

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC EQUITY FOR WOMEN IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship has emerged as an effective tool for promoting equitable and sustainable development, particularly in neglected communities. In India, where gender-based economic gaps continue despite policy initiatives, social entrepreneurship offers a novel approach to improving women's economic equity. This research paper investigates the multifaceted role that social entrepreneurship plays in promoting economic empowerment and equity for women from various socioeconomic origins in India. The study adopts a qualitative research methodology that involves analysing secondary data from peer-reviewed literature, government papers, international development agency publications, and documented case studies of Indian social entrepreneurs. The major goal is to look into how social entrepreneurship helps women gain access to income-generating possibilities, financial inclusion, skill development, and social mobility. The study also aims to identify the structural problems that these efforts encounter and offer solutions to increase their scalability and effectiveness. The findings show that social enterprises make a major contribution to reducing gender inequality by providing alternative livelihood opportunities, particularly in underserved rural and semi-urban areas. SEWA, Mann Deshi Foundation, and SELCO India have helped thousands of women become financially independent through initiatives such as microcredit, vocational training, and market connections. Social entrepreneurship models frequently include a strong community focus, incorporating components of education, health, leadership, and legal awareness, so contributing to holistic empowerment. However, despite their success at the grassroots level, many women-led or women-focused social enterprises encounter scaling challenges due to limited funding, insufficient legislative support, and societal hurdles. The study also identifies a considerable digital divide that limits rural women's engagement in technology-enabled businesses. Furthermore, patriarchal attitudes and a lack of family or community support frequently limit women's capacity to participate fully in entrepreneurial activity. The study emphasizes that the full potential of social entrepreneurship can only be achieved in a supportive ecosystem that includes the government, business sector, and civil society. Suggestions include improving capacity-building initiatives, increasing financial inclusion mechanisms, incorporating gender-sensitive policies, and fostering digital literacy. There is also a need for greater coordination between social enterprises and government initiatives such as the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Stand-Up India, and Mahila E-Haat. Finally, social entrepreneurship in India has proved the ability to improve women's roles in families and communities while also providing money. It promotes dignity, agency, and involvement, all of which are necessary for economic fairness. While challenges still exist, effective legislative interventions, technical advancements, and community participation can dramatically increase the impact of these businesses. This study confirms that empowering women through social entrepreneurship is not just an issue of social fairness, but also a crucial to achieving India's long-term developmental goals.

Research Objective: The primary objective is to analyse the contribution of social entrepreneurship to improving economic equity for women in India, focusing on skill development, financial independence, and community upliftment.

Research Question: How do social entrepreneurship initiatives promote economic equity for women in India, and what factors influence their success and scalability?

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, economic equity, women's empowerment, skill development, India, inclusive growth, financial inclusion, and gender equality.

Introduction

Economic equity for women is fundamental to sustainable development. Notwithstanding considerable advancements in recent decades, women in India still encounter inequalities in income, labor force engagement, and resource accessibility. Social entrepreneurship, defined by creative, inclusive, and sustainable strategies for tackling social concerns, has arisen as an effective means of confronting these disparities. Social businesses facilitate women's economic participation, therefore alleviating poverty, improving education, and promoting gender equality.

In recent decades, the debate around economic development in India has increasingly emphasized the importance of inclusive growth—growth that offers equitable opportunity for all segments of society, notably women. Despite

regulatory changes and other empowerment measures, women in India continue to confront structural and systemic impediments that prevent them from fully participating in the economy. From unequal access to education and financial resources to deeply ingrained gender norms, these obstacles have constrained women's economic freedom and perpetuated cycles of poverty and dependence. Amid these challenges, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a transformative force capable of closing the gender gap in economic participation. Social entrepreneurs—individuals and groups that use innovative, sustainable, and mission-driven approaches to social problems—are increasingly focusing on empowering women, particularly in neglected and rural areas. By combining financial expertise with a strong social mission, these companies generate economic possibilities, improve skills, and cultivate leadership among women, leading to a more fair economic landscape.

