

Supporting Women Social Entrepreneurs in India- A Historical Study

Dr. Radhamma D. K

*Assistant Professor, Department of History, Government First Grade College, Bangarpet, Kolar District,
Karnataka State*

Abstract— In social entrepreneurship, different social, cultural or environmental issues are identified, solutions are conceptualized, developed and implemented. Basically, non-profit motivated in nature, the success is measured on the basis of “Returns to Society”, such as alleviating poverty, providing health care to the general masses, community development or women empowerment. Social entrepreneurship is gradually becoming a crucial element because of volunteerism and civic commitment. The concept of social entrepreneurship is almost four decades old, but in the recent past, it is gaining momentum. It primarily offers an altruistic form of entrepreneurship, that focuses on the benefits that society will reap because of an initiative. Social benefit or positive social changes or transformation is more important than corporate profitability. Therefore, identifying the existing social problem, conceptualizing a solution, which could bring about positive changes in the attitude of general masses, uplifting their life, safeguarding their opportunities, is the main agenda. Accessing a more comprehensive notion of how solving a social problem, will benefit the society at large, empowers the deprived and downtrodden, is very important in social entrepreneurship. Pakistani personality Akhter Hameed Khan and Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus are the prominent personalities associated with social entrepreneurship. However, there are numerous personalities and institutions in India, associated with the concept of social entrepreneurship, working for the cause of social upliftment and creating wonders. Social entrepreneurs emphasize on ways to relieve or eradicate societal pressures and produce progressive externalities or public properties. Few organisations, who could bring women empowerment through social transformation are discussed in this research paper.

Index Terms— Empowerment, Social issues, Ethical solution, Non-profit approach, Upliftment

INTRODUCTION

In the recent past, a growing tendency of becoming job provider rather than job seeker is observed not only amongst youth but in general as such. These institutions are no doubt will have the prime objective of money making at heart but are guided by noble social causes. Besides, many people opt for entrepreneurial professions and paths mainly because they have the insight and belief that it will offer better commercial and psychological rewards than the usual monotonous big corporation routes. Social entrepreneurship is steadily and gradually becoming, a vital, important and a very crucial element because it functions on the basis of volunteerism and civic commitment. Social entrepreneurs are intended to guide the society’s transformations and such entrepreneurs concomitantly act to address particular cases of social issues and problems and empower transformation progress throughout the system. Few examples occurred in India would substantiate this initiative of social entrepreneurship. Department of Power, Government of India, in its report published on 31st March 2011, states that, out of 6,40,268 villages in the country, 5,39,163 villages have been provided with electricity connection so far. It constitutes 84% of the villages. This information narrates that, still 16% of the villages i.e., 1,01,105 villages does not have electricity connection at all. This means that about 400 million people in rural areas face the challenge of access to electricity and modern energy services. This has adversely affected the economic productivity of the people, forcing them to rely on unsustainable use of available bio-mass resources.

The energy situation in rural India further gets aggravated by poor quality fuels, unreliable supply, inefficient use of available sources and limited access to reliable sources of electricity. It is still observed that many households are using traditional sources

for cooking fuel such as firewood, cow dung, crop residue etc., the usage of which causes respiratory, cardio vascular and other health related problem. The use of these traditional fuel sources causes indoor air pollution, which further gets aggravated due to poor ventilation system. The burden of adverse impact is disproportionately borne by women because they are involved in food preparation and solid fuel collection, which takes lots of time, which otherwise could be used for income generating activities or for leisure.

In order to meet the energy requirement of rural population, to improve their economic productivity, thereby promising them a sustainable improvement in living conditions, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India, launched a pilot project known as RESRA (Renewable Energy Supply Model for Rural Areas). This project was funded by German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear safety (BMUB) and was implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft Feir Internationale Zusammenareit (GIZ) GMBH, a German Government owned 'not-for profit' enterprise. BMUB has funded the project via, the International Climate Initiative (IKI). On a pilot basis, 24 villages were identified in Chhattisgarh state. These 24 villages were further grouped into six clusters, comprising four villages each. The population of these villages were mostly tribal communities, whose livelihood primarily based on Animal husbandry, Hunting, Tribal farming. Enhancing their livelihood opportunities was the prime objective of RESRA.

