

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FROM THE INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL COURSES

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ABSTRACT

The major focus of the research conducted is to evaluate the trends of developing a postgraduate program for social entrepreneurship in India's higher educational institutions (HEIs). The researcher has performed an extensive search on the syllabi of social entrepreneurship from websites of HEIs in India focusing on the keywords on entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and social innovation. The studies identified that the curricular differences exist among various institutions were considered significant. To get better and deeper insights, the researcher has performed an analysis of the schools where these courses are being taught. Moreover, evaluation of course objectives, its contents, teaching pedagogies and strategies is conducted on entrepreneurship. Discussion on these offered insights has ignited an argument for the requirement of inter-disciplinary collaboration among social entrepreneurship educators.

Keywords: Higher Education, Social Entrepreneurship, Higher Educational Institutions, India

INTRODUCTION

In today's contemporary society, there is an emergence of social enterprise which has been considered as responses to inabilities of the commercial and public sector in solving the social problem faced by the society which includes problems like unemployment, poverty and inadequate social services (Tam, 2017). Because Social Entrepreneurship (SE) is considered as an approach to resolve the social and societal problems through innovative solutions that ensure the sustainability of social value (Mort et.al, 2003). Further, this concept of SE is well-established in business vocabulary (Peredo & Mclean, 2006). The importance of SE is expanded to the level that it has made a place in the educational aspects of leading business schools with an essential matter of discussion at several academic and professional forums. But when it comes to the Indian context, SE has still not made appealing development and numerous reasons are supporting it. Considering the similarity between India and other developed nations based on their respective political background, India is just second largest democracy after the United States where the economic developed is backed up with such democratic setup (Khanna, 2007). The other essential feature is the fact where in the oldest market-based economies had no restrictions on private property rights. Presently, India is incredibly diverse having several religions, ethnic groups, cultures and languages spoken, English is still considered to be the business language. As per the statistics provided by

Nasscom in 2015, India is just second to China in terms of the largest emerging economy and ranks third in global start up ecosystems. Also, India is second to China in terms of total population wherein India has more than 1.2 billion people (Census of India, 2011). With this high and increasing growth rate of population, there is an extreme demand for fulfilling social and environmental needs with restricted resources. Further aggravating the scenario, other social problems are emerging in India such as poverty, healthcare systems, education, lack of employment opportunities, hygiene and sanitation, water, and environmental issues. Considering the spread of poverty which is having a wider reach but not uniform distribution (Gore, 2003) there are a large number of social entrepreneurs emerged at a varied level to resolve the issue. They have come to function in a situation where all-state, market and third sector-have failed to overcome the social issues. The social entrepreneurs have utilized the existing resources and moulded into an innovative alternative to come up with sustainable and scalable solutions to the social problems thereby creating value to the beneficiaries. Social entrepreneurs use both social mission and entrepreneurial skills to solve social problems. In India, there is no existing special legal framework for Social Enterprise (Singh, 2016). Indian social entrepreneurial ventures are considered as a means to deliver basic services and opportunities to the underdeveloped sectors like education, sanitation and healthcare facility to the weaker sector or underprivileged people of the society. There are some social enterprises are applying an innovative, cost-efficient and technology-driven business model to serve a vulnerable group of people and others are creating a supporting infrastructure to remove barriers that create a hurdle for social enterprise (Intellcap, 2012). The benefit from social enterprises in India is enormous owing to diversity and uncertainty of cultural aspects (Bornstein, 2007). According to the Asian Development Bank, 2018, in India, 21.9% of the population falls below the poverty line. To solve above problems, socially inclined citizens are required to collaborate for the formation of civil society (Lan et al., 2014) or individually, create a social enterprise to address the social problem in the affordable way (Mair & Noboa, 2006). For this purpose, social entrepreneurial education and training are required in a professional manner to create trained social entrepreneurs.

The entire paper is divided into seven major sections. The first section introduces the readers to the topic of social entrepreneurship, summarizes or discusses the relevant prior research and gives a brief understanding of the aspects to be covered in the coming section. The second section focuses on providing an overview of social entrepreneurship education in the Indian context. The third section discusses the data collection and analysis approach in analysing social entrepreneurship. Fourth and fifth sections cover the essence of the paper. It describes the curriculum and pedagogy of social entrepreneurship education in major Indian universities along with challenges faced in doing so. The sixth section describes the appropriate model of a curriculum for imparting social entrepreneurship in HEIs. And the final section provides the concluding remarks along with the future scope of research in this area.

