



Women Social Entrepreneurs: Catalyst of Social Change

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Keywords :

Social Entrepreneurship,
Women social
entrepreneurs, Poverty,
Social Issues,
Socioeconomic growth

ABSTRACT

Due to its ability to create jobs, contribute to production and exports, produce money, and reduce poverty, entrepreneurship serves as an engine for the socioeconomic growth of a nation. Women can make significant contributions to the various facets of the nation's growth. A new idea known as women social entrepreneurship was created when the concepts of social entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship were combined. Social entrepreneurs, including women social entrepreneurs, continue to rise to the occasion and look for solutions to the myriad social issues that India is currently dealing with. As a result, this essay attempts to examine the early businesses of a few accomplished young women social entrepreneurs who have not only contributed to the country's economic progress but also developed novel solutions to its social challenges. Working for society can be a difficult responsibility for all parties concerned, but it gets even more difficult when women are involved. Women are significantly more involved in socially conscious businesses than they are in standard businesses in many different nations throughout the world. The trend and growth of women's social entrepreneurship in India is also analyzed in this study and the problem that they face in the journey. This essay also offers numerous recommendations for boosting the determination and fortitude of female social entrepreneurs so they can aid in the advancement of the nation.

INTRODUCTION: -

Despite the rise in study on social entrepreneurs in recent years, women's contributions as social entrepreneurs have received very little attention. Some academic studies have begun to study social entrepreneurs, explaining why they decide to become social entrepreneurs, the challenges they encounter, and the tactics they use. The amount and range of study on social entrepreneurs is growing, but it still often confines the concept to a small group of people and fails to account for the actual diversity within this category because it is still mostly focused on an idealised picture of what a social entrepreneur is. This paper's central argument is that conventional literature on management and entrepreneurship has a significant influence on much of the literature on social entrepreneurs, and as a result, research on female social entrepreneurs may follow a similar trajectory.

Over the past two to three decades, a lot of the study in the fields of sex/gender and management/entrepreneurship has shifted its emphasis, shifting from a mostly descriptive field of inquiry to a much more analytical one.

This paper seeks to give a brief overview of recent research on social entrepreneurs before outlining some of the findings that are specifically connected to the involvement of women. It also takes into account some of the famous women social entrepreneurs and the problems they face while entering the field of entrepreneurship.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: -

1. Explain what social entrepreneurship is.
2. Provide instances of Indian women who are pursuing social entrepreneurship.
3. Talk about the difficulties Indian women social entrepreneurs face.
4. Talk about the initiatives India is taking to empower women.
5. Provide ideas for empowering women.

METHODOLOGY: -

The paper is based on secondary sources. It comprises research and reports from government organisations, industry trade groups, and other published articles.

Objective I: -**SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: -**

An "entrepreneurial activity with an embedded social purpose" is what social entrepreneurship. The goal of social entrepreneurship is to identify a social issue and apply entrepreneurial concepts to plan, launch, and manage a social business that will bring about the desired social change. A social entrepreneur also assesses the benefits to society, whereas business entrepreneurs often gauge success in terms of profit and return.

Social entrepreneurs are created when innovative, highly driven, and critical thinkers come together with a desire to address social issues. Hence, the idea of social entrepreneurship is a business founded and operated by an entrepreneur for a social cause. Compared to corporate social responsibility, it is significantly different (CSR). While social entrepreneurship is based solely on a social issue, CSR involves businesses engaging in social activities such as charity work or projects in addition to their core businesses.

The new catchphrase is "sustainability of society and organizational success" as government indifference and the failure of capitalistic systems continue to widen inequality and strain resources.

According to Gregory Dees, dubbed the "Father of Social Entrepreneurship Education," social entrepreneurs influence society by:

- ✓ establishing a goal to develop and uphold societal ideals (not just private values)
- ✓ identifying and tenaciously pursuing fresh chances to further that goal
- ✓ taking part in the ongoing processes of innovation, adaptation, and learning
- ✓ acting audaciously without being constrained by the resources at hand, and
- ✓ demonstrating increased responsibility for the people it serves and the results it produces.

WOMEN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS: -

Women's empowerment and entrepreneurship Women entrepreneurs "involve an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman with a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital," according to the

Government of India. Hence, a woman or group of women who start an original commercial activity, take calculated risks, and manage that business operation are considered entrepreneurs. "Woman is the partner of man, gifted with equal mental potential," said Mahatma Gandhi. This proves that in terms of mental strength and intelligence, women are on par with males.

