

Social Entrepreneurship: A New Approach to Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The nexus of social entrepreneurship and sustainable development is a subject of great interest nowadays, as nation is looking for solutions leading to sustainable development. Exploring this context, the paper aims to build connection between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development from both the perspectives of, conceptual reflection in literature and ongoing practices in reality. First most purpose of this study is to address the emerging practice of social entrepreneurship by exploring the theoretical and behavioral antecedents of social entrepreneurship and its contemporary practices. The purpose of SE is trade for acute social purpose, re-invest their surpluses into social objective, and build themselves accountable for their actions, they do so by putting new approaches and creating sustainable solutions to most pressing social problems such as unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, starvation, resource crises, social exclusion etc. to change the society in a better way. Now a day social entrepreneurs are acting as predecessors of sustainable development as they are generating solutions to procure the environment and preserve the available resources of the nation. Whereas sustainable development is often considered as a final goal of social entrepreneurship. By exploring key theoretical concepts of sustainability and, intentional antecedents for social entrepreneurship the paper proposes a process model to link these two constructs. In this model an emphasis is given to technical know-how as essential element for sustainable SE formation. Thus linking the sustainability with social entrepreneurship this study attempts to provide a new paradigm to future researches.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Development, SE Intentions and Process Model

Introduction

Sustainable development may term as a development that can fulfill the needs of the current generations without harming the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. However, it refers to the course of action where development is undertaken in such a way that benefit of various constituents of nature, and assorted social groups including future generations are conserved and preserved. It deals with protecting our nature in its present state for our upcoming generations as a gift as well as taking care of socio-economic aspects of all sections of society. Sustainability in India and in all over world is not a new concept, as its ancestry can be traced back to our historical phases when human being was directly in touch with nature in all respects like by being

religious (in the form of worshipping and growing more trees), being social (wherein various festivals were based on crop harvesting) and being economic (as profession linked directly to nature).With the passage of time increasing corporate competitiveness and desire for maximum market share pulled man away from its basics, and the result of such negligence had been paid by nature in the form of natural disasters like tsunami, hurricanes etc. which now a day became a common phenomenon . The price of this development was earlier borne only by nature whereas now man himself is at dilemma as how to reverse on initial path. In the year 2015 there are 17 sustainable developmental goals were adopted by United Nation for next 15 years under “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”For achievement of those goals lots of conferences, meetings and committees have been signed in all over the world to manage this chaos, but results are away from those desired. One of the major cause responsible for slow progress in this issue has been the non-involvement of all sections of society. The economies of all over the world are realizing that if we are by some means able to revert back to our original economic path by involving manpower in commercial activities rather than machines, our sustainability efforts can be geared.

However, the researches on the topic of sustainable development have increased to a great extent in the last few decades but most of them are about the conceptualization of the determinants of sustainable development and its effect on corporate or nations conduct. Besides, with regard to the available literature, it seems that sustainable development is a multifaceted concept. It also suffers from lack of consensus on its conceptualization, determinants and pragmatic forms (Hall et al, 2010). Our expression starts from the observation that the researches suggesting genuine tools for the stakeholders of sustainable development are scarcely available. For this purpose, we recommend social entrepreneurship, as a means of solving social problems, ignored or taken less care by the State, could provide an effective solutions and a potential responses to the challenges of sustainable development. Social entrepreneur can act as the predecessors of sustainable development and sustainability may term as the final goal of SE.

Objectives for the study

- To study the concept of social entrepreneurship by positioning its factors as the predecessors of sustainability.
- To observe the initialization and conceptualization of the term sustainable development in the context of SE will be done.
- To explore the connection between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development by proposing a process model for SE.

Before discussing links between sustainable development and social entrepreneurship, it is important to define more clearly what both of these actually are. In the following sections, the authors will review the evolution of the concepts of sustainability and social entrepreneurship,

And will examine several empirical studies to demonstrate how social entrepreneurship contributes towards sustainability

Study of social entrepreneurship:

