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**A Study on Social Entrepreneurship in promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Development**

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**Abstract**

The sustainable rural development is one of the most complex contemporary issues and for that the concept of social entrepreneurship has emerged in recent times due to its importance in promoting sustainable rural societal development and gaining increasing importance in today's Indian economy. Where institutions have failed or avoid to resolve the social problems and needs of the rural areas, social entrepreneurship gives a new groundwork for the socio-economic development of the rural people. It can be considered as one of the alternative solutions to reduce poverty and migration; and develop employment in rural environments.

Social entrepreneurship together with social innovation can be viewed as a medium that can be used to promote inclusive and sustainable rural development. 'Social innovation' refers to innovative activities which include tools, methods, ideas or strategies used by 'Social Entrepreneurs' to fulfill social needs and overcome social issues. 'Inclusive and sustainable' development emphasize the importance of harmonizing the goals of development and equity based on sustainable development with principles which priorities economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.

In the present paper the importance of social innovation and social entrepreneurship has been examined and how these acts towards promotion of inclusive and sustainable rural development have been explored. Case studies from several social businesses have been presented to provide empirical evidences on their contributions in that direction. From the empirical evidences it is evident that social entrepreneurship is a distinct and unique approach of achieving sustainable rural development of the nation.

**Key Words:** Social Entrepreneurship, Social Innovation, Social Networks, Sustainable Rural Development, Social Needs, Rural India.

**Introduction**

The sustainable rural development is one of the most complex contemporary issues. Social entrepreneurship has emerged in recent years given its importance in promoting sustainable rural societal development and gaining increasing importance in today's Indian economy. Where institutions have failed or avoid to resolving the social problems and needs of the rural areas, social entrepreneurship gives a new groundwork for the socio-economic development of the rural people. It can be considered as one of the alternative solutions to reduce poverty and migration; and develop employment in rural environments.

Social entrepreneurship together with social innovation can be viewed as a medium that can be used to promote inclusive and sustainable rural development. 'Social innovation' refers to innovative activities which include tools, methods, ideas or strategies used by 'Social Entrepreneurs' to fulfill

social needs and overcome social issues. 'Inclusive and sustainable' development emphasize the importance of harmonizing the goals of development and equity based on sustainable development with principles which priorities economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.

Social entrepreneurship is the work of social entrepreneur and the concept was coined long ago but has been popularized in the recent past. A social entrepreneur is someone who identifies a social problem and uses entrepreneurial skill to solve and manage the social problem. Social entrepreneurs attempt to create social value which is beyond income and profits (Roshan Baa, 2012). According to Roberts et al. (2005) Social entrepreneurship is the application of entrepreneurship in the social spheres that led an important gap between business and benevolence. It is an innovative and social value-creating activity that takes place within or across non-profit, business or government sectors (Austin, J., Stephenson, H., & Wei-Skillern, J., 2006). Social entrepreneurs create innovative solutions to immediate social problems through ideas, capacities, resources, and social provisions necessary for sustainable social transformations (Alvord, S. H., Brown, L. D., & Letts, C. W., 2004). It is a growing phenomenon in emerging economies like India since they are fighting for a large number of social issues like lack of healthcare facilities, increasing pollution and wastage, lack of education and infrastructure, sanitation, poverty etc. Hence, the world is witnessing an upsurge in social entrepreneurs building innovative business models integrated with social causes for addressing the sustainability needs of our planet.

### **Social entrepreneurs and sustainable development goal**

The 17 sustainable development goals are designed by the United Nations to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and control climate change by 2030. They are both a vision and a plan for improvement in quality of life of both developed and developing countries. With these 17 goals, 169 targets and 230 indicators the SDGs are remarkable diplomatic achievement for the 180 countries that have signed on, especially when viewed against the complexity of challenges each of these countries face within their own borders. The goals are truly global and applicable to rich and poor countries alike.

Social Entrepreneurs with their solution-oriented ideas and services are ready to do good for all. They are problem-solvers in the areas covered by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). We need them for their creative solution to the social problems of our societies are confronting. We need them to join together collaboratively and leveraging their change making skills and power to shift institutional, societal and individual mindsets towards removing our societal problems.