Social Entrepreneurship

Bill Drayton was the first person to coin the term social entrepreneurship in 1980. At present, social entrepreneurship is gaining significant importance in the field of education that shows societal problem can be solved through innovation, value creation, sustainability and outcomes associated with entrepreneurial efforts has emerged as a critical area (Austin, Stevenson & Wei-skillern, 2006). There are several studies conducted on social entrepreneurship, gave several definitions, concepts, theories and arguments (Seelos & Mair, 2004). Few researchers described social entrepreneurship as an established concept (Peredo & McLean, 2006) followed by others who believed in different schools of thought possessing reverse consent & belief for social entrepreneurship. Hence, the notion of social entrepreneurship has been debatable since the beginning of the last decade (Choi & Mazumdar 2014). On contrary, the third group noticed a lack in the process of social entrepreneurship. Being, a critical issue for researchers, social entrepreneurship has to be

dealt with concrete knowledge and use of appropriate methodologies prevailing to the existing scenario. It is therefore useful for researchers to reach a consensus to describe the social entrepreneurship empirically. Viewpoint to social entrepreneurship varies concerning geography, culture & eco-system of the prevailing nation. Seelos & Mair defined social entrepreneurship that created social values through the innovative business model in the society followed by researchers who argued that social entrepreneurship must be included in creating economic and social values (Zahra et al., 2009). However, these researchers were unable to make a concrete and reasonable association of social entrepreneurship with economic and social outcomes. Also, a study by Choi and Majumdar argued that there is no scientific definition of social entrepreneurship in existing literature hence, emphasized developing more viable definitions on social entrepreneurship. In this regard, another group of researcher urged that scientific and social research community needed to be focused on areas to draw the attention of policymakers, development thinkers, and new entrepreneur to take initiation to develop a social venture in a region. However, social entrepreneurship can be regarded as a social activity that is performed by a social entrepreneur who has a particular social mission to identify and resolve a social problem. In the process of doing so, she utilizes an innovative strategy and sustains the business by bringing about social impact thereby ensuring sustainability and scalability (Hadad & Gauca, 2014). Definitions of social enterprise has been changing within the regions according to use, context and policy for social enterprise (Kerlin, 2006) in the US, social enterprise is termed to be non-profit and market economy is driven but in contrast to Europe, It has an association/ co-operative and social economy driven (Kerlin, 2006). Due to the growth of social entrepreneurs in large numbers and looking at their level of knowledge and skills, it is said that they can be groomed/ trained through a well-designed curriculum.

The evidence found when Harvard Business School (HBS) launched the course titled "Social Entrepreneurship" in the mid-nineties. Soon it spreads across the globe with leading business schools started offering social entrepreneurship education. It gathered attention and became a hot topic for discussion in various academic and professional forums (Peredo & McLean, 2006).

Social Entrepreneurship Education in India

In India, there are more than 700 universities, 37000 colleges and 11000 stand-alone institutions as per the latest statistics from the UGC website. The higher education sector in India has become an important source of promoting and supporting social enterprise sector in the form of developing start-up enterprises. According to a report published by Yes bank, there are more than 100 incubators in India and their focused areas are manufacturing, technology, innovation, health care and entrepreneurship. Although the focus area of these incubators are not exclusively on social enterprise or using business concept and tools to solve social problems, there are many pieces of evidence that major portion of incubates are using innovative approaches to give social impact (British Council, 2016).

There are a growing number of academic institutions those started academic courses on social entrepreneurship either as full-fledged postgraduate or diploma program. Social entrepreneurship education is progressing in India as many higher education institutions involved in social enterprises are found nowadays. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) was one of the first academic institutions to introduce an academic curriculum on social entrepreneurship as two years full-time Postgraduate course *i.e.* M.A. in Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship in 2007. The course is designed for those who believe that social innovation and enterprise can work as a tool for social change. At present, there are other universities and AICTE approved institutions like Ambedkar University, New Delhi,

Azim Premji University, Bangalore, SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management, Mumbai, Institute of Rural Management, Anand and Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Gandhinagar are prominent academic institutions that offer a course either as a one-year diploma or two years post-graduate degree on social entrepreneurship. Apart from this, various higher institutions are utilizing their expertise by researching social entrepreneurship.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The main aim of this paper is to give a broader picture of social entrepreneurship education in India. This is done by reviewing the existing literature on social entrepreneurship across the world. It is important to note that the most prominent contributions are reflected in this paper. The major databases referred to in this case are Google Scholar, Scopus, and Thomson Reuters to identify and review the papers. Further, the methodology adopted by the researcher includes identifying the HEIs offering postgraduate courses in social entrepreneurship either in the mode of full time or part-time or distance learning. This was achieved through secondary research and desk analysis. The narrative is built using the relevant documents available on the websites of HEIs. The content analysis approach is done for these documents thereby creating a constructive comparison among them. Thus, a broader picture obtained from the websites of five prestigious institutions whose program curricula and syllabi were accessed is utilised for further analysis.

