

Whither Social Enterprises?

Motivation for Social Enterprise Research and a Review

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Seminar Hall

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Social Enterprises (SEs) and Social Entrepreneurs (S-ENTs): Review of global, Indian and *Bharat* landscape

- Story of an Elephant and seven blind men (elephant is in the room and fortunately there are many wise and not blind men!)
- Dynamism in the SE discourse in the last 10 years
- But lack of unanimity on Definitional issues about SE
- SE- an idea whose time has come?

A swinging pendulum from a matter of fact to idealistic vision via many destinations in between

The Social responsibility of business is to increase its profits.
(Friedman 1970)

To

Social Businesses will usher in Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment and Zero Net Carbon Emissions (Prof Yunus 2017)

Situating SE debate in the context of Role of enterprise, market and society

- From Friedman (1970) to Yunus (2017) a journey that has come full circle
- LPG as the dominant discourse
- Rapidly changing global geo-social-political-economic context since 1980s
- Power of the market and simultaneously failure of the market
- Enterprise solutions to poverty
- Profits at the bottom of the pyramid Prahalad (2004) and others
- Markets for the poor M4P approach

Situating SE debate in the context of Role of enterprise, market and society

- Conscious capitalism, CSR, triple bottom line, B corporations, Inclusive Business, Responsible business etc
- Markets that have failed to deliver (again for the last mile)
- Governments that have abandoned its responsibilities for those at the last mile
- NGOs that are boutique and deliver to the last mile (but only) on small scale and that too when grants are available

SE Ecosystem

- Dynamic
- Large numbers across the country but largely skewed towards metros and English speaking
- Multisector health, agri, education, skilling waste management etc



Working definition

SEs are organisations (irrespective of their legal status)

- Purpose (Mission) comes first and Profit later
- SE is a means to an end
- SE attempts to blend Social and Enterprise dimensions together
- They aspire to combine the best of efficiency of an enterprise (revenue model and surplus), vision (purpose) of the NGO sector with the ambition of outreach (scale) of the state
- The scope of their work is woven around the Trinity of Affordability, Accessibility and Assurance of products and or services they provide

Our motivation and Methodology for this study

- Review theory
- Understand the practice unfolding in India (agriculture and rural)
- Draw lessons from the Indian practice

Our approach

- Studying facts and processes (as reflected in balance sheet data of SEs of last 3 to 5 years) leaving out start ups and vintage examples
- Critical and dispassionate analysis: comparing theory, assumptions and reality
- Examining social and enterprise dimensions through case studies
- Draw lessons and disseminate for effective action and facilitative policy (NOT IMPACT STUDY)

Progress so far: January 2018 till now

- Study state of the SEs in rural agricultural space
- Desk review of literature and documents on SEs
- Purposive sample: Identified 16 SEs with diverse activities in the value chain
- Different geographies for regional diversity
- SEs in operation for at least 3 to 5 years
- Team of 12 researchers across the country as collaborators

Progress so far: January 2018 till now

- Field interactions and interviews over with all 16 SEs
- Case studies being written using a common study protocol
- Drafts to be peer reviewed in a meeting October 2018
- Finalised Case studies and analysis for dissemination (first quarter 2019)

Thank you!

Feedback and comments to

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