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Volume 5 Issue 2, pp. 369-379

Date of Publication: 30th August 2019

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2019.52.369379>

This paper can be cited as: Natrajan, R., (2019). "Women Social Entrepreneurship in Action" A Case Study of Women Social Entrepreneurship initiatives in Tamil Nadu (India). PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 5(2), 369-379.

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“WOMEN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ACTION” A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP INITIATIVES IN TAMIL NADU (INDIA)

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Abstract

Entrepreneurs are not homogeneous and their initiatives determine the social and economic development of a nation. They are able to position themselves successfully in the local and global market. Many scholars and academicians addressed the functions of entrepreneurs especially women commercial entrepreneurs and their involvement to improve the society. However, there is an urgent need to create awareness among women about social entrepreneurship initiatives, due to an increasingly number of problems that women have been facing in the society. This paper aims to discuss the hindering factors and the support system that is required to promote women social entrepreneurs. This research paper focussed on young and small pioneer organisations. The researcher used case study analysis based on semi-structured interviews with women social entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu (India) being mainly young and small pioneer organizations. The researcher provided some valuable suggestions to increase the number of women social entrepreneurship initiatives along with the scope for further research.

Keywords

Commercial Entrepreneurs, Economic Development, Facilitating Factors, Social Entrepreneurial Initiatives, Social Entrepreneurs

1. Introduction

The industrial development of any nation will determine the wealth or the economic position of a country. On the other hand, it is not possible without the entrepreneurial competencies to establish more ventures and achieve success. Therefore, it is important for a nation to promote such entrepreneurs who can change the nerves of the society. To get a clear perspective of social entrepreneurs and the impact created by an entrepreneur one should have a clear understanding about entrepreneurship.

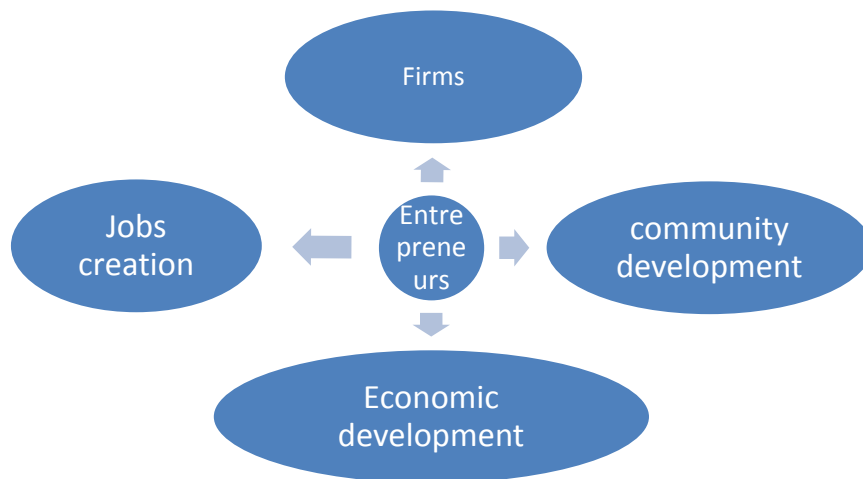


Figure 1: *Industrial Growth and Nation's Development 1*

The term **entrepreneur** originates from the French word, *entreprendre*, which means, "to undertake. "In a business context, it means to start a business or a person who undertakes a venture and turn into a profitable venture. The process carried out by an entrepreneur is entrepreneurship, though possible through a holistic approach (Catherine M. Clark & Christian Harrison, 2019). It is neither restricted to a number nor limited to a particular gender. Men and women are able to contribute equally to the society and to the business. Over the past few years, women are able to come out of their traditional entrepreneurial shell and push themselves to solve social issues without forgetting the entrepreneurial spirit. (Hansrod, H., (2019).