Social entrepreneurship is a process involving the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to implement social change and address social needs (Mair and Marti 2006). They are the businesses which trade for acute social purpose, re-invest their surpluses into social objective, and build themselves accountable for their actions, rather than simply, maximizing profits for stakeholders and owners. They do so by putting new approaches and creating sustainable solutions to change society in a better way. A review of the recent literature there has been considerable debate in the- literature as to what constitutes social entrepreneurship. For example, some have argued that the primary objective of social entrepreneurship is to create social value, and social entrepreneurs employ business concepts to sustain their operations as they pursue this objective (Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort 2001). Others describe social entrepreneurial organizations as sustainable ventures that embody a passion for social impact (Wolk 2008). Swanson and Zhang (2012) discounted the notion that one objective precedes the other when they conceptualized the social entrepreneurship zone. This construct positions social entrepreneurship on a map of organizational forms defined by the nature of the social objectives and the varying levels of business sophistication at and beyond the point of self-sustainability. Desa (2007) categorized the extant social entrepreneurship research into four broad streams – studies that attempt to define the field of social entrepreneurship and differentiate it as a unique phenomenon of study, studies that focus on the resource-constrained environments within which social enterprises operate, studies that investigate the roles of the social Swanson and Zhang (2012) enterprise institutions, and studies that examine the performance metrics for social entrepreneurship. As a growing field, social entrepreneurship research provides rich research opportunities that are both challenging and intriguing (Nicholls 2018).In social entrepreneurship clearly indicates that the conceptualization has expanded over the years and become more inclusive.

Study of sustainable development

The concept of sustainability at the heart of the current concerns has become increasingly popular, among the researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers in recent decades. In 1972 Stockholm Summit is thought to be the first contribution towards the commencement of sustainable development of the global community then the term sustainable development was first proposed in 1980 by the World Union of Conservation of Nature (WUCN) to provoke a development that takes into account the economic, the environmental, and the social factors. In 1987, the concept of sustainable development became famous and institutionalized its publication in the Brundtland report by the World Commission on the Environment and Development (WCED). Thus, sustainable development, in its widest sense, is termed as the “development that can meet the needs of the

present generations without threatening the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The overall objective of sustainable development is to find an optimal interaction of economic, human, environmental and technological systems. The OECD, which participated in the sustainable development goals summit, defined sustainable development as a concept that "incorporates equity and social cohesion concerns, as well as the need to respond to threats against the humankind's common goods". Recent developments in sustainability research have extended the term beyond the notion of economic, social, and environmental efficiency to effectiveness – practices that preserve or enhance economic, social, and environmental well-being (Dyllick and Hockerts 2002; McDonough and Braungart 2002; Young and Tilley 2006). In this context, we can mention that, although more attention is paid to the societal dimension, the economic and ecological dimensions are not ignored but indirectly valued, especially that the three aspects are closely linked in a sustainable development framework: what is good for the society is good for sustainable development (Gibbs, 2009). In this regard, Hall et al (2010, p.440) advance that "sustainable development seeks to place social and environmental objectives on equal footing with economic objectives-the so-called "triple bottom line".

Social entrepreneurship, the predecessor of sustainable development

Social entrepreneurship has evolved as a promising approach to sustainable development. This paper focuses on social entrepreneurship that creates innovative solutions to immediate social problems and also mobilizes the ideas, capacities, resources and social arrangements required for long term, sustainable, social transformation through social innovations.

- Acumen Fund (World Health International (WHI) in India has been successful in promoting many sanitation solutions by providing effective UV water treatment for impure water to pure it especially for the under privileged community in the country, operating on the motto to provide pure and safe drinking water to all. It has now more than 300 water treatment plants which brought their resources from local community as water, land and electricity and ensure that none of these get exhausted. For setting up the units they take land from locals for about 15 years with the promise of returning it back without any additional cost and created plenty employment opportunities for the locales of the region.
- Dr Harish Hande in 1995 has founded a solar power generating firm "SELCO" is another great example of a social entrepreneur who is dedicated towards redemption of mankind and protection of our nature through exertion of solar energy ingeneration of electricity for especially rural sector. It caters to fulfill energy requirements of a vast population 70% of them are underprivileged and marginal farmers earning at piece rate of 100-200 Rs per day, and has expanded his project to Gujarat after serving Karnataka and Kerala. This power generating system has vanished. The use of smoky and dangerous kerosene lamps and helped in avoiding emissions of approximately 24,000 tones of CO₂ released by these kerosene lamps.

