

## **The Reformers of the Society**

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### **Abstract**

India has the world's second largest labour force of 516.3 million people and although hourly wage rates in India have more than doubled over the past decade, the latest World Bank report states that approximately 350 million people in India currently live below the poverty line. With an estimated population of 1.2 billion people, this means that every third Indian is bereft of even necessities like nutrition, education and health care and many are still blighted by unemployment and illiteracy. Therefore, here come the reformers of the society - Social Entrepreneurs they can help to alleviate these issues by putting those less fortunate on a path towards a worthwhile life. Rather than leaving societal needs to the government or business sectors, they can solve the problem by changing the system. This article strives to mark down some of the characteristics of the Social Entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** Innovative, Opportunistic, Passionate, Social Entrepreneurs

### **Introduction**

The past two decades have seen an explosion of entrepreneurship and a healthy competition in the social sector, which has discovered what the business sector learned from the railroad, the stock market and the digital revolution: Nothing is as powerful as a big new idea if it is in the hands of a first class entrepreneur.

A social entrepreneur identifies and solves social problems on a large scale. Just as business entrepreneurs create and transform whole industries, social entrepreneurs act as the change agents for society, seizing opportunities others miss in order to improve systems, invent and disseminate new approaches and advance sustainable solutions that create social value.

Unlike traditional business entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs primarily seek to generate "social value" rather than profits. And unlike the majority of non-profit organizations, their work is targeted not only towards immediate, small-scale effects, but sweeping, long-term change.

### **The Real Heroes**

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, a sister organization of the World Economic Forum, in partnership with the Jubilant Bhartia Foundation announced Chetna Vijay Sinha, Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank and Mann Deshi Foundation, as the winner of the 2013 Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEYOY)-India award. Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank and Mann Deshi Foundation, headquartered in Mhaswad, Maharashtra, aspires to create 1 million rural women entrepreneurs in India by 2020. The group manages three institutions that together help create alternate livelihoods and incomes for rural women: a women-owned rural cooperative bank that extends a range of financial services; a rural mobile MBA school

that offers skill and entrepreneurship training; and a chamber of commerce that facilitates market and policy linkages.

It is inspiring to know the social entrepreneurs are encouraged and awarded for the work done to the society at the same time there are others who also contribute to welfare of the society to name some them.

At Thenur village, about 40 km from Trichy, in Perambalur district, one of the most backward districts in Tamil Nadu, is Senthil Kumar Gopalan, a mechanical engineer who returned to India after quitting his high paying job in the US, is working for change. The good news is that the winds of development are already blowing in the village. One needs courage, determination, and plenty of devotion to stay in a place like this and work for the community. Senthil appears to have all of it. The US \$90,000 annual package that he was earning could not keep him bound in foreign shores, as he listened to his inner voice and decided to return to India to work in the villages, inspired by the lives of Gandhi, Vivekananda and Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

He quit his job as a physics professor to educate the residents of Chennai the importance of saving water. His tireless efforts bore fruit when J Jayalalithaa, the then chief minister of Tamil Nadu made rainwater-harvesting compulsory for all the properties in Chennai, a first in India. For his unique efforts in 2003, he was made an Ashoka Fellow. Ashoka Fellows are selected from all over the world who work at the grassroots level. In 2010, the Harmony for Silvers (founded by Anil Ambani's wife, Tina) selected him as one of the ten recipients of Silver. This time, the award was for his work in the field of sanitation. He was called the Inventor of Ecological Sanitation. he is real hero aged 64 Dr Sekhar Raghavan.

In 1979 Francis founded the Integrated Village Development Programme (IVDP). The organization began small with a night school and a first-aid centre in Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu. IVDP started out with small projects like conducting night schools in the light of gas lamps and setting up a first-aid centre. Today, IVDP is majorly into SHG, health and hygiene and education. When Mr.Kulandei heard about poverty and starvation in rural India, he decided to make a difference in the society with his experience he has had over the years. For this one particular community who lived in reserved forest, he recalls they use to eat roots and whatever they could find in the forest which was making them ill and thus increasing the death rate. Today if you visit the same village, the village is completely different. Today there is a school, a bore well to drink clean water and the village is now motorable from Hosur whereas years back one had to walk 20kms from the nearest town to the village.

### **Characteristics of Social Entrepreneurs**

The above mentioned some of the social entrepreneurs are successful as the inculcated the following in them

#### **Solution Orientated**

Social entrepreneurs are constantly striving to create change with limited resources. This can best be accomplished through innovation and creativity. These are constant themes – innovative or disruptive solutions, creative imagination, unconventional ideas and solutions. To be effective, the solutions need to be practical.

### **Strong Self-Belief**

Enterprise is not for the shrinking violets of the world. You need to have a strong belief in yourself and what you are doing. This will arm you against all the rejections and setbacks that you will encounter. The self-belief is what inspires and often frustrates others, but without it, no enterprise would take off.

### **Tenacity**

You need to refuse to give up. You need the ability to keep going against the odds. You should be able to pick yourself up after every knock down and continue as if nothing has happened.

### **Innovative**

Entrepreneurs have the ability to challenge the status quo and come up with new and better solutions to address social or environmental problems. They have the ability to shrug off constraints and are not tied down to specific ideologies or disciplines.

### **Opportunistic**

Entrepreneurs often see and exploit opportunities that others miss. You need the ability to challenge everything and every way things are done – the questioning often generates an opportunity possibly a new way of delivering a service or creating a product. The successful entrepreneur will pursue an opportunity regardless of the resources currently available to them.

### **Passionate**

By their very nature, social entrepreneurs are passionate about what they do. Entrepreneurs are driven people. It is this passion, which engages and motivates people around them. Successful social entrepreneurs are infectious with their ideas. They have a zeal for what they do and they carry others with them. They are naturally optimistic. They believe in the vision they have created.

### **Calculated Risk Takers**

Entrepreneurs tend to be risk takers. Generally, the existence of risk does not deter an entrepreneur, where others may well decide to walk away. However, blind risk taking is normally a recipe for disaster in an entrepreneurial setting. Successful entrepreneurs understand how to measure (intuitively or formally) the balance between risk and reward and, on the basis of this, will make their calculated decision.

### **Expertise**

Social entrepreneurs are usually experts in their field. This allows them the ability to know when there is a time for change and also allows them to spot the opportunities.

### **Focused**

Successful entrepreneurs remain focussed on the change they want to create. They do not give up. They are constantly seeking to improve the system.

### **Good Communicators**

Entrepreneurs influence the people they meet to get them helping them with their enterprise. They inspire and motivate people so that they willingly support the entrepreneur's vision. Entrepreneurs are good networkers.

### **Impatient**

Social entrepreneurs are impatient. This is normally why they challenge the status quo and want to change things.

### **Strong Leaders**

Social entrepreneurs are able to lead and inspire others. Their energy and work ethic borders on heroic and challenges others to keep up with them. They know how to get the best out of others by getting them excited about the big vision, whilst making sure everyone stays focused and on mission.

### **Resourceful**

With limited resources social entrepreneurs know how to make the most of what they have or influence others to help. They are good at mobilising human, political and financial resources.

### **Conclusion**

Social entrepreneurs are not born they are made. **Former President Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam** has rightly said that Educationists should build the capacities of the spirit of inquiry, creativity, entrepreneurial and moral leadership among students and become their role model". Thus, it is vivid and clear that developing social entrepreneurs lies in the hands of educational institutions that need to make drastic changes in the education system to develop the social consciousness and thirst among the students, which will enable them to create a better society to live in and live for the subaltern of the society.

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