

Spiritual Growth and Social Entrepreneurship: Understanding the integration of spirituality and social entrepreneurial process

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Abstract

The business world today is moving from capitalism to social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs view a social mission as an explicit and central one than following the path of individual wealth creation. Seizing opportunities and utilizing resources are the key factors that influencing entrepreneurial process. Entrepreneur's belief system is shaped or process of interpretation that makes entrepreneurs pursue solutions to social problems. Transcends from wealth creators to social warriors may be explained by focusing on their spiritual orientation (Ganzin, Islam, & Suddaby, 2020). The objective of the study is to explore the connection of spirituality development to social entrepreneurial process of social entrepreneurs. The paper offers a new theoretical conceptualization in relation to understanding how spiritual growth influences social entrepreneurs. Thus, the paper tries to build up the relationship between spiritual growth and social entrepreneurial process. As such, our paper strengthen the existing social entrepreneurship theory by introducing the spirituality dimension to the cognitive process and highlights the trigger points related to social entrepreneurial behavior that transcendence individual wealth creation. Furthermore, the linkage between the attributes of social entrepreneurial process and spiritual development phases is an eye opening to both spiritual and entrepreneurial studies.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, Spiritual growth, Entrepreneurial process

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is considered as a most prominent solution for uplifting lower income and resource limited communities (Dabson, 2001). As Aldrich and Cliff (2003) suggest entrepreneurship can be defined as the discovering and exploiting process of new business opportunities. Moreover, in the opinion of Kuratko (2009) entrepreneurship is known as generating wealth in changing processes. Furthermore, he argues that the wealth creation is done by value addition to product or service with the risk of equity, time, and career commitment. In the presence of entrepreneur or the skill of entrepreneurship the original product or service may or may not be invention /innovation but there is a value addition through the allocation of necessary skills and resources (Ronstadt, 1984).

Today the business leaders shift the organizational purpose and relationships towards social capital (Deloitte, 2018). According to global survey today about 65% of CEOs of leading organizations agreed upon “inclusive growth” (which includes relationship with workers, customers and communities as well impact on society at large). The current scenario of economy is showing the transformation from capitalism towards social entrepreneurship, was argued intensively by Michael Porter (Driver, 2012). Michael porter specifically mentioned that ignoring of customer necessity by disregarding resource utilization, logistics and energy, was the fundamental misled error of current financial market. Therefore, social entrepreneurial approach in businesses play vital role. Thus the contribution of social entrepreneurship highly recognized in terms of wealth creation via social, economic, cultural and environmental (Darshani, 2015). Psychological wellbeing is one of the key factor to keep society reliable to cope with community collaboration, networks and successful personal lives. Even in commercial world business leaders try to shift the organizational purpose more towards recognizing social capital. Spirituality is a powerful element of human mind to create better community and society. However, integration between spiritual formation and social entrepreneurial process is scarcely explored.

Although, the studies on spiritual development in social entrepreneurial approach are limited, the present study contributes to existing literature of both spirituality and social entrepreneurship by revealing how social entrepreneurs adopt spirituality in upcoming social entrepreneurial sector in emerging economies. Therefore, the research is focused on theoretical approach of “How does the spiritual development integrate with social entrepreneurial process in developing a successful social entrepreneur?”

The objective of the study is to explore the connection of spirituality development to social entrepreneurial process of social entrepreneurs.

The study was carried out solely as a secondary research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The nature of social entrepreneurship

In resource poor conditions, an entrepreneur can perform well because of their ability to be creative with limited resources (Pyysiäinen *et al.*, 2006). The best way of observing true value of entrepreneurial behavior is when resources and opportunities are in the most scarce situations (Kodithuwakku & Rosa, 2002). Thus, in the heart of entrepreneurship lies the concept of ‘opportunity’, and the process of pursuing such opportunities without much regard to the resources entrepreneurs currently control (Dees, 1998). As Aldrich and Cliff (2003) suggest entrepreneurship can be defined as the process by which people discover and exploit new business opportunities. The product or service itself may or may not be new or unique but value added by the entrepreneur is carried through allocating necessary skills and resources (Ronstadt, 1984). Entrepreneurs mobilize their existing resources and the resources of others to achieve their entrepreneurial objectives, which is related to wealth creation. Moreover, in the opinion of Kuratko (2009) entrepreneurship is known as the “dynamic process of creating incremental wealth”.