### **Few Social entrepreneurship in India**

**Pardada Pardadi Educational Society (PPES):** It is a budding social enterprise in working towards women empowerment in Delhi / UP and closely associated with the 'Pardada-Pardadi Foundation'. This social enterprise was established with a clear mission to create and grow a socially responsible business that offers high quality products and services and contributes to the general upliftment of society, specifically through empowerment of rural women by making them socially and financially

independent. The foundation runs a school for educating close to 1500 girls from villages in and around Anupshahr (dist. Bulandshahr, UP) and generating employment for rural women in keeping with their mission of empowering them through social and financial independence. The school, in addition to providing free education, study material, uniforms and meals, also prepares these girls for a productive future through vocational training for embroidery, appliqué work and block printing etc. Upon graduation, all students are invited to work in Pardada Pardadi's Production Center, which creates home furnishings like table covers, duvets, sheets, curtains, and gift items like picture frames, trays, dairies, and coasters. These items are sold both in India and abroad through a nicely designed website. It has also started an 'aggarbatti' (incense sticks) unit with a manufacturing capacity of 10,000 sticks per day and has a Call Center that employs girls graduating from Pardada-Pardadi school.

**ERC Eye Care:** ERC focuses on providing Inclusive, affordable, accessible and sustainable eye care for all specially for North-East Indians who are living in remote villages- compounded with frequent socio-political unrest, poor connectivity, and poor transportation facility, poorer economic status. It provides eye care services and consulting at ₹50 and the optical retails starting at ₹99. It also provides cataract surgery for a very nominal rate of ₹3500. It looks to start off 4-5 satellite centers providing basic eye care in rural areas. With a Mission to provide affordable eye care in an accessible manner, and having a vision to ensure right of every person to be able to see & work productively, it started out in 2011. ERC devised their customized unique Hub & Spoke model to reach out to the most underserved and inaccessible areas and more than 1,30,000 patients treated since June 2011.

**Jaipur Rug Foundations:** Founded as a not-for-profit organization in 2004 by **Nand Kishore Chaudhary**, the Foundation forms an integral part of the Jaipur Rugs Company which is the largest manufacturer and exporter of handmade carpets. Working with 40,000 artisans, belonging to socially and economically vulnerable class in over 600 villages in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand makes Jaipur Rugs Foundation a stellar example of social entrepreneurship in India. It is exporting these handmade carpets to more than 45 countries such as in Europe, United States, Canada, Australia, Russia, Middle East and Asian market among various other countries. The Foundation aims at training, developing and upgrading new artisans at the grassroots, then engaging them with sustainable business. Considering the agony due to intense caste and gender discrimination, the foundation started nurturing the traditional artistic capabilities with them, exploring their potential and linking them with the global market. To eliminate the menace of middlemen from supply chain, from training to providing work to connecting global market, everything is directly provided to the doorstep of the artisans.

Entrepreneurship development and social development evolved as two different verticals of the Foundation. In the 600 villages where it is working, majority of them have no access to healthcare services, education and government schemes. Thus, the Foundation started artisans providing education to women artisans who had never been to schools. Under this, they get basic understanding of functional literacy and life skills so that it eases their work operations. The Foundation was initially funded by the profits of Jaipur Rugs Company. "We got some funding for skill development from the Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj under its flagship scheme, **Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana**. It was about developing 4,000 artisans in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. Currently, we have partnered with a World Bank project, JEEVIKA in Bihar. The partnership would impart training to 2,000 women artisans in the biggest naxal hit areas of the state.

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**Rangсутra:** Rangсутra is a company of artisans from remote regions of India – the deserts of Rajasthan, hill regions of Uttaranchal and Assam. Their goal is to ensure sustainable livelihoods for artisans and farmers, by creating top quality hand made products based on the principles of fair trade and a celebration of India’s rich craft heritage. Sumita Ghose is the founder and managing director of

Rangсутra, a social enterprise which seeks to bring about socio economic development and inclusive growth in rural India by engaging both: the community-craftspeople and artisans come from some of the most disadvantaged communities, with very little opportunities for self development and growth and the market (tradition and the contemporary). Rangсутra is owned by 1800 rural artisans- most of whom are women. Other owners are like minded organizations and people committed to ensuring sustainable livelihoods for rural artisans in India. Rangсутra provides design, marketing, technical and organizational support needed to make crafts and allied rural industries into viable enterprises, so that they provide regular home / village based employment to 3500 rural artisans.