- Working on similar lines Mr. Gyanesh Pandey of Husk Power System in Bihar has also generated electric power by biomass gasifiers that create fuel from rice husks, whereas Azure Power Pvt. Ltd. By Mr. Inderjeet Wadhwa has worked hard to start a clean power plant in the private sector in Punjab and came up with this novel idea of power generation in rural sector using renewable and eco-friendly sources of energy. Both of them have been working tremendously well in their field with sustainable development of the society.
- “Drishtee” is a social enterprise for-profit that came into existence in the year 2000 implementing a sustainable, scalable platform of entrepreneurship for enabling the development of rural economy and society with the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology). This initiative of Mr. Satyan Mishra aims to facilitate the public awareness about the required information related to their field of occupation. Through a franchise and partnership model, Drishtee provides access to information and local services needed by rural economy. The business model is driven by village entrepreneurs, who own the village node to operate a self-sustaining, profitable kiosk.
- Similarly “Project Shakti” was launched in the year 2001 by Hindustan Lever Ltd. (HLL) as an initiative for women empowerment, in consonance with the purpose of integrating business interests with national interests. The basic objective of Project Shakti is to create income-generating capabilities for underprivileged rural women, by providing a sustainable micro-enterprise opportunity, and to improve rural living standards through health and hygiene awareness. Both of these enterprises work towards the financial sustainability of the under-served sections of society by empowering them with resources with which they can earn their livelihood in an environment-friendly manner.
- “GOONJ” is an initiative in the handicraft industry; it is a social entrepreneurial activity to enable the insolvent and physically challenged people by providing them opportunities to produce hand-made products such as folders, bags, registers etc. for the market but with a vision to preserve the environment. It is a phenomenon to see the handmade notebooks made out of wastes and used papers, wallets, bags, and many decorative pieces made of used clothes such as T-shirts, jeans, kurtas etc. and all that at an affordable price too. It is a very widespread sight to see their products in all around Northern India on display. Similar is the case of “Manav Srijan” which is an NGO, which empowers the females who are left out single to establish their own micro-enterprises using eco-friendly resources. There are numerous such exemplary social entrepreneurs who have actually thought of liberating themselves economically by procuring products of the nature and improving lives of others without degrading the environment.

Links between sustainable development and social entrepreneurship:

Sustainable development is often considered as a final goal of social entrepreneurship. Sustainability is capacity of an organization to continue or survive over time. The sustainability in SE may be understood as a process, that includes: the identification of a specific social problem and a specific solution (or a set of solutions) to address it; the evaluation of the social impact, the business model and the sustainability of the venture; and the creation of a social mission-oriented for profit or a business-oriented nonprofit entity that pursues the double (or triple) bottom line (Mair et al., 2006). In the context of social enterprise, sustainability has two sides. One side relates to the fact that an enterprise must be able to survive and endure financially over time. And secondly enterprises' social mission can endure and should be able to maintain or extend its impact over time. It is important to conceptualize the relationships among these variables. The Researchers have invested considerable effort in assessing the performance of social entrepreneurial organizations. A double bottom line, for example, has been used to describe the desire for both financial performance and social impact. A triple bottom line adds environmental concerns to the basket of measurement indicators of an organization's performance. A quadruple bottom line, which has emerged relatively recently, refers to enterprises that attempt to measure their success in creating value in each of the financial, social, environmental and cultural realms.

Research design:

Inductive and qualitative approaches of research were taken for this paper for the purpose of development of a process model of SE with reference to sustainability. This study is based on insights generated through a broad scan of several theories of SE intention formation by eminent of this field. Whereas development and landscape reports of social entrepreneurship in India (by Intel, British Council, Ashoka and others) is taken into consideration, for in-depth analysis of facts and figures, presented in these reports. Data is gathered from various primary and secondary sources; Thesis and research papers published in journals, books on SE, existing case studies, reports on SE, research articles personal interviews of founders, informed observation and internet sources.

Propositions to propose a model:

This paper proposes a process model which brings social entrepreneurship and sustainability as two sides of one coin. The authors suggest that, with its missions and purposes, social entrepreneurship should be sustainable by design. Social entrepreneurial organizations should maintain their economic viability while addressing social problems by implementing innovative solutions for those problems, whereby making them truly socially, economically and environmentally – sustainable. In this section each of the concepts are described in greater detail in the light of the empirical evidence as drawn from the prior studies.