However, not all entrepreneurs have the same mission, i. e. individual creating wealth. There are others who view a social mission as an explicit and central one than following the path of individual wealth creation. They are called ‘social entrepreneurs’. As Dacin, Dacin & Matear (2010) posit social entrepreneurs are identified using four factors such as the characteristic of individual social entrepreneurs, the process and resources utilized, operating sector and the primary mission and outcome. Seelos & Mair (2005) state that the social entrepreneurship integrates the resource availability to be an entrepreneur on traditional concept with the serving the community to uplift in social entrepreneurship. Thus, the present paper discusses the social entrepreneurial process and resources in detail as the most of the definitions of social entrepreneurship immensely evaluate the entrepreneurial process along with the operating sector (Dacin, Dacin & Matear, 2010).

Drayton (2002) Alvord, Brown & Letts (2004) state the social entrepreneurship as sustainable social transformations using ideas, capacities, resources and social arrangements through innovative solutions to immediate social problem. Dart (2004) states that the difference of conventional meaning for social entrepreneurship in terms of strategy, structure, norms, and values and contemporary understanding of nonprofit sector. The author further elaborates moral legitimacy of social enterprises linked not only with overall emergence of social enterprise but also with its pro- business, pro- markets and values. Drayton (2002) put forward that there is no existence of social entrepreneurs without powerful radical thinking with creativity, widespread impact, entrepreneurial quality and strong ethical mentality. Mort, Weerawardena & Carnegie (2003) defined the social

entrepreneurship as ‘a multidimensional construct involving the expression of entrepreneurially virtuous behavior to achieve the social mission, a coherent unity of purpose and action in the face of moral complexity, the ability to recognize social value creating opportunities and key decision making characteristics of innovativeness, proactiveness and risk- taking’ (p.76). Their behavior is shaped by the social mission, long term sustainability, and environmental dynamics (Dwivedi and Weerawardena, 2018). Guided by the ethical and moral obligations, thriving social enterprises have the capacity to address the social issue which has impact to the community or society by providing high results to the people (Dees, 2008; Pless, 2012). Desa and Basu (2013) emphasise the resource based view to explore the scale of social entrepreneurial social impact by understanding the interaction of resources and capabilities to achieve welfare and well- being of target community.

The social entrepreneurial process

To be an entrepreneur, the individual goes through the entrepreneurial process. The entrepreneurial process attributes are same for social entrepreneurs as well. Entrepreneurial process is composed of identifying opportunity, assessing and acquiring necessary resources to implement (Morris, Lewis & Sexton, 1994). Opportunity identification is central to the domain of entrepreneurship (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). Entrepreneurial process will collapse in the absence of opportunity or key resources (Morris *et al*, 1994). Thus, opportunities are something that exists on paper or as an idea (Muzyka & Birley, 1997). Ardichvili *et al.* (2003) mention that a successful entrepreneur first identifies the opportunity and then create a value for stakeholders. The authors further elaborate that opportunities are created or recognized but not naturally found. He further suggests that realized opportunities can be turned into profitable and functioning businesses and opportunity in practical terms will result in financial profit. And entrepreneurial opportunities are spawned through the emergence of demand for new products and markets (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000) or emergence of new processes and ways of organizing (Abrahamson, 1996) when environmental changes create information gaps (Timmons, 1999). Emerging of new business opportunities is the first step in the entrepreneurial process. Secondly, the creation of new business ventures is generated through resource mobilization in the entrepreneurial process. Dimov (2010) explains the difference between new entrepreneurs and already emerged entrepreneurs. The author states that the emerging ventures move towards more complex situations in terms of organizational actors, resources and stakeholders than the nascent entrepreneurs. However, Alvarez and Barney (2005) emphasize that uncertainty in new market opportunities create high risk transitions for small businesses who become large or emerging. Thus

seizing opportunities and utilizing resources are the key factors that influencing entrepreneurial process.

Although, substantial research supports the cognitive influence on the entrepreneurial process, we know little about the cognitive basis of how entrepreneur's belief system/worldview is shaped or process of interpretation that makes entrepreneurs pursue solutions to social problems. The reasons behind the transcends from wealth creators to social warriors may be explained by focusing on their spiritual orientation (Ganzin, Islam, & Suddaby, 2020). Raco (2018) emphasizes that the optimism of spirituality in entrepreneurial world leads the business advancement, fore-sighting the vision, keeping the business values active and coping with the stressful situations. Therefore, the author further states, spirituality becomes one of the contemporaneous triggering factor of launching a venture. The driving force of spirituality lies on the inner inspiration and the intrinsic commitment (Raco, 2018).

