


Chapter 9

Sustainability of Social Enterprises

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ABSTRACT

Evidence supporting the budding role of social enterprises in fostering sustained socio-economic development of regions and communities across the globe are evolving continuously. Hence, the global upsurge in the social enterprise research and practice is appreciated, considering social enterprise primarily is presumed to have great potential in solving a range of social problems. Even though social entrepreneurship and social enterprise have remained central and thought-provoking in the realm of scholarly investigation for the past few decades, the emerging literature on social enterprise and their role in economic development is riddled with theoretical inconsistencies and definitional controversies. Thus, little or no rational knowledge about their functioning and management is available. Further, factors influencing the sustainability of social enterprises have rarely been explored and deliberated. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to identify and analyze the factors which influence the sustainability of social enterprises with focus on India.

INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship as a social problem-solving endeavor is emerging as a socially innovative business model for the required social transformation and change in the whole world (Robinson et al., 2009; Mair & Marti, 2006; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Dees et al., 2002; Chell, 2007). However, the social entrepreneurship philosophy is still considered to be in its budding phase (Short et al., 2009). The field has fragmented literature, and there is lack of consensus regarding the framework and theory of social entrepreneurship (Hill et al., 2010; Short et al., 2009; Certo & Miller, 2008; Mair & Marti, 2006). To date, social entrepreneurship and social enterprises have majorly been consented as entrepreneurial activities with an embedded social purpose. Thus, social entrepreneurship mainly stands for endeavors

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that primarily focus on social value creation, and hence social mission remains central to every social entrepreneur activity. While dealing with complex social issues, the social entrepreneurship fosters social innovation and consequently stimulates ideas for some socially acceptable and sustained business strategies and enterprise forms. In actual practice, the social entrepreneurs indulge in creating institutions for the purpose of actualizing their social transformation mission and carrying the innovative solutions forward.

Consequently, the field of organization building and development gains social entrepreneur's utmost interest and priority. The rationale for such hyped importance for organization success lies in the fact that the social entrepreneurs use such ventures for sustaining their social change as well as for scaling up their ensuing social impact to the maximum potential. Therefore, exploring these issues of social entrepreneurship management appears to be of the highest importance as it can enable practitioners to evaluate the effectiveness of their ventures. India has witnessed an uprise in the budding number of social entrepreneurs in the past decade (Ashoka's growing list of Indian social entrepreneurs, 2015). While social entrepreneurship movement is catching impetus within Indian, we have however a poorly defined and unstructured social entrepreneurship sector in India. Even very little is known about social entrepreneurship management and organization and there is lack of a comprehensive picture of their processes till date.

The theories concerning the creation, management, and performance of social enterprises in India are yet to be crafted. Indian social entrepreneurship is a relatively unexplored field. There is absolute dearth of research in the Indian context, and Indian social entrepreneurship market has a long way to go both in theory and practice as compared to the Western countries. A few nascent studies conducted over social enterprises in India have primarily explored the success stories of social entrepreneurs through qualitative and case studies, which are often anecdotal and have limited value for comparative studies. Thus, there is need as well as scope of leading some rigorous, quantitative research in order to enhance the applicability of social entrepreneurship research in India. There has been a global upsurge in social enterprise research and practice considering social enterprise as a rapidly growing thought worldwide. The renewed significance of social enterprise has arisen primarily on account of their assumed potential in solving a range of social problems. The evidences supporting the budding role of social enterprises in fostering sustained socio-economic development of regions and communities across the globe are evolving continuously. Even though, social entrepreneurship and social enterprise have remained central thought provoking domains in the realm of scholarly investigation for the past couple of decades, the emerging literature on social enterprise and their role in economic development is riddled with theoretical inconsistencies and definitional controversies. Thus, very little is known about functioning and management of social enterprises.

Further, factors influencing sustainability of social enterprises have rarely been explored and deliberated. The purpose of this chapter is to identify and analyze the factors which influence sustainability of social enterprises operating in India, and the process hopes to enhance the understanding and advance the field of social entrepreneurship. Thus, the intention of this study is to reveal and deliberate on the factors: individual, organizational and institutional which influence the practices of sustainability of social enterprises.

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