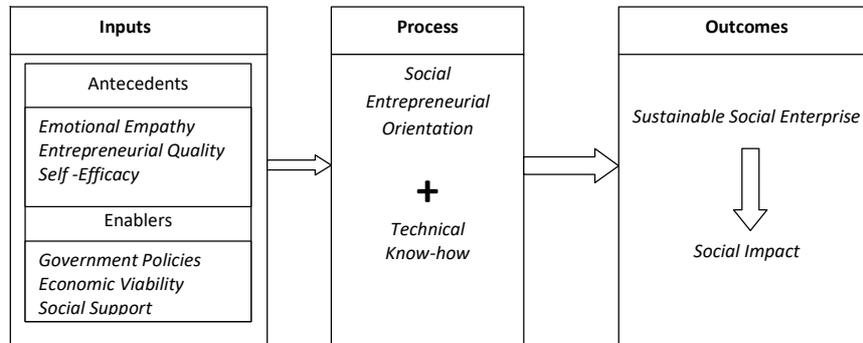


Figure 1: Social entrepreneurship and sustainability process model

Development of any sustainable social enterprise needs some antecedents to initiate the process where as some enablers to facilitate this process.

Antecedents

Emotional empathy

The first well known and widely agreed core value in social entrepreneurship is "empathy", it key element to create any social impact. In the SE field empathy is basically related to helping behavior of individual /organization with innovative solution to problems of others. Empathy, in its most basic sense, is the sharing of emotions or the ability to anticipate how another individual is likely to feel in a particular situation formerly it can be distinguished in two types first is emotional and second is cognitive empathy as social entrepreneurship is relatively sensitive towards emotions (feelings) of society so for this study emotional empathy is taken as primary antecedent. So from above we can conclude as:

Preposition 1): Empathy leads positively towards desirability of Social Entrepreneurial Orientation.

Entrepreneurial quality

As the word social entrepreneur is made of two words social and entrepreneur so it clearly shows the importance of entrepreneurial qualities for creating any social impact on small or large extant. Entrepreneurial qualities are the key to drive social enterprise. If we talk about the personality of social change maker entrepreneurial qualities like unique leadership style (Thompson et al., 2000), passion towards their mission (Bornstein, 2004; Boschee, 1995), risk mitigation, and a strong ethical fiber can only the way to create sustainable social impact. Without taking this attribute into consideration it is impossible to bring social impact on large scale. Thus we can sum up it as:

Preposition: 2) Entrepreneurial qualities are essential for social entrepreneurial orientation.

Self-efficacy:

Self efficacy is basically a belief of ones on his own self that he can do it. It is a kind of one's confidence about its capacity. Model includes self-efficacy as a measure for internal PBC which they hypothesize as a determinant of intentions in line with predictions Bandura defined self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of actions required to attain designated types of performance" besides this various authors also mentioned self efficacy as crucial for entrepreneurial performance by investigating it empirically. More specifically, Campo states that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is the degree to which one believes that he (she) is able to successfully start a new business venture. From above said point of views scholars we can conclude social entrepreneurial self efficacy enable a person to create social venture and get success in carrying out it thus we propose:

Preposition: 3) Belief of self-efficacy leads toward feasibility of social venture creation.

Enablers

Government policies

Although social entrepreneurship mainly grows out of necessity when the social-economic climate of nation is not good and government finds itself incapable of offering adequate support to society but it has shown that sometimes government regulations also motivate for social venture formation by providing great extent of subsidies in taxation and by formulating favorable government policies for the same. There are so many Government policies which facilitate many sectors of the social environment like education, health and livelihood. As prior research has indicated, favorable government policies foster a positive climate for the development of entrepreneurship. Similarly, government policies have tremendous influence on how non-profit organizations should operate. Government regulations and policies have played a significant role in increasing the success of businesses in the sector of renewable energy too. Thus we can conclude as:

Preposition: 4) Social entrepreneurship can flourish with favorable government policies.

Economic viability

Social entrepreneurs mainly deal with the noble task of civilizing the welfare of the society and for this they try to find innovative and affordable solutions to various societal problems. But every activity of social business carries a cost, to meet these they needs funds, for this they take help from local lenders for short term if they didn't succeed they feel lost because they don't have another option then so for the development of any social enterprise economic viability plays an important role because SE cannot attain sustainability until it is economically

viable. Whereas according to (Alvord et al. 2004) the capacity to construct bridges between social ventures and external support, especially financial support, is one of the key patterns for success of social ventures. Contrary these social entrepreneurs are facing problems in gaining financial support for their ventures because of the nature of their enterprise. To minimize the dependency of funds from charities and donation a SE must be economically viable to accomplish its social mission in long run. Thus we can conclude as:

Preposition: 5) Economic viability is important for SE formation.