Spirituality has an effect on social entrepreneurship

Rindova, Barry & Ketchen (2009) state that for some entrepreneurs neither profit nor wealth is primary motivation to be an entrepreneur. Hence, phases towards the better changes of the society and community will create the entrepreneur. Dalai Lama (1999) (as cited in Kauanui, Thomas, Rubens & Sherman, 2010) defines the spirituality as qualities of human being which brings happiness to oneself and others where love and compassion, patience, forgiveness, contentment, a sense of harmony, a sense of responsibility concerned. Raco (2019) connotes the spirituality as 'feeling of being connected with one's work, with others and entire universe' (p. 31). The consciousness and thoughts of individual determine the oneself or "I" where the former assists in emergence of one's self and the later support the gaining of strength (Ulluwishewa, 2015). Thus, the spirituality has the linkage to one's self i.e mind, body and spirit. According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, the entrepreneurial mind set and behaviour is created through internal locus which concerns the internal state of the person and external locus which derives through the contextual variables (Raco, 2019). Spiritual side of individuals release high rate of inspiration that focuses mind to restore excitement and personal motivation (Tacey, 2004). The same author states that spirituality nurture the inner core of the person to life to be intellect. Thus the internal locus of control leads to high rate of inspiration

The spirit identification of spiritual self can be determined through the self/ psychological actualization. Psychological actualization of an individual builds the moral of the organization (Kauanui, Thomas, Rubens and Sherman, 2010). Thus, the spirituality transforms the love, affection and service of individual to others. Therefore, Kauanui, Thomas, Rubens and Sherman (2010) assert

that spirituality is an essence of recognizing identity (who they are), origin (where they come from) and retreat (where they going to go). They further mention spirituality empowers oneself with energy, passion, direction and meaning to both personal and occupational life. Spirituality denotes the relationship between the self and beyond the self (Welch & Koth, 2009). Spiritually successful entrepreneurs gain more sense of success in values than monetary benefit such as profit, market share or revenue. Kasser (2002) mentions that even financially successful individuals do not create happiness all the time. Kauanui, Thomas, Rubens and Sherman (2010) also put forward that individuals find joy and passion in their work, sense the spiritual connection to their work. Ashar and Lane- Maher (2004) conclude that four attributes of spiritually successful individuals i.e. sense of accomplishment, balance of work and family, contribution to society and contribution to employees. Kauanui, Thomas, Rubens and Sherman (2010) speculate that entrepreneurs' motivation has no effect to his/ her perceived economic stability.

Spirituality as the driving force of social entrepreneurship

We assert that spirituality holds the key in bridging this gap related to how entrepreneur's worldview is constructed. Entrepreneurial activity is a driving force for capitalism, and spirituality plays a significant role in entrepreneurial activity and spirituality-related entrepreneurship values (Dana, 2009). Spirituality has clear association with personal well-being which denotes the eight dimensions of satisfaction i.e. standards of living, health, life achievements, personal relationships, personal safety, groups, future security and spirituality or religion (Sarriera et al, 2014). Holistic wellness also conceptualized by interconnecting the dimensions of physical, emotional, mental, social, vocational and spiritual (Hamilton & Jackson, 1998). Ebert (1984) declares that spiritual dimension of health consists confidence, life force, moral, and ethical codes and enthusiasm. Social entrepreneurs exhibit sense of interconnectedness to all things; higher self-awareness and a relationship with a 'higher purpose. These are also the three key themes related to spirituality (Hamilton & Jackson, 1998). Thus, this conceptual paper intends to develop the understanding of the link between spiritual growth and social entrepreneurship, by using the relational phases of spiritual formation as suggested by Welch & Kent (2009). Thus the spirituality is an essential factor to be a successful social entrepreneur. The spiritual growth within the individual contributes to accomplish social enterprises gradual success. Sirine & Kurniawati (2018) states that spirituality assists in identifying untapped potentials of social ventures via utilizing creative and entrepreneurial talents.

Growth phases of spirituality

Spiritual growth has five distinct phases: unknown, awareness, connection, radicalization and integration. The degree of transcendence can vary within these phases of spiritual development as well as within the individuals/ entrepreneurs.

Unknown phase: is a static state where individual is unaware or is unsure of her own identify, values or purpose. The individuals as well do not understand the identity of the other persons who are outside to one's self (Welch & Koth, 2009). As they further elaborate "the other" does not imply someone who is inferior or alien. The individual with introvert characteristics or unaware of the world outside or narrow minded can be trapped in own world to think beyond is encountered at this stage. Ashar & Lane- Maher (2004) depicts that pure spirituality is formed within the individual which is personal, inner and deep domain which provide the experience of extraordinary calmness and happiness and the oneness with the universe.