This paper investigates how social entrepreneurs function at the crossroads of social justice and market-based solutions, the distinct techniques they use to empower women, and the overall socioeconomic impact of their work. The study uses case studies, policy analysis, and empirical data to assess the efficacy of social entrepreneurship as a tool for promoting gender-inclusive economic development. Finally, this research hopes to contribute to a better understanding of how entrepreneurial innovation can challenge old assumptions and act as a catalyst for systemic change in the pursuit of economic justice for Indian women.

The paper examines the complex role of social entrepreneurship in promoting economic fairness for women in India. It emphasizes principal projects, evaluates their effects, and pinpoints opportunities for enhancement. Social entrepreneurship may enhance economic justice for women in India by offering resources and assistance to female entrepreneurs and by motivating women to establish social enterprises.

Social entrepreneurship has arisen as a potent tool for tackling structural imbalances, especially regarding gender inequality in India. Women in India encounter several economic obstacles, such as restricted access to education, financial resources, and career prospects. Social entrepreneurship provides new answers to these difficulties by integrating profit-oriented goals with social impact aims. This research examines the function of social entrepreneurship in advancing economic fairness for women in India. It analyses the obstacles encountered by women, the effective forms of social entrepreneurship, and legislative suggestions to amplify their influence.

Nevertheless, the paper will reveal how the enduring obstacles, such as cultural prejudices, insufficient money, and inadequate legislative backing, that impede the scaling of these projects social entrepreneurship has emerged as a transformative approach to addressing economic inequities, particularly for women in India. This study investigates the role of social entrepreneurship in promoting economic equity for women by examining its impact, challenges, and potential for scalability. The research aims to understand how social enterprises empower women economically, the barriers they face, and the strategies that can enhance their effectiveness.

Literature Review

Over the last two decades, the concept of social entrepreneurship has gained a lot of support in development discourse, especially as a means of addressing persistent inequities. Several scholars have attempted to define and contextualize social entrepreneurship, highlighting its distinct combination of innovation, social mission, and economic sustainability (Dees, 1998; Bornstein, 2007). While traditional entrepreneurship attempts to maximize profits, social entrepreneurship aims to provide social benefit, frequently focusing on underprivileged groups such as women, rural populations, and the differently abled.

Several studies have demonstrated the transforming value of social entrepreneurship in empowering women. According to Datta and Gailey (2012), social enterprises in India frequently take a grassroots approach, involving women not just as recipients but also as active participants and leaders in economic initiatives. These businesses create jobs, offer vocational training, and encourage financial independence, thereby raising women's social standing and decision-making authority in their households and communities. Yunus (2007) illustrated, using the Grameen model, how access to microfinance and entrepreneurial training may help women escape poverty and develop long-term community resilience. Similarly, Kabeer (2005) argues that economic empowerment must be complemented by social and psychological empowerment, something that many social enterprises inherently strive to address through holistic models.

There is a large amount of scholarship demonstrating that gender parity is not just a social but also an economic imperative. The World Bank (2012) emphasizes that bridging gender gaps in labor force participation and entrepreneurship might significantly enhance GDP in developing countries such as India. Social entrepreneurship, which promotes inclusive and participatory economic models, is consistent with this broader development objective. Sen (1999) underlines the significance of capability building in attaining true freedom and empowerment. To promote long-term change for women, social entrepreneurs in India sometimes use a capacities strategy that focuses on skill development, literacy, healthcare, and leadership.

Despite the promise, literature identifies hurdles for women-centric social enterprises. Battilana and Lee (2014) find structural contradictions between social mission and financial viability, which might cause operational difficulties. Gender biases in finance, patriarchal traditions, and insufficient state support frequently limit the scope and impact of these initiatives. Furthermore, Bansal (2011) observes that many programs are not scalable and suffer with impact measurement. Empirical research in India has identified several effective models of women-centric social enterprises. SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) is a well-known cooperative concept that provides microfinance, healthcare, and capacity-building to low-income women workers. SELCO India is another famous example, offering solar-powered livelihood solutions to rural female entrepreneurs. These case studies show how contextualized, community-driven models can provide both social and economic benefits.

