, though most have shifting accounts as they form a floating population. As of February 2009, it had savings of Rs 1.3 lakh—mostly used by children for food and visits to their families. *Khazana* opens for a couple of hours every evening to allow children to withdraw cash and even take small loans. The children themselves decide whom to give a loan. "Giving them the power to make decisions is preparing them for life," Panicker says. Members can open two types of accounts—a savings account and a current or chalta-phirta account. The manager is elected from among them once every six months and the functioning of the bank is decided through monthly meetings. Those elected are taught the basic principles of banking and one of the most important rules for that person is to be polite to others. As *Khazana* develops accountability in children by making them stakeholders, NGOs have approached Butterflies to help them develop the model. Today *Khazana* is present in eight Indian cities and internationally in Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan. The institute now plans a

mobile banking centre which will go about town. (Vaish 2009)

Vikram Akula founder CEO of SKS Microfinance, a McKinsey alumnus started this microlending venture in villages of Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. Though this venture is for profit, it has initiated a sharp social change amongst the poor women from villages.

Felu Das a man without any formal degree, started local fast food kiosk at the district town of Midnapur four decades ago, now he is planning to develop a chain of local fast food. He got his son admitted to a management school so that after management training, his son would help him to expand the business. Already EILM – a Kolkata based B-School has signed MOU with him to provide technical and professional support for expansion of his business. (Guha Thakurta, 2011).

### Training on Social Entrepreneurship

Various organisations all over the world conduct training programme on the social entrepreneurship. An overview of the activities of some of the important organisations is given below:

Organizations such as Ashoka, Innovators for the Public, the Skoll Foundation, the Omidyar Network, the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, the Canadian Social Entrepreneurship Foundation, EthiCorp Pte Ltd. New Profit Inc. and Echoing Green are, among others, who mainly emphasise on developing the Social entrepreneurs around the globe. The Academy of Young Social Entrepreneur Young Leaders (SOGLA) in Turkey provides young entrepreneurs with a high quality of education, supports start-up and sustenance of their social entrepreneurship projects.

In India Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, (EDII) Ahmedabad, Gujarat, significantly contributed in the training and development of the social entrepreneurship. The institute has following mechanism for the training and spreading awareness of the social entrepreneurship.

- Centre for Social Entrepreneurship
- Chair in Social Entrepreneurship
- Sponsoring Social Entrepreneurship Development Programme (SEDP)

- Programmes for Existing Social Entrepreneurs
- Sponsoring Students of EDI's Post Graduate Diploma in Management of NGOs
- Best Social Entrepreneur Award
- Sensitisation Workshops in Colleges and Universities

### **Social Entrepreneurship in Management Education and Higher Education -An Assessment**

A growing number of colleges and universities all over the world are establishing programs focused on educating and training the social entrepreneurs.

Greg Dees is often considered the father of the Social Entrepreneurship as an academic subject. He is the founding faculty director of the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship and an adjunct professor at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. He has taught at the Yale School of Management, Harvard Business School, and Stanford's Graduate School of Business.

Names of the globally acclaimed institutions which run courses on Social Entrepreneurship are following:

- Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship, Duke University
- Center for Social Innovation, Stanford University
- The Social Enterprise Program, Columbia University
- Canadian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, University of Alberta
- Berkley Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, New York University
- Center for Sustainable Enterprise, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Although social entrepreneurship is becoming part of higher and management education all over the globe, there are typical problems which constraint its growth and development as an academic discipline which are summarised below :

- There is a lot of confusion on "Who will teach the course on social entrepreneurship? At the same time there is no clear natural path to develop faculty to teach social entrepreneurship."
- Business schools still view the social entrepreneurship as a practice, not a discipline. There is not enough academic research on social entrepreneurship; there needs to be more in order to advance the credibility of the social entrepreneurship as an academic field.
- Most business schools still confines social issues by including a term paper or holding discussions other superficial nature. The social Entrepreneurship coursework and extracurricular activities are rarely connected to the mainstream.

In India, with the specialization offered by most of the B-schools confines to Human Resource Management, Marketing, Finance, Retail , Operations Systems – the typical conventional structure. Hardly a few business schools offer courses on social entrepreneurship, Sustainable Development or Entrepreneurship as a whole. Apart from the reasons mentioned above the factors which are responsible for this state of affairs are following—

- i) With the parochial vision and commercial mind set of the management of B-schools in India, (most of them are privately run) feel that conventional areas of specialization will help their students to get a good placement in industry which in turn will be useful for them to promote the brand of their B-school in the education market- an invariable offshoot of commoditization of education.
- ii) Neither the private run B-schools nor University system providing higher education in management is interested in going for experimentation or adopting innovative approach in the study of management. They like to follow the conventional model which fits into the existing corporate structure.
- iii) The Indian social psyche is also extremely averse towards taking risk. All the stake holders of

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management education – be it the aspiring MBA, parents of the management students, the institution of higher learning running the management course – are mainly interested in placement, to be more precise in how the management student bags a safe, secured, high paying job in a good company is the chief concern of all. This might be the colonial hang over of a nation which for two hundred years believed that the secured employment is the most coveted goal of life. Practice of this philosophy has made the working population of this nation morally and intellectually crippled, dependent for whom entrepreneurship is a foreign phenomena.

In India barring a few Tier I B-Schools like, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, N.S. Raghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning at Indian Institute of Management Research, Bangalore, Mumbai, hardly there is any systematic endeavour on the part of institutions imparting higher education in management to promote the study of entrepreneurship as a whole and the social entrepreneurship in particular. This is an alarming situation for Indian Management Education system.

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