The study of women entrepreneurs has grown significantly in recent years, gaining academic acceptance and, most importantly, aiding in the knowledge of all the elements that contribute to women's challenges in starting their own businesses.

Objective II: -

Women continue to build ground-breaking social companies in big numbers across India as the startup ecosystem there thrives. These women handle pressing social problems on their own initiative because they have a burning passion to improve people's lives.

It demonstrates increased responsibility for the people it serves and the results it produces for their betterment.

1. Aditi Gupta, Menstrupedia.

Although it's considered taboo in India, Aditi Gupta isn't disturbed by the topic. She wants to teach young girls and women about this "taboo" topic in order to help them distinguish between fact and fiction and have healthy periods. Menstrupedia.com, which she and her husband Tuhin Paul co-founded in 2012, is perhaps India's first website with a defined goal of disseminating all knowledge related to menstruation.

2. Sheetal Mehta Walsh, Shanti Life

The poor often get trapped in the tedious process of taking a loan. Financial institutions often give out loans at such high rates that the poor find it nearly impossible to pay it all back. With the aim to release the poor from this vicious loan process and help them achieve sustainable living through access to necessary resources, Sheetal Mehta Walsh co-founded Shanti Life with her husband Paul Walsh. The venture helps the poor take microfinance loans at low interest and trains them.

3. Sairee Chahal, Sheroes.in

Sairee Chahal is bringing together the two most crucial issues of our time—women empowerment and employment—through her significant endeavour Sheroes.in. Sheroes essentially serves as a platform for female professionals who are dedicated to succeeding at their jobs. It offers a forum for meaningful discussions on this subject and facilitates working women's access to pertinent resources and new opportunities.

4. Prukalpa Sankar, SocialCops

Prukalpa discovered early on that the decisions that were frequently made in public life couldn't be justified by the available data. Prukalpa founded SocialCops with the intention of assisting in the data mining process and encouraging citizens and public institutions to play a larger role in decision-making. It is a technology business that contributes to the development of exact data on significant societal factors including income and savings, access to healthcare, and infrastructure quality, enabling smarter judgements.

5. Priya Naik, Samhita Social Ventures

The lives of people all over India are improving thanks to the efforts of several people. But, because of their dispersed nature, they are unable to have a significant impact. Samhita Social Ventures, Priya Naik's company, steps in at this point. It enables people, businesses, NGOs, donor organisations, and others to have a significant social influence. The word "Samhita" means "collective good" in Sanskrit, and this endeavor is unquestionably moving in that direction.

Objectives III: - OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN

In India, being a woman considered a blessing. As a mother, a daughter, and a wife, she is adored. Nonetheless, being a woman in India can occasionally be a misfortune. Due to the dowry her parents must pay to get her married, she is not accepted as a daughter. She doesn't have a lot of independence to act on her own.

Women in India encounter a variety of issues and difficulties, particularly those who attempt to become business owners or social entrepreneurs. These are a few examples.

1. A Mother's Role

Babies are only born by women. They are naturally viewed as mothers first. Also, they must first spend more time at home with their kids. They are frequently categorised as working in the "informal sector" or the "shadow economy" because of the work they undertake at home. (2014) Torri and Martinez

The 'housewifization' of labour, which considers women's labour as menial labour and excludes it from the production of capital, is the term Maria Mies used to describe this condition. Despite regulations prohibiting it, they are paid less for comparable work than their male counterparts.

2. Childhood

Girls are encouraged to be shy, not speak much in front of men, and not to be forceful starting in their early years. They are frequently getting ready to get married.

In comparison to their male counterparts, girls who experience all these discriminatory family and cultural behaviours are weak, meek, introverted, and have a low need for success.

3. Training and Education

Ghosh (2002, as referenced in Datta and Gailey, 2012) asserts that one of the main causes of women's subservience to men is a lack of social abilities.

4. Resource availability

Due to the aforementioned family and cultural obstacles, it can be challenging for women to establish their own business or simply learn how to be an entrepreneur against the wishes of their father or spouse.

Even after overcoming these obstacles, some women still have difficulties when choosing which enterprises to pursue, raising capital, manufacturing goods and services, marketing them, and managing them.