Research Gap

While there is an increasing volume of research on social entrepreneurship and women's empowerment, there is still a scarcity of longitudinal studies examining long-term effects on economic fairness. Furthermore, there is little research on the impact of digital technology and new-age platforms in scaling these efforts for greater gender participation. There are few intersectional analyses that take into account caste, religion, and geographical variations in access to social entrepreneurship.

According to the literature, social entrepreneurship has the potential to significantly improve economic equity for women in India. To optimize its impact, more detailed, data-driven, and inclusive studies are required. This research emphasizes the importance of integrated approaches that combine innovation, community participation, and supportive legislative frameworks in ensuring that social enterprises become long-term tools of women's empowerment in India.

Methodology: This study uses a qualitative research methodology, mostly based on secondary data analysis, to investigate the impact of social entrepreneurship in creating economic parity for women in India. The secondary data approach is ideal for this research since it allows for a thorough understanding of current trends, policies, case studies, and theoretical frameworks on the issue.

Research Design: The research is both descriptive and analytical in nature. Its goal is to identify current patterns and examine how social enterprises contribute to women's economic empowerment. This includes investigating the structure, goals, problems, and outcomes of social entrepreneurship models for women.

- Sources for Secondary Data: The analysis is based on a variety of trustworthy secondary sources, including:
- Databases like JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate host academic journals and peer-reviewed articles.
- Government reports and publications by Indian ministries, including the Ministry of Women and Child Development, NITI Aayog, and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- Reports from international organizations such as the World Bank, UN Women, and the International Labour Organization (ILO), Case studies and evaluation reports of well-known Indian social enterprises like SEWA, SELCO, Goonj, and the Mann Deshi Foundation. Books and edited volumes in social entrepreneurship, gender studies, and development economics. News stories and policy briefs from credible media and research think tanks, such as ORF, PRS India, and Economic & Political Weekly.

Data Analysis Techniques

The secondary data is submitted to content and theme analysis.

- Content analysis involves interpreting linguistic data from policy documents, reports, and publications to find patterns, tactics, and results relevant to social entrepreneurship and economic fairness for women.
- Conducted thematic analysis to identify major topics in Indian social enterprises, including empowerment, skill development, access to capital, socio-cultural difficulties, and sustainability.

Validity and reliability

To ensure validity, only legitimate, peer-reviewed, or government-approved sources are used. Triangulation is the process of comparing different sources to cross-check data. This improves the dependability and trustworthiness of findings.

Limitations

- Secondary data may not contain recent or localized insights from faraway places.
- Some social enterprises may have limited quantitative effect data, which is not publicly available.
- Without primary data, the study's interpretation may fail to convey individual experiences.

Ethical considerations

All secondary sources are properly cited, and academic integrity is upheld throughout the research process. There is no usage of any personally identifiable information. This methodology allows the researcher to combine a wide range of data and present a thorough, evidence-based knowledge of how social entrepreneurship contributes to economic fairness for women in India. Social businesses may provide women skills training, resources, and assistance to engage in entrepreneurial endeavours.

- A supportive policy framework can motivate women to establish social enterprises and engage in the social economy.
- Women entrepreneurs can motivate other women to establish enterprises, resulting in increased employment creation for women.
- Women entrepreneurs substantially contribute to economic growth and employment creation. Women-led ventures employ more than 27 million workers in India.

Advancing gender equality: Assisting women in their business pursuits can facilitate societal progress towards gender parity. Social entrepreneurs provide innovative concepts and methodologies for resolving social concerns, potentially resulting in significant advancements in tackling challenges such as poverty, education, healthcare, and social justice. The Present State of Women's Economic Equity in India Gender Inequalities in Economic Engagement India performs poorly on international gender equity indexes, indicating substantial disparities in women's economic involvement.