Social entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy in India

While pedagogy remains a central focus in education, designing an appropriate pedagogy for social entrepreneurship education creates multiple challenges. The existing SE curriculum is designed and developed to give facilitators a series of teaching methods to select from available options. These options are a combination of traditional lectures and discussion in class, case-based and field projects that include interviewing/shadowing the entrepreneurs, building a business plan for a social enterprise that is fictitious.

So far it is observed that the most common pedagogy used by academic institutions in India to run postgraduate course in social entrepreneurship is lecture, activities and simulations on a topic related to a social issue and critical discussion of cases on successful social entrepreneurs in India and abroad, immersion (field visit and rural visit), workshop components, and guest speakers. It is also evident that social entrepreneurship curriculum is greatly influenced by the foreign syllabus and pedagogy mostly from Europe and the USA and there is a lack of Indian literature on social entrepreneurship. Therefore, there is an urgency to develop Indian case studies and syllabus based on social enterprise and has to be incorporated accordingly (Thomas & Reddy).

University/ Institution	Course title of post graduate course	Course objective and pedagogy
Tata Institute of social sciences, Mumbai	M.A. in Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship	The objective of two years program in social entrepreneurship is to help students to get the skills, knowledge, and mindset important to launch social enterprise or act as an important role in existing one in a rural context. This program is interdisciplinary and combination of theory and cases, experience and student enquiry.

Despande Education Trust and Karnataka University, Dharwad	Master of Social Entrepreneurship Program	The program imparts students important skill sets in social innovation, entrepreneurship development and business practice.
Ambedkar University	MA in Social Entrepreneurship	The purpose of this program is to make participant familiar with the emerging area of social entrepreneurship and the impact. It imparts specialized skills to start a social business venture that creates social impact. The teaching pedagogy used is reading activities, simulation on topics related to social issues and critical discussion of cases on live social entrepreneurs and enterprise.
SVKM's Narse Monjee Institute of Management, Mumbai	Part-time MBA in Social Entrepreneurship & Sustainability Management	MBA in Social Entrepreneurship aims to develop strategic Orientation and motivation of students towards creating a successful social enterprise that solves societal problems in an innovative way. The pedagogy used to teach the courses are lectures, case studies, academic analysis and framing the issue.
Indira Gandhi Open University and Centre for Entrepreneurship Development	MBA (Social Entrepreneurship)	The program is innovative and aims to equip professional in the social sector with knowledge and skills to address specific managerial problems and challenges in the social sector. The course is delivered through distance learning mode, lectures, and study materials.

As mentioned in Table 1, the institutions were using a variety of learning and teaching strategies to teach social entrepreneurship course. These strategies were started from traditional learning, e-learning, case studies, and hands-on projects, visits to social ventures, and the importance given to social innovation. The institutions were adopting different pedagogies to teach social entrepreneurship in a simplified manner. After evaluating the curricula and contents of the above five institutions, it can be inferred that for an individual to be a successful social entrepreneur, she should be aware of both business and social aspects. However, the hurdle lies in the type of education being imparted to social entrepreneurs in terms of its sufficiency to cater to the need of both business and social models which is still an on-going debate.

Challenges in Social Entrepreneurship Education: Mono- disciplinary or Multi-disciplinary programs

The different issues discussed in social entrepreneurship in the previous section indicates that social entrepreneurship education should be able to handle financial and marketing needs on one hand and societal problems on others.

Tracey and Philips had given importance to the business education for the entrepreneurs but one must keep in his mind that a social entrepreneur has to accomplish social objectives. It means that social entrepreneurs need to be trained in a different discipline to help them to face the challenges.

Dees has emphasized that students should develop a capability to resolve a social problem innovatively with the help of cross-disciplinary learning.

The social entrepreneurship education imparted in the US for the postgraduate students focuses majorly on inculcating the marketing skills. On contrary to the courses that are offered at the public administration schools targets predominantly philanthropic and

political skills. This is due to the reason that the social entrepreneurship educators should ensure that there is mutual learning supporting in equipping the students with all the skills (Mirabella & Young, 2012).