5. Personality

Indian women are frequently risk-averse due to their protective and oppressive parental upbringing and unsupportive sociocultural context. They lack the self-confidence to start a business on their own which is typically risky by its nature. Being associated with successful husbands, kids, or parents makes them joyful and proud.

Objective IV: -**EFFORTS MADE BY INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

- ✓ In India, a number of institutions and organizations have been set up to acknowledge, encourage, and empower women, female entrepreneurship, and female social entrepreneurship. Here are some examples of them.
- ✓ For the first time, India's Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–12) recognized that women not only share citizenship rights with males, but also act as drivers of the country's economic and social development.
- ✓ For the purpose of advancing women's social and economic empowerment as well as the growth, care, and protection of children, India maintains a separate Ministry of Women and Child Development. (Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2006).
- ✓ The "Young Women Social Entrepreneurship Development Project" was founded by the British Council and Diageo to support women's knowledge of social enterprise in India. (British Council, 2015; Sharma, Singla, and Grover, 2015; referenced).
- ✓ To encourage networking among various organisations of women entrepreneurs in India, the Federation of Indian Women Entrepreneurs was founded in 1993.
- ✓ In 1983, the Federation of Women Organization was founded to support female entrepreneurship and female empowerment.
- ✓ The Women's India Trust (WIT) was founded by Kamila Tyabji in 1968. Its goal is to assist in the export of goods made by Indian women to different nations.
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- ✓ In 2001, the Consortium of Women Entrepreneurs of India (CWEIF) was founded. It aids women in discovering production, marketing, and financial techniques.
- ✓ Several regional, national, international, and local groups work to advance women's rights in India.

- ✓ The women's cooperatives offer a range of services, including financing, water supply, sanitation, housing, educational institutions, and health care.
- ✓ Slums are home to about 65 million people (about twice the population of California) in India. The largest slum district in the nation is Dharavi, which lies close to Bombay. But, throughout time, its citizens have built tens of thousands of prosperous small companies with the aid of cooperatives and others.

Objective IV: -

HOW CAN WE EMPOWER WOMEN IN INDIA?

As more women than males enter the league of self-driven and self-motivated business owners, entrepreneurship in India has taken a dramatic turn. Despite the inaccurate portrayal of the gender, women are successful business owners, decision-makers in government, venture capitalists, bestselling authors, and academics. As almost 126 million more women join the market, the gender gap in this sector is steadily closing.

1. Upskilling women

The need for skilling has been reinforced by technological innovation, shifting occupational designs and patterns, and work environments. Similar to this, modernising skills and adopting new innovations will enable female business owners to transform their destiny by grasping the constant demands of business.

2. Financial participation

Compared to startups led by men, those with female founders or at the top of the organisational hierarchy obtain less investment. Despite the widespread disparity in obtaining relevant education and skill, the presumption that women are risk-averse, and the lack of social connections needed to secure funding, female entrepreneurs have the potential to make significant contributions to economic growth, innovation, and job creation.

3. A comprehensive startup ecosystem

Women-led businesses were less likely to stand out and engage in cross-border trade until recently since they were perceived as people who would miss out on possible openings in the globalisation and digitalization industry. Since there were so few female start-up founders, the gender gap was even more pronounced among innovative new businesses seeking capital.

4. Promoting entrepreneurship in the field of innovation

Trade skills have become much more important in today's world because technological advancements offer the possibility of starting or growing one's own firm. Yet, risk aversion, a lack of access to startup finance, and a small social network can affect both business and an individual's capacity for creativity. In the field of innovation, it is essential to continue exchanging outstanding ideas and experiences from around the world. Women's participation in digitization can address a further important issue related to a smaller gender gap. This can be done by building a network of male and female financial investors and analysts, which will likely reduce prejudices and improve performance in this direction.

Giving business skills trainings is a fundamental step in empowering women entrepreneurs, but for training programmes to actually effect transformational change, they must address the more profound psychological and societal barriers that women face.

CONCLUSION

The field of social entrepreneurship is receiving attention from academics, practitioners, and increasingly, policymakers. This essay has provided some insight into what social entrepreneurship means in India and has provided some examples of social entrepreneurship in India. The socioeconomic strength and pride of India are significantly enhanced by the contributions made by the women entrepreneurs. Several initiatives are being taken to support and empower them. These are all admirable and beneficial activities. To give them more influence and to accept them as equal participants in India's economic and social development, however, much more is required.

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