Principal concerns encompass:

- Labor Force Participation: The World Bank reported that female labor force participation in India was at 19.2% in 2021.
- Wage Disparity: Women, on average, earn 20% less than males for comparable labor.
- Access to Resources: Women's access to financing, property ownership, and business networks is still constrained.
- Structural Obstacles: Patriarchal norms frequently inhibit women's pursuit of economic autonomy. Education and Skill Development: Women exhibit lower literacy rates and possess limited access to vocational training possibilities.

- Policy Deficiencies: Although several government efforts are in place, their execution is sometimes irregular.

Women's entrepreneurship in India has been progressively increasing, with a rising number of women entering the business sector. Notwithstanding several hurdles, women entrepreneurs in India have substantially contributed to the economy and society. Historically, women in India have participated in small-scale and informal enterprises; nevertheless, there has been a significant transition towards women engaging in bigger and more innovative entrepreneurial endeavours.

Multiple causes have facilitated the ascent of women entrepreneurs in India, encompassing elevated educational attainment among women, shifts in societal standards, and governmental programs aimed at fostering women's entrepreneurship. Women in India are increasingly establishing enterprises across several areas, including technology, healthcare, fashion, and social entrepreneurship, demonstrating their expertise, inventiveness, and resolve.

Nevertheless, women entrepreneurs in India continue to encounter other challenges, such as societal standards, limited access to financing, insufficient mentorship, and the need to reconcile professional and familial obligations. Confronting these hurdles and establishing a more conducive environment for women entrepreneurs is essential for their sustained success and the broader economic advancement of the nation. Studying and comprehending the distinct obstacles and opportunities encountered by women entrepreneurs in India is crucial for formulating effective strategies for their empowerment and progress in the entrepreneurial sphere.

Examining the obstacles and prospects for women entrepreneurs is essential for several reasons. Initially, it is essential to comprehend the distinct challenges that women encounter in the entrepreneurial sphere, including cultural expectations, financial accessibility, and the equilibrium between professional and familial obligations.

Identifying these difficulties enables the development of effective support systems and solutions to solve them. Secondly, examining the options accessible to women entrepreneurs is crucial for maximizing their potential contributions to the economy. Women contribute varied views, inventions, and competencies to the business sector; acknowledging and fostering these opportunities may provide advantages for both female entrepreneurs and the economy at large. Consequently, examining the obstacles and possibilities faced by women entrepreneurs is essential for advancing gender equality, stimulating economic growth, and establishing a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial environment. It allows authorities, organizations, and people to execute focused plans that enable women to thrive in entrepreneurship and make significant contributions to society.

Statistics and trends on women's entrepreneurship in India demonstrate a favourable trajectory, with a growing number of women engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Recent data indicates a consistent rise in the number of women entrepreneurs in India, reflecting an expanding trend of female engagement in economic operations. This alteration is ascribed to several sources, including evolving societal standards, more access to education, and governmental measures fostering female entrepreneurship. Despite facing challenges, female entrepreneurs in India are achieving significant advancements and contributing to the country's economic growth.

Data and trends highlight the necessity of more research and assistance for women entrepreneurs to realize their full potential and promote equitable economic growth in India. The Indian government has instituted programs and policies to support women entrepreneurs. Diverse initiatives, like Stand-Up India, offer financial assistance to underserved women entrepreneurs.

The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana provides loans to women-owned microenterprises to facilitate the initiation or expansion of their operations. The government has established specific platforms, such as the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), to offer networking opportunities, mentorship, and resource access for women entrepreneurs.

PM Vishwakarma loans are a form of financial aid provided to craftsmen, artisans, and small-scale entrepreneurs, particularly in rural regions, to bolster their enterprises and foster economic empowerment. In the realm of women's empowerment, Vishwakarma loans can substantially facilitate women craftsmen and entrepreneurs in

initiating or expanding their enterprises, generating income, and achieving financial independence. These loans enable women to get essential funds for investing in their trade or company, acquiring raw materials, tools, and equipment, or expanding their market presence.

