

# SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG DALITS AND TRIBES OF INDIA: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

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**Abstract:** *Social entrepreneurship promotes the most innovative solutions to the most pressing social problems of a society. The mission behind origin of social enterprises is to bring social change. Social entrepreneurs are considered as the change agents to bring positive social change in a society and the concept has great impact on systems of a society by developing and implementing innovative approaches. Tribes and Dalits (lower back word class of people) are the most oppressed, avoided and discriminated groups of a society and stands in the least position of social hierarchy. Government has been executing many schemes to achieve socio - economic empowerment and wellbeing of Dalits and Tribes, among the schemes, Social entrepreneurship is the best method, which protects the ethnicity, culture of the groups and promotes sustainable development. The nature of social entrepreneurship is to make the situation better and to bring change, so the said groups required it more to upgrade their social and economic status. Government has been encouraging such enterprises to promote job givers/employers to remove unemployment from our society. But still only few entrepreneurs are there from these groups due to our mind set and discrimination. Dalit and Tribe entrepreneurs are experiencing social, financial and technical problems in initiating such enterprises. Apart from this few success stories are there. To overcome such problems the society needs to change its mind set and attitude towards Tribes and Dalits.*

**Key Words:** *Dalits and Tribes, Discrimination, Mind Set, Social Change, Social Entrepreneurship.*

## 1. Socio – Economic Scenario of Dalits & Tribes in current Indian Society:

Being a democratic and secular country, Indian constitution guarantees equality of law to all its citizens and this guarantee applies to all aspects of national life including social and economic. This provision was meant to be a tool especially for the up gradation of deprived sections. Dalits and Tribes are such deprived sections have historically been poor, deprived of basic human rights and treated as social inferiors in our country and they still facing economic, social, cultural and political discrimination in the name of caste. Gandhian and Ambedkar's views differs on this issue, Gandhi viewed this as a social issue whereas Dr.Ambedkar viewed this as economic and political issue caused by upper caste people. Government of India had recognized them as "Scheduled Caste" and "schedule Tribe", which means they are on a government schedule that entitles them to certain protections and affirmative action.

Ours is a country with 1.2Million massive population, out of 104 Million and 300Million are Tribals and Dalits respectively (2011 Census). Tribes and Dalits are the most oppressed, avoided and discriminated groups of a society and stands in the least position of social hierarchy. Dalits and Tribes continues to suffer on account of severe socio-economic deprivation arising out of poor asset base, dependence on wage labour, subsistence level of farming, engagement in scavenging and other unclean jobs and other social evils. Government has been executing many schemes to achieve socio - economic empowerment and wellbeing of Dalits and Tribes, such as reservation has been provided to Dalits and Tribes in Government jobs, the number of such openings is obviously small compared to their population size and there is no significant change in their status. In these circumstances the deprived groups required right livelihood for their survival and to uplift their socio – economic status. For this sake Social entrepreneurship is the best method to make the situation better and right.

## 2. Social Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurs – Concept:

Entrepreneurship refers to new and creative business ideas that are usually driven by economic motives. But when innovation, resourcefulness and opportunity are used to address socially relevant issues, it is called social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurs deal with problems like poverty, marginalization and environmental degradation. They try to identify the root cause and effect change at the systemic level.

The organizational setup may be for-profit or not-for-profit but the main motive is to address pressing societal problems. Thus, innovation, systems change and market orientations are some important aspects of social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurs take up on themselves, social challenges; instead of leaving them entirely to the government. Social entrepreneurs are visionary, ambitious and persistent. They offer new ideas and innovative solutions to society's most pressing problems. They assess the merits and demerits of system and solve the problem by changing the system. They try to engage widespread support and spread the solution.

The business sector has demonstrated the power of innovation and entrepreneurship. Creativity and passion can be channeled to bring about solutions to several problems of our society.