This paper aims to analyse the hindering factors and the support system that is required for women social entrepreneurs, whilst establishing their social entrepreneurship ventures in Tamil Nadu (India) using a case study method. The researcher explored the prospective redemption of women social entrepreneurs who use their social entrepreneurial ventures as their main tool to carve those individuals captivated by their old principles or philosophies (Budhiraja and Dr.Bhatnagar, 2009). The researcher carefully analysed the case of five social entrepreneurs and the challenges they faced while promoting their social entrepreneurial ventures (Chantra, Yanto, 2017).

1.1 Research Question

- What are the hindering factors of women social entrepreneurs?
- What are the support system required to promote women social entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu (India).

1.2 Objectives

- To ascertain the hindering factors of women social entrepreneurial ventures using a case study of selected successful Social entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu (India).
- To differentiate between a social entrepreneurial ventures as well as the commercial entrepreneurial ventures.
- To identify ways for creating a support system to promote women social entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu (India)

2. Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurs are not homogeneous

Entrepreneurs are not homogeneous and the role played by them in establishing a venture depends upon the needs of the society and involves the characteristics of an entrepreneur. Many scholars and academicians addressed the function of the entrepreneurs and their involvement to improve the society in the earlier period. (Catherine M. Clark & Christian Harrison, 2019). Henceforth, the focus has shift from wealth creation to increase the broader social values or assuming the responsibility of addressing the social issues. (Zahra and Wright, 2016). They were not given the required prominence in the various fields compared to the commercial entrepreneur. Contradictory to the commercial entrepreneurs, the social entrepreneurs have equally contributed to the society

both economically and physically. Social entrepreneurs stress the importance of addressing the societal issues at the same time carry out the process as an entrepreneur.

2.2 Social Entrepreneurship

The term social entrepreneurship identified as an entrepreneurship embedded with social cause and resource mobilisation. This creates a global impact in the modern economy. Most importantly the revitalizing thoughts or ideas from the developing countries such as providing low cost cataract surgery for the poor, providing sanitation and supplying water, producing eco-friendly product for the poor and needy through education and training. This can be sustained by creating a value to their services provided by them. Nevertheless, the perception of social entrepreneurship is not widely known as there is a cliché that charity is social entrepreneurship or vice versa. Social entrepreneurship is an important phenomenon for major social growth or the economic growth for any nation (Hilla Cohen, Oshrit Kaspi-Baruch & Hagai Katz, 2019). Social entrepreneurs need not be a large-scale producer; they start with the small social enterprises with the small resources available, to create a huge impact. (Jacques Defourny & Marthe Nyssens, 2010).

The socio-economic conditions prevailing and the infrastructural facilities available to increase the industrial development in the western world are different from India. (Ali, G., Yaseen, A., Bashir, M. K., Adil, S. A., & Hassan, S, 2015). Social entrepreneurship is an interdisciplinary area of Business studies, sociology, or political studies. This kind of mind-set has led to myopic works across a range of fields especially among the scholars. (Abel Duarte Alonso, Seng Kok & Seamus O'Brien, 2019). The misconception about female entrepreneurship, needs to be changed. Women left their jobs to become an entrepreneur is not for cash flow in the family, however, it is for the job satisfaction (Idris, N. & Tan, J, 2017). To overcome those clichés, the researcher decided to carry out a study about women social entrepreneurship initiatives in Tamil Nadu using case study method. This will project a clear view about women social entrepreneurship initiatives, by identifying the hindering factors and the support system that is required to promote women social entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu (India). (Kariv, D., 2013).

3. Research Issues

Women entrepreneurs in India are a relatively growing phenomenon and women entrepreneurs contribute to the well-being of the society. They perceive themselves as leaders

and able to multi tasks. However, there is still a bias that they either are more to facilitate family by taking care of their children or fit themselves into any government services. Women entrepreneurs are willing to work in an environment where they are willing to demonstrate their ability and where there is an environment of stability (Vijaykumar, T. and B. Naresh, 2012). This will facilitate women entrepreneurs, to equip themselves to be a backbone or the support system of the society (Vinesh, 2014). The need and the growth of women Social entrepreneurship is relatively greater than ever before as it is a rapidly increasing division across the field of entrepreneurship (Choi and Majumdar, 2014). However, there is a need for social entrepreneurs to establish their standing in a society is equally important; as there is a misunderstanding about social entrepreneurs is existing facilitator of charity organisation or philanthropically activity. (Johnson et al., 2017,) Social entrepreneurs are more community oriented so providing an ecosystem for the women social entrepreneurs is essential for them to operate with more dignity and self-efficacy. They take responsibility by building a different social culture to tackle such social problems. (Bates, K. G., 2010).