Vishwakarma loans facilitate women's economic empowerment, fostering their social and financial autonomy, elevating their quality of life, and augmenting their standing within their communities. Self-help groups (SHGs) are crucial in women's empowerment by offering a forum for women to unite, support one another, and strive for economic independence. These clubs often have 10-20 members who aggregate their resources, jointly preserve funds, and extend modest loans to members for diverse income-generating endeavors. Self-help groups (SHGs) facilitate women's financial autonomy while enhancing their self-esteem, decision-making capabilities, and leadership competencies.

Participation in SHGs provides women with training in several areas, including financial management, entrepreneurship, and leadership, therefore augmenting their empowerment. Studies indicate that women involved in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) exhibit elevated self-esteem, improved access to resources, and enhanced decision-making authority within their homes (Mahato, 2023). Furthermore, SHGs have been linked to enhancements in women's general well-being, health, and educational attainment.

Bank linkage loans in India denote loans extended by banks to self-help groups (SHGs) or microfinance organizations, which subsequently allocate the cash to individual women entrepreneurs. These loans are intended at empowering women by giving them with access to financial resources to establish or develop their enterprises, better their livelihoods, and become economically independent. The notion of bank linkage loans for women's empowerment in India gained traction with the establishment of self-help organizations in the 1980s and 1990s. These groups, primarily composed of women from underprivileged areas, aggregate their funds and secure loans from banks to fulfill their financial requirements. The loans are frequently utilized for income-generating endeavors, including small-scale agriculture, handicrafts, and commerce. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has been instrumental in facilitating bank linkage loans to enhance women's empowerment in India. NABARD collaborates with banks and microfinance institutions to enhance the provision of loans to self-help groups, especially those consisting of women.

Expanding market prospects for women entrepreneurs in India pertain to the developing business environment that presents many sectors and industries for women to build and expand their enterprises. The growing emphasis on women's empowerment and gender diversity in entrepreneurship has led to an increased demand for products and services tailored exclusively for women, hence generating niche markets for women entrepreneurs to exploit. Furthermore, the Indian market is seeing a transition towards inclusive and sustainable business practices, creating opportunities for women entrepreneurs who emphasize social and environmental effect in their enterprises. Furthermore, advancements in technology and internet commerce have enabled women to extend their reach to a wider audience and strengthen their market position without facing traditional obstacles.

The expanding market prospects in India provide women entrepreneurs a favourable environment to develop their company concepts, innovate, and expand their enterprises, while making substantial contributions to the economy and positively influencing society. The supporting environment for startups is essential for promoting the growth and success of women entrepreneurs in India. This ecosystem comprises incubators, accelerators, networking platforms, and investment possibilities particularly designed to promote women-led enterprises. These services provide women entrepreneur's mentorship, training, and support to address the problems of initiating and expanding a firm. Furthermore, measures include government programs, corporate collaborations, and women-centric entrepreneurship initiatives provide a supportive environment for the success of women entrepreneurs. By utilizing this enabling environment, women entrepreneurs in India may seize new market possibilities and achieve their full potential in the commercial realm. The growing awareness and acceptance of women in business are essential for the prospects available to women entrepreneurs in India.

As cultural perspectives transform and prejudices are contested, increased opportunities are emerging for women to enter and thrive in the corporate realm. There is an increasing recognition of the substantial contributions women

make to the economy through their entrepreneurial activities. This shift in perspective is creating a more favourable environment for female entrepreneurs, leading to increased access to resources, networks, and opportunities. The emergence of successful women entrepreneurs is positively transforming the narrative surrounding women in business. Government measures, corporate diversity programs, and advocacy activities contribute to enhancing awareness and fostering acceptance of women in business. India is seeing a change in entrepreneurship by embracing diversity and encouraging women to follow their entrepreneurial ambitions, with women increasingly contributing to innovation and economic progress.