Government sponsored energy efficient diesel generators and to manage these systems, Village Energy Committees (VEC) was constituted. This Village Energy Committees, provides electricity to the local entrepreneur and household on demand and earn revenue. These diesel generators are powered by the oil of 'Jatropha seeds', which are locally grown. Since paddy cultivation is the prime economic activity of the region, electricity demand for irrigation, rice de-husking was more. This system turned out to be a boon, because of the availability of reliable on-demand electricity. Women Self Help Groups have emerged as major beneficiaries of this system. By pooling in funds from their personal resources and also from bank loans, many women's from SHG have set up multiple rice hullers, flour mills and government linked ready-to-eat, food

business. As per the report released by the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, Government of Chhattisgarh, Self Help Groups have supplied more than 100 tonnes and have earned more than 3 million rupees revenue from the Anganwadis-linked food manufacturing business during 2013. Hence in due course of time, RESRA, has turned out to be a women driven energy supply model, who look after operations, management and steering of the project. As a result of its efficient operations, local entrepreneurs have established 10 rice hullers, 18 bore wells, 10 irrigation pumps. Expelling oil from locally available tree borne oil seeds (TBO) has become a lucrative business and many Self Help Group are into this. Overall the system has promised and provided a sustainable livelihood alternative.

Encouraged by the success, this system was introduced in Maharashtra state. Two villages which are about 40 km away from Pune city were identified. High LPG prices and dwindling fire wood resources had made the life of villagers miserable. Hence in these two villages, local households are supplied biogas through piped network. Few women of the village have constituted themselves into a several Self Help Groups and they are being trained on capacity building initiatives and now these Self Help Groups manufacture cooking fuel pellets, used for clean cooking through forced dwarf cook stoves. After meeting the local demand, the surplus cooking fuel pellets are sold to others. Hence RESRA has been a multi-faceted approach in demonstrating and developing models of energy supply and enhancement of livelihoods. The dominant factor for the rise of social entrepreneurship is the societal pressure that is forcing humans to do something for the society and its present day affairs at large but at the same time having a monetary gain factor to it that can make them survive as well in this world. Conventional business models are all directed towards the maximization of revenue and economic profits, which in turn steer the firm to emphasize on improving self-proficiency to be more resourceful in fitting the market's demands. Nevertheless, the market capacity and resources are limited and the competition is ever increasing. This pushes enterprises to focus on recognizing profits and notwithstanding the long term development that it owes to society.

With increase in social problems, new challenges have risen for commercial firms which follow traditional business practices. There has been an increase in the number of companies that have started to think about corporate social responsibility (CSR). On the other hand, organizations that particularly target to pacify these social pressures have increased progressively as well. Though there are many examples of successful social entrepreneurship ventures and industries in the recent years, this notion is still a new one. In times when many countries are specifically facing the dilemma cited above and are searching for ways to cope up with the burdens from both economy and society, it is meaningful to examine why this kind of business venture is budding and spreading globally and how its theory and procedure could be defined and explained.

MILESTONE IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Another benchmark example is set by Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad, popularly known as 'Lijjat' is an Indian women's co-operative involved in manufacturing of various FMCG's. Seven Gujarati women from Bombay in 1959, with a seed capital of Rs. 80, to create a sustainable livelihood using their only known skill i.e., cooking, started preparing papads on the terrace of their building to earn dignity as individuals. Lijjat expanded as a co-operative system, within three months of its inception there were about 25 women making papads. In the first year, the organization annual sales were Rs. 6,196. The group got considerable publicity through word-of-mouth and news published in local vernaculars. This publicity helped them to get more members, which stood at 150 by the end of the second year and more than 300 by the end of third year. Today the company has an annual turnover of Rs. 6.50 billion with almost Rs. 290 million in exports, houses 43,000 employees. Head quartered in Mumbai, today it has 81 branches and 27 divisions spread across the country, especially in rural areas. This initiative is considered to be one of the largest and most remarkable entrepreneurial initiative by women leading to women empowerment.

In July 1966, U.N. Dhebar, the chairman of Khadi Development and Village Industries Corporation (KVIC), a statutory body set up by Government of India, for the development of rural industries

formally recognized Lijjat as a unit belonging to "Processing of cereals and pulses industries group" under Khadi and Village Industries Act and gave the status of "Village Industry". In 1966, Khadi Development and Village Industries Corporation (KVIC) granted a working capital of Rs. 8,00,000 and several tax exemptions. In the same year Lijjat registered itself as a society under 'Societies Registration Act, 1860'.