3.1 Research Design

The researcher adopted descriptive research design for her research study on social entrepreneurship initiatives. Case studies will enable the researcher to get a holistic view. This the reason the researcher decided to adopt the case study method for this research works in order to get a holistic view about women Social Entrepreneurship and their initiatives. (Silverman, 2010). The hindering factors of the social entrepreneurs analysed for the purpose of this research to bring out the necessary support system that is required to promote women social entrepreneurs. The researcher has classified the social entrepreneurship initiatives under four different category of social entrepreneurship such as Health, Energy, education and Environment for better understanding and convenience.

3.2 Enlisting and Short-Listing the social Entrepreneurs

The entrepreneurs enlisted based on the Focused Group Discussion (FGD) with the stakeholders in each category invited to Centre for Entrepreneurship Development Madurai for Tamil Nadu. Social Entrepreneurs – The members who received training from Centre for entrepreneurship Development, The leading Non-government organizations such as Dhan foundation, Kirubha institute of technology for social entrepreneur.

3.3 Developing Case Studies of Successful Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives

During the preparation of the case study, the researcher was able to understand and analyze the demographic and academic profile, challenges faced by them and entrepreneurial competencies exhibited to overcome these challenges. A total number of five case studies were prepared allocating under the three sub categories of Social Entrepreneurship from Tamil Nadu (India).

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The researcher used interview method to collect the primary data from the social entrepreneurs. A pilot study conducted to do a fair testing among few social entrepreneurs in each sector, in order to understand the response and comfort level of the respondents. Based on the feedback, the interview schedule improved, before using it in a general survey. The researcher adopted a novel method of informal chat in the beginning and subsequently drawing her for a more serious discussion on their challenges and strategies adopted to address these challenges. The study was undertaken drawing the inputs from the primary data emanated from the survey among the successful social Entrepreneurship from the field research as well as literature survey conducted through desk research.

3.5 Sampling

Through the Focused Group Discussion (FGD), the researcher was able to generate a list of social entrepreneurs ten in Tamil Nadu (India). The rationale behind choosing Tamil Nadu as it is a combination of metropolitan and cosmopolitan cities and it is multicultural. The researcher believed that it is important to develop and build the trust among the social entrepreneurs whom she was interviewing, to open up to the researcher without any hesitation to share their views. The researcher is also a former employee of Centre for Entrepreneurship development, which enables the researcher to contact those members effortlessly, who is associated with Centre for Entrepreneurship Development from Tamil Nadu region, so the researcher decided to use Tamil Nadu for her case study. (Punch, K. (2005). Even though the entrepreneurs were helpful, however there are certain issues faced by the researcher were:

- Some of the entrepreneurs were unable to allocate the time with the researcher to complete this case studies in depth.
- Some social entrepreneurs especially the representatives in Tamil Nadu were not ready to document their work due to political and legal pressure.

Thus, the researcher was able to get the support and cooperation of one entrepreneur in each subcategory category and three case studies were developed. An analysis been done by interviewing the three social entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu to identify the hindering factors of women social entrepreneurs and the support system that is required to promote those social entrepreneurship initiatives. The researcher based on the findings, provided recommendations and suggestions to help and support the emerging or future women social entrepreneurs.

4. Findings and Suggestions

The researcher listed the following information based on the findings about the hindering factors and the support system required for women social entrepreneurs, in the process of establishing their ventures. Suitable suggestions are also included as a solution to the issues mentioned.