Social Entrepreneurship: A Catalyst for Change Characterizing Social Entrepreneurship Social entrepreneurship entails the utilization of commercial concepts to attain social objectives. In contrast to conventional firms, social enterprises emphasize social effect in addition to financial viability.

Principal Attributes Inclusivity: Social companies frequently prioritize underprivileged populations, especially women.

Innovation: They utilize technology and innovative business structures to tackle systemic challenges. Sustainability: These enterprises seek enduring influence by reallocating earnings towards their objectives.

Case Analyses of Social Entrepreneurship in India

Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA): SEWA is a labor union that empowers self-employed women via collective bargaining, skill enhancement, and financial inclusion.

It possesses:

- Facilitated financial freedom for nearly 2 million women.
- Facilitated access to microfinance and insurance.

Emerging Markets

This social venture aims to empower rural women by educating them as solar energy entrepreneurs.

Principal effects encompass:

- Improved earnings prospects for more than 10,000 women.
- Enhanced energy accessibility for rural families.

Mann Deshi Foundation:

Mann Deshi provides financial literacy initiatives, vocational training, and microfinance services to women in rural areas.

Accomplishments encompass:

Establishing more than 8,000 enterprises run by women.

- Disbursing loans totalling \$50 million.
- Obstacles Encountered by Social Enterprises:
- Monetary Limitations: Social companies sometimes have difficulties in obtaining capital because of their hybrid character, which integrates social objectives with profit generation.
- Expansion and Viability: Numerous social firms have challenges in expanding their operations while upholding their social goal.
- Obstacles in Policy and Regulation: The legislative environment for social businesses in India is still developing, resulting in ambiguities over taxation, funding, and operations.

Policy Recommendations:

- Enhancing Financial Assistance: The government need to furnish targeted subsidies and incentives for social companies centred on women.

- Access to Credit: Financial institutions ought to develop gender-sensitive lending options.
- Training Programs: Need collaborations between social enterprises and educational institutions to deliver vocational training for women.
- Digital Literacy: Foster digital competencies to empower women to engage in the digital economy.
- Social Enterprise Legislation: Establish explicit regulations for the registration and operation of social companies.
- Impact Measurement: Standardize measures to evaluate the social effect of companies.

Economic Equity and Social Entrepreneurship for Women

Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a key driver of inclusive development in India, particularly among underrepresented groups such as women. Its goal is not simply to create jobs, but also to promote economic equity by assuring equal access to income, resources, and opportunities for women who have historically faced economic and social exclusion. In a society with widespread gender discrepancies in employment, earnings, and asset ownership, social entrepreneurship plays an increasingly important role in attaining economic fairness. This research paper investigates how social enterprises might reduce economic inequality and build long-term empowerment for women in India.

Social entrepreneurship has enormous potential for promoting economic fairness by providing inclusive and transformative possibilities for women. It empowers them not only economically, but also socially and politically, contributing to the correction of historical disparities in resource access and decision-making authority. To fully realize this potential, India's gender-inclusive growth requires a stronger commitment to equity-driven approaches and policies across time.

Furthermore, the concept of economic fairness contributes to assessing the larger impact of social entrepreneurship on gender justice. It assesses success not only by the amount of employment produced, but also by how those occupations affect the socioeconomic status of women in their families and communities.

In this study, economic fairness is not only a goal, but also a lens through which to evaluate the efficacy of social entrepreneurship. It clarifies whether the activities are inclusive, durable, and transformative for women from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

The pursuit of economic fairness serves as both a motivator and a metric of social entrepreneurship's success. Even well-intentioned entrepreneurial initiatives run the risk of reproducing existing disparities unless they ensure equitable access and outcomes. Thus, economic equity remains the most relevant and crucial metric for assessing the true impact of social entrepreneurship on women in India.

Economic fairness is a prominent issue in this research paper, emphasizing the significance