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Social entrepreneurship in India is mostly developed based on the understandings of the faculty members of universities and limited international exposures. However, for an emerging economy like India, it needs further concentrated investigation due to the vividness of problems to be catered via social business models. But the research in this area is limited and confined to the definition of social entrepreneurship. It doesn't cover the pivotal aspects such as nature and dimensions of social business model, contemporary issues that could be solved via social entrepreneurship, and both formal & informal modes of delivery of such an education (Arasti & Salamzadeh, 2018). There are instances wherein the social entrepreneurship is compared with corporate entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, sustainability, so on and so forth (Nigam et. al., 2014). However, social entrepreneurship as defined in the aforementioned sections has a clear distinction that it aims to solve a social issue utilizing the business concepts. This understanding should be focused on while formulating the curriculum in Indian Universities. But content analyzing as presented in table 1 reflect a different picture. The course objectives column reflects a common theme wherein aspirants are trained in knowledge, skills and approach of setting a social enterprise. These aspects are important and experiential, but having a conceptual clarity along with the philosophy behind social entrepreneurship is vital to enable individuals to apply the right tool in resolving social problems (Salamzadeh et. al., 2013).

The problems of developing countries are different from the ones belonging to developed economies. Also, there is a great extent of variation in issues among developing countries as well. Thus, management of social enterprise requires a local understanding of the country and its problems because the social problems are extremely contextual. Along with this, there are certain characteristics of a social entrepreneur overlapping with conventional entrepreneurs such as leadership style, organisational culture, networking abilities, etc. boosting the success of social enterprise (Prasetyo, 2016). However, this local context is not fully incorporated in HEIs in India while imparting social entrepreneurship education. Much of the content is taken from international best practices that don't capture the essence of local social issues.

India is already suffering from the issue of low female participation in all socio-economic activities. This is contradicting the demographic dividend argument of India. It is extremely important to give due recognition to gender balance in creating social entrepreneurs in society. Without gender balance, several social enterprises would fail to provide gender-neutral solutions (Salamzadeh, Arasti & Elyasi 2017). None of the contents analyzed of the five universities in this research catered to the gender-sensitive approach of social entrepreneurship. Also, having a huge opportunity cost involved in pursuing social entrepreneurship refrain the female participation in such education in India.

Finally, the theoretical and practical contribution of this paper to the body of literature would include suggesting a comprehensive model of social entrepreneurship education in India (Salamzadeh, Salamzadeh & Nejati 2011). The current model of social entrepreneurship is operating in isolation from a prior understanding of the relationship with humans. It is infeasible to operate as a social entrepreneur without having basic knowledge in the stream of humanities. Current HEIs in India are operating on the earlier model wherein they are producing entrepreneurs rather than social entrepreneurs. Thus, the refined model

should include a strong subset of the following disciplines to inculcate a strong behavior of social entrepreneurship that is successful and sustainable in long run.

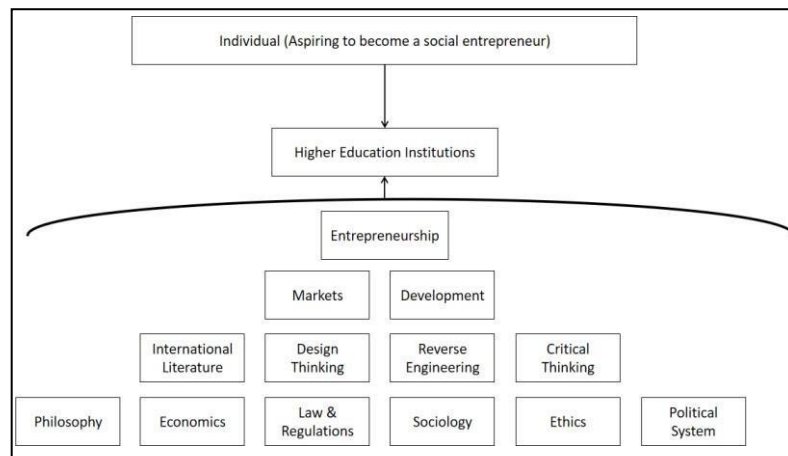


FIGURE 1
PROPOSED SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP MODEL

This model should attempt to stimulate the zest among the individual to pursue social entrepreneurship in HEIs (Sousa et. al., 2016). As a result of this, more and more employment opportunities will be created along with a private resolution to social problems. The role of government would be reduced in resolving social issues thereby providing higher bandwidth to them in catering to their major functions of providing public goods, national security, criminal justice, the judicial system and tax collection.

CONCLUSION

India's post-graduation level program on social entrepreneurship is still in its initial stage and slowly getting accepted across universities and institutions. The paper has given light on the social entrepreneurship education at post-graduation level in India. The data collected by the researcher on the five institutions from India indicate that when there was no significant difference exists in the design of the courses, the pedagogical input varies. Still, in infancy, the social entrepreneurship program is offered by selected institutions. Hence, the sample size in this study has been limited to five institutions. Nevertheless, the research serves as the beginning of a discussion for further increasing the spectrum of research in social entrepreneurship education at the postgraduate level in India.

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