Awareness Phase: eventually, the individual moves into a second phase of awareness of her 'self' and the presence of something outside her own existence (existence of a higher purpose). However, in this stage, the co- existence of self and other is fully aware and the interaction between two individuals do not happen.

Connection phase: the next phase occurs when there is connection between the self and the 'other'. The connection occurs with the competition or involvement with each other. Throughout the active process of this stage the reflection of existing of the other takes place. The thinking of adjusting and adapting strikes the mind of individual to thrive. This process leads the individual to transform oneself from "me" concept to "we" concept. By holding individual's personal identity, individual transforms him/ herself towards the "other" by challenging own attitudes, values and beliefs to facilitate the well- being of others.

Radicalization phase: this phase is manifested by a change in behavior and it is called "radicalization". It is the phase which moves the individual from existing person to new person where he/ she think and behave differently towards others betterment. Radicalization provides the individual to be socially and environmentally responsible. The individual who leaves the comfort zone to become new individual in terms of mind set to gets the opportunity to serve the community indirectly. The final phase of spirituality development is integration where the self is now part of something bigger. The individual transcends from being self- centered to striving towards meeting the needs and well-being of others (Welch & Koth, 2009). Welch & Koth (2009) state that individuals who retain with phase five of spirituality development, will eventually transcend their own needs and wants to the well- being of others.

The paper does not emphasize the relationship between the phases of spiritual development and the stages of social entrepreneurial process. However, spirituality development stages can affect any

attributes of social entrepreneurial process. In traditional entrepreneurial literature the weight for the spiritual values on entrepreneurial behaviour is insignificant. In recent past the research draw the attention towards integration of spirituality in work and work place (Kauanui et al, 2008). Mitroff & Denton (1999) mentions that spirituality is an interconnectedness of individual and it is highly personal. Thus work place play vital role in understanding individual's willingness for wholeness and integration where individuals seek purpose to their lives (De Valk, 1996). Spirituality at work incorporate mind, body and spirit of individuals to the working environment (Kauanui et al, 2008). Culture, values and people devise the personal contribution to the community and opportunity (Kauanui et al, 2008). Integrating individual inner being with organizational goals creates deep sense with co- workers and thereby providing meaningful contribution to the community. Kauanui et al (2008) passionate work of entrepreneurs is based on the personal cause which makes money and recognition as a by- product of the work.

Spiritual growth helps social entrepreneurs to engage in social entrepreneurial process successfully. Gandy (2016) puts forward that human beings are considered as spiritual beings by studying the decision making pattern. Individual's world view determines the fundamental beliefs of individuals and the position that is stipulated by the world on us. Sirine & Kurniawati (2018) connotes that entrepreneurial intention is the fundamental enacted behaviour of establishment of nascent businesses. Thus, the primary mission of social entrepreneurs to resolve social issues become the intention of forming a social enterprise. Think beyond the self of the spirituality development creates the platform for social entrepreneur to start the venture. Social entrepreneurs seize the opportunities by provisioning faith and compensation for others. As the researcher further elaborates that spiritual view of entrepreneurship by emphasizing risk taking ability of entrepreneurship can maximize spiritual virtue of individuals. The spiritual flavour of social entrepreneurs provides the common understanding between individual/s world view and action. Entrepreneurs with spiritual development encounter the spirituality while engaging in the business. They are not purposely be spiritual to be spiritual/ social entrepreneurs (Gandy, 2016).

CONCLUSION

This research paper intends to explain the indebtedness of spirituality in social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurial qualities encompass utilization of inspiration to serve vulnerable target, motivation to do direct actions, creativity, encouragement and secure sustained outcome for community. The researchers put forwards that social entrepreneurs are there to sustain social values by seizing new opportunities to serve the social mission, engaging in continuous innovation, adapting

to the changes through learning, acting smartly in resource scarce environment to achieve the goals without going backward and being accountable for resources utilized to create the outcome. The primary mission of the social venture (i.e. enhance social values/ solve the social issue/ achieve a social mission) that has the connection to others which go beyond the self, leads a social entrepreneur through spiritual growth. Therefore, the spirituality development of business individuals, opens the arena to be more successful social entrepreneurs by acknowledging existence of others and the nature.

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