Social support

Is a kind of trust and support from the surroundings, in the context of SE any social impact cannot be achieved by any entrepreneur by own it needs support of all civic society thus the presence of different stakeholders facilitate the formation of social enterprise. A successful SE can be flourish in efficient network include relationship of one to many individual in society and can refer to supplier, facilitator, clients and venture capital. In this context, some well renounced funding agencies (venture capitalist) Ashoka, Skoll or Schwab Foundation can possibly play an important role. So we can present it as:

Preposition: 6) Social support can act as facilitator for development of SE.

SE orientation

Above discussed antecedents and enablers leads to creation of SE Orientation, means behavioral intention to create social venture. The social entrepreneurial behavior may be termed as the recognition of opportunities to create social impact through the generation of nonmarket and market disequilibria. In recent years, SE intention researches have proliferated beyond its initial phase on descriptive case of evidence and attempts at definition and delimitation. The field has seen the emergence of sets of SE intention theories and suggestions often based on grounded qualitative research. But now in recent researches done in past few years researchers have begun to test this concept empirically to suggest that SI Intentions are precursor for social venture creation. Thus it can be sum up as:

Preposition: 7) SE Orientation leads to social venture formation to create social impact.

Technical know-how

Technical knowledge maybe of several types such as, knowledge for creating ventral technologies, knowledge of prevailing models for social change which the he/she wants to reproduce, and other knowledge related to the development of innovative solutions to societal problems. Sometimes these social entrepreneurs already possess technical knowledge about their venture due to their professional background as Mr. Harish Handey who is doctorate in energy engineering, Mr. Satyam Mishra (Drishtee) who is an IT engineer, Mr. Gyanesh Pandey and so on having technical knowledge about their ventures. Besides this if someone is not having it previously by its past education needs to learn it in present as Mr. Arunachalam Murugnantham (Pad Man) inventor of a low-cost

sanitary pad-making machine is not having knowledge of his venture through his previous education as he dropped out from school at the age of 14 has gained technical knowledge before starting his venture. Many studies show that having the technical knowledge for creating required solutions correspond to the social problems is essential for the development of successful social ventures. So it can be understood as relevant technical knowledge is important for the sustainable development of social enterprises that social entrepreneurs either already have by their previous knowledge through their professional background, or past experiences, or need to acquire this knowledge by training.

Proposition: 8) Technical knowledge is positively associated with sustainable SE formation.

Sustainable SE as outcome

Thus both SE orientation and technical knowledge for venture creation simultaneously leads towards the formation of sustainable SE development. Because without combining technical know-how to behavioral intention for SE it is difficult to generate social impact in large extent, as it needs sustainability of the venture for long run. Researchers have invested significant measures in improving the capacity of business sustainability based on financial and non-financial performance, to quantify the outcomes of SE i.e. Social Impact.

Proposition: 9) Sustainable SE can create social impact at large extent.

Social impact

It is the effect of performance and outcomes of any venture on human well-being of the community. Although quantifying the outcomes and social impacts of social entrepreneurship is difficult and challenging because the social outcomes are often comprehensive and hard to quantify (Austin, Skillern, Stevenson, and Wei 2006). Although a number of measurement tools, processes, and concepts have been invented to match the particular contexts. But these are insufficient. These tools include the balanced scorecard, social return on investment, and social impact for local economies. Despite all efforts, a universal measurement of social entrepreneurship performance outcomes is yet to be commonly accepted (Urban 2008).

“Thus in final words to make social impact at large extent and in long run any SE venture needs sustainability”.

Conclusion and implications

As sustainability in social entrepreneurship is still in its embryonic phase, this study presents novel insights into the key role that social entrepreneurship can play towards achieving the sustainable development. It demonstrates that entrepreneurial activities can deal with many social, economic, and environmental challenges at the local and global levels. This paper seeks to provide new insights into the literature by linking social entrepreneurship with sustainability and providing a way for sustainable SE formation. This study is a modest attempt towards development of process model of social

entrepreneurship, where well tested antecedents and enablers were studied to create social entrepreneurial orientation but it is observed that only behavioral intentions cannot lead SE formation so gap is identified, as lack of technical know-how. The study explored role of technical knowledge in process of SE formation, thus it could be a proposition for future research. Where as in this study entrepreneurial qualities are also viewed as important antecedent in the formation of behavioral intention, which altogether make a great sense.

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