Since the main objective was to promote self employment for women, no machineries are used at the production level. Even today entire production process is done manually, without using modern technology for mass production or packaging. In many orthodox Indian families, a woman is not encouraged to work outside their homes. To give work and livelihood in their home itself, valuing people and understanding women problems, Lijjat created a sound and sustainable business model. Connecting to women was possible by collaborating with women groups. Women Self Help Groups offered solution. Several Self Help Groups were approached and trained in this direction. Since it was offering a sustainable livelihood model, many members were interested and became a part of it. These members are called as 'member sisters'. Everyone works so passionately as a result the company has reached to great heights. The company itself provides training and raw material (dough). To get standard size of papad, the rolling and measurement pad are also provided. The company also provides transportation facilities, per branch, to pick up and drop 'member sisters' to company. The 'member sisters' visit company daily and take dough home, roll them into papads when they are free from their domestic chores. Next day, when they visit the company to collect dough, they give their previous day production, which is tested for quality and once the quality standards are done, her share of rolling charges every day will be paid. These success stories motivates the morale of any individual or organisation and boosts their social interest level.

Business entrepreneurs like Ajim Premji and social entrepreneurs like Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus, for his innovative financial institution like Grameen Bank, set up in Bangladesh, are viewed and compared on par with each other. Infact, sometimes, social entrepreneurs takes the lead over business entrepreneurs. These simple but

extraordinary people came up with bright ideas and against all the odds succeeded at creating new products and services that dramatically improved the lives of people around them. Social entrepreneurship steers the essence to drive social change and it is that potential payoff with its lasting, transformational benefit to society that puts the field and its practitioners apart.

DIFFERENTIATING FACTORS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social entrepreneurs are like the catalysts for society just in the same way as entrepreneurs change the face of business. Social entrepreneurship consists of improvising systems, devising new approaches, grasping opportunities others ignore and forego. Not only identifying the problem but devising solutions to change society for the better. Several parameters differentiate social entrepreneurship from the present ways of traditional business ventures.

Strategy:- In social entrepreneurship, strategy followed is cooperative rather than competitive owing to the social mission of entrepreneurs, poor working capital and market orientation.

Financing:- Funding for business enterprises is accomplished by giving the ownership shares - stocks or incurrence of long term debts - bonds or short term debt - loans. Thus, the difference in funding between for profit and not-for-profit social organizations lies in the peculiarity between investors and donors.

Market:- Business entrepreneurs function in a marketing environment, where the supply and demand indirectly influence the price and quantity of the product sold or service rendered. In most of the cases, a social entrepreneur marketing environment usually implies that the costs are not fully covered by the revenue. Therefore, serving the society takes the lead over, profit earning and maximization.

Governance:- Business entrepreneurship is administered by a Board of Directors accountable to the owners and the stakeholders. Non-profit social entrepreneurship ventures have the possibility of a different governance structure. They can form a subsidiary organization managed by a business enterprise board if want to run a part of their enterprise for profit.

Market failure:- One theory articulated behind the existence of social purpose organizations is that they

emerge when there is a social-market failure, i.e., the commercial market forces do not fulfill a social need, such as in the case of public goods or in contract failure. This can be due to the incapability of those needing the services to pay for them. A problem for the commercial entrepreneur is an opportunity for the social entrepreneur.

Mission:- The essential purpose of social entrepreneurship is creating social value for the greater public good, whereas commercial entrepreneurship targets at creating profitable operations resulting in private gain.

Resource mobilization:- The non-distributive restriction on surpluses generated by non-profit organizations and the embedded social purpose of for-profit or hybrid forms of social enterprises confines social entrepreneurs from entering into the same capital markets as commercial entrepreneurs. Also, the finances of a social entrepreneurial venture often make it challenging to recompense staff as competitively as in commercial markets.

Performance measurement:- The social aim of the social entrepreneur endures greater challenges for measuring performance than the traditional entrepreneur who can count on relatively tangible and quantifiable measures of performance such as financial indicators, market share, customer satisfaction and quality. Furthermore, the various financial and nonfinancial stakeholders to whom a social entrepreneurial firm are accountable to are greater in number and more diverse thereby causing more complexity in managing these relationships.

CONCLUSION

Social entrepreneurship has evolved a lot in a very little span of time and is accompanied in government institutions, organizations and Non-Profitable Organisations. For social entrepreneurship, recognizing the opportunity is the basic foundation, which starts the entrepreneurial behaviour and further broadens social, cultural and environmental goals. There is a need to propose precise measurement indicators which can benefit in empirical research. Moreover, other aspects affecting the process of recognition of opportunity have to be researched. The motives that social entrepreneurs use to select a new business model depend on the instinctive demands of the society. As the eventual purpose of

business model innovation of social entrepreneurship is looking for the balance between social value and keeping sustainable development.

REFERENCES

- [1] Raina, T. G. (2018). Social entrepreneurship: the need, relevance, facets and constraints. Springer Open , 8-10.
- [2] wikipedia. (2018, August Monday). www.wikipedia.com. Retrieved September Friday, 2018, from www.wikipedia.com.