**Ayzh :**The company was founded by Zubaida Bai with the simple idea of developing affordable, appropriate health technologies produced by women and for women in rural India. Every year a million mothers die from unsanitary childbirth conditions. AYZH’s core product JANMA, a Rs 100 clean birth kit (containing simple tools recommended by the WHO) helps prevent infection at the time of birth leading to reduced maternal and infant mortality.

Zubaida’s motivation to start the company was personal. In 2006, on the birth of her first born she contracted an infection that caused years of suffering and was told by doctors that she may not be able to have another child. She made a promise to find a sustainable clean birth solution on behalf of women worldwide. Besides reducing maternal and infant mortality, AYZH increases income of women in rural India by enabling them to be the producers and sellers of tools like sterile birth kits.

With a total of 32,000+ kits sold, more than 64,000 mothers and babies worldwide now have access to a clean and safe birth.

**Jayaashree Industries:** One Indian social entrepreneur has given women from low income groups in India dignity, by making it possible for them to afford to buy sanitary towels and provide them with an income at the same time. Arunachalam Murugananthamis the person who changed things. From a poor background in the South of India, he created the world’s first low-cost machine to produce sanitary towels. According to a report by market research group AC Nielsen, “Sanitary Protection: Every Woman’s Health Right”, 88% of women in India are driven to use ashes, newspapers, sand husks and dried leaves during their periods. As a result of these unhygienic practices, more than 70% of women suffer from reproductive tract infections, increasing the risk of contracting associated diseases.

Muruganantham re-engineered a sanitary machine, and in 2006 it won the award for the best innovation for the betterment of society from the Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai. Plus, he also received an Indian presidential award for innovation. Currently more than 1300 machines made by his start-up company, Jayaashree Industries, are installed across 27 states in India and seven other countries. This social entrepreneur sells his low cost machines directly to rural women through the support of bank loans and not-for-profit organisations. A machine operator can learn the entire towel-making process in three hours and then employ three others to help with processing and distribution.

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Mr. Muruganantham has been accorded the recognition as **Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World 2014** for his accomplishments.

**Lijjad Pappad (Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad):** According to Lijjat's website, the organisation started work in 1959. A pioneer batch of 7 village ladies had set the ball rolling by making 4 packets of Papads. The faith and patience of the members were put to test on several occasion - they had no money and started on a borrowed sum of Rs. 80/-. Today, Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad is a

Women's organisation manufacturing various products from Papad, Appalam, Masala, Gehu Atta, Chapati, SASA Detergent Powder, SASA Detergent Cake (Tikia), SASA Liquid Detergent. Membership has also expanded from an initial number of 7 sisters from one building to over 43,000 sisters throughout India.

**Greenway Grameen Infra (GGI):** Neha Juneja and Ankit Mathur founded CGI to create sustainable solutions for the rural market. Their first product, a clean cook stove, called the Greenway Smart Stove. CGI'S team consists of technology experts, designers, sociologists and marketers who worked with rural communities to create the Greenway Smart Stove design. The results clearly show that stove saves 65 percent fuel and reduces carbon emissions by 80 percent. This is an important problem to solve as traditional stoves cause over 2 million premature deaths annually due to indoor air pollution. Also, they lead to deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions, and the release of black carbon.

### Conclusion

Today it is revealed that government and institutions failed to solve some social problems and needs particularly in rural areas. In this situation social entrepreneurship plays a major role for the socio economic development of the rural people in India. The role of social entrepreneurs in sustainable economic development is being gradually recognized and various steps are taken by government and various international bodies to promote social entrepreneurship to bring a balanced societal development in the society. A synthesis of the above cases mentioned in the paper suggests that social entrepreneurship is the solutions for the fulfillment of social needs and desires. From the evidences it is evident that social entrepreneurship is a distinct and unique approach of achieving sustainable rural development of the nation.

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