4.1 Government Support

Government should direct the financial institutions and commercial banks to create awareness among the bank managers, creditors about the need to support women social entrepreneurs. This will remove the hindrance of lack of financial resources. This will enable the social entrepreneurs especially to help the other women in the society to address the issues. As social entrepreneurship is not gender based and it involves men and the women in the society, so the government may facilitate the formation of consortium of social entrepreneurs for their collective wellbeing. There are success stories like, Amy cotton in London, Similarly, Innovative experiments such as Kudumbashree in Kerala, SEWA in Gujarat, who are the major examples to support the social enterprise activities includes the cause of women and addressing several issues faced by them are few in the country.

4.2 Training and Development

The Universities in Tamil Nadu and the Entrepreneurship Development of India may facilitate the success of Social Entrepreneurship and suitable training programmes may be imparted to equip the budding women entrepreneurs with all the competencies. The Central Board of School Education and the State Directorate of School Education may include the case studies of most successful Social Entrepreneurs in the school curriculum in Tamil Nadu.

4.3 Policy Support

The Ministry of Education, Entrepreneurship Development programmes in India in collaboration with the state government and the Central Government may encourage the establishment of Social Entrepreneurship ventures. Similarly, the Government of Tamil Nadu can promote or encourage the social entrepreneurship initiatives even in Prisons. This will help them to get back into the society with dignity, especially it will benefit the women and ethnic minorities to facilitate and orient them to gainful employment, profitable self-employment or impact making social enterprises.

4.4 Communication and Infrastructure

The Government of India and the State Government have already initiated a number of steps to encourage social enterprises by the women as women both in Tamil Nadu. However, increased in the level of communication is essential to reach and to create awareness. (Brown, B. (2015). Women social entrepreneurs faced major problem in managing their work force. The second challenge they faced is Local Competition. Most of the entrepreneurs are unaware about the latest technology in their business process.

4.5 Legal Support

The next challenge faced by some women social entrepreneur is that they are unable to understand legal compliances. They have less knowledge about that. Then they lack in Managerial and financial Education. A few of the Entrepreneurs faced problems in maintaining cordial interpersonal relations. Thus by adopting the following previously mentioned measures in letter and spirit, the Problems associated with women will be resolved. Self-employment gives them the opportunity to enjoy freedom with personal integrity (Singh, R. and Raghuvanshi, N, 2012).

6. Conclusion and Scope for Further Research

Economic and social development of a nation depends upon the nation's ability to promote entrepreneurial culture. This can be done by manufacturing of goods and services, increase the employment opportunities, attract the investors and able to improve the infrastructure. Such Entrepreneurs are not homogeneous and the roles played by them in establishing a venture depend upon the needs of the environment and their characteristics. The role of social entrepreneurs, especially women social entrepreneurs and their contributions to the society is retractable. The modern society should encourage more women social entrepreneurs as they possess the qualities

of commercial entrepreneurs. (Inés Alegre, Susanna Kislenko & Jasmina Berbegal-Mirabent, 2017) Social entrepreneurs are acting as a catalyst of the social changes especially women entrepreneurs shape the other women in the society, using their creativity. (Carter and Jones-Evans, 2012). Through this paper the researcher has identified the hindering factors of social entrepreneurial initiatives The researcher has identified some research gap based on the literature survey and empirical as well as preparing the case studies from the successful Social Entrepreneurship initiatives. The study conducted among the social entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu, similar studies initiated in other parts of the country. The reason behind such studies can help anyone to understand the impact of social cultural environment prevailing in other regions about Social entrepreneurship. However, there is a need for Universities Grant commission (India), Entrepreneurship Development corporations (India), has provided liberal financial assistance to the Universities and Colleges to support such studies for establishing social enterprises. There is a scope for further research to study the performance appraisal of the support provided by the social enterprises. There is an opportunity to identify the effectiveness of this institutional mechanism to promote women social entrepreneurs or encourage women social entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship and Management Development Cell (EMDC) sponsored by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Ministry of HRD and the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Cell (IEDC) sponsored by Department of Science and Technology, Government of India are functioning in different colleges and universities.

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