### **3. Social Entrepreneurship among Dalits and Tribes:**

India is a rapidly developing country with 8.71% GDP and one of the broad economies where Foreign Direct Funds flows, but still above 90% of Dalit and Tribal families are under Below Poverty Line (BPL). The New Economic Policy opened doors to the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) due to its special features LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization). This has negative as well as positive impact on our society, which is rich people, became richer and poor people become poorer. The corporate sector has looked in to social service sector to get good brand value and also their social responsibility with the concepts of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Social Entrepreneurship for the welfare of the marginalized sections like Dalits and Tribes. After this much voluntary efforts and welfare schemes by the concerned authority, majority of the Tribes and Dalits are still in deprived status, the reason behind this is lack of awareness of the deprived groups on welfare schemes for them and corruption of the concern authority. To overcome this Social Entrepreneurship is the best method.

The nature of social entrepreneurship is to bring required change in the required segment of the society. It always promotes better change of the situation, so social entrepreneurship is the best method for the socio economic empowerment of the said groups without disrupting the culture, ethnicity and values of Dalit and Tribes.

### **4. Achievements of Dalit and Tribal Social entrepreneurs:**

Apart from this negative aspects few success stories are there;

#### **4.1. Vat Vrikshya of Odisha: Initiated by Vikash Das**

Vat Vrikshya, (banyan tree in Sanskrit), is an Odisha-based self-sustaining social business organization that works in remote rural areas with marginalized women and Adivasi's communities that have traditionally been neglected and exploited by mainstream society. The organization has operations in four major tribal districts of Odisha, part of India's 'starvation corridor', with among the country's highest rates of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, infant and mother mortality and school dropout rates.

The organization was set up primarily to empower marginalized women become active agents of their own change process. Vat Vrikshya creates sustainable and diversified livelihoods opportunities for women so that they earn enough in the lean agricultural periods to meet their costs of living.

The enterprise provides women with vocational training, soft loans, expert advice and market linkages to help develop supplementary sources of income. It has linked over 200 tribal hamlets which are then connected with larger towns, cities, and various government-led institutions. The enterprise also helps people sell their wares directly in fairs and markets, bypass exploitative middlemen and earn better profits.

#### **4.2. Coffee Plantations of Tribes of Araku Valley and Ananthagiri forest area, Andhra Pradesh, Initiated by Naandi Foundation and Forest Department of AP.**

Coffee cultivation is transforming the picturesque Araku valley, a popular tourist spot in Visakhapatnam district, and bringing about a qualitative change for the better in the lives of tribals.

The Naandi Foundation had been working in promoting coffee cultivation in the valley for the past 15 years and the results were now visible. However, unfortunately, last year the Hudhud cyclone dealt a severe blow to coffee cultivation in the valley but the farmers had withstood it.

In this social entrepreneurship project The Naandi foundation arranges land, required pesticides and coffee plants to the needy tribals with the collaboration of Forest Department of Andhra Pradesh, and the

tribals have to take care of the plants, they can market the coffee production without any profit sharing with the organization.

## 5. Challenges faced by Dalit and Tribal Social Entrepreneurs

Government has been encouraging social entrepreneurs to promote employers to overcome the unemployment problem from our society. Regarding this government has been taking measures by establishing India Inclusive Innovation Fund (IIIF), The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Impact Investor Council (IIC) and so....., but still Dalit and Tribal social entrepreneurs are facing the challenges like;

- a. Problem in conveying the Business Idea
- b. Attracting donors
- c. Working remotely
- d. Hiring / getting work force
- e. Time availability
- f. Fund grabbing / raising
- g. Support from the Market / Business People
- h. Approval from the Concern authority / government
- i. Product quality Maintenance
- j. Continuity / sustaining of employees
- k. Market demand and Competition from other
- l. Awareness Promotion
- m. Availability and acquiring technology.

## 6. Conclusion:

The social entrepreneur's main focus is the social and environmental well being. When a social entrepreneur sees a problem in the environment, community or ways of the people, they take action toward helping solve that problem. Social entrepreneurs make the world a better place to live. The main goal of social entrepreneurship is not money or wealth; rather they prioritize more on serving the needs and wants of the community in a more resourceful way.

As said earlier the center theme of social entrepreneurship is promotion of well being of the society and bringing positive change, which is required for the betterment of socio – economic empowerment of tribals and Dalits. Instead of reviewing statistics and discussing about policies let us change our mind set towards Dalits and Tribes and let change their mind set towards self empowerment. Let us allow them to enjoy equity, equality, social justice and equal opportunities which are fruits of social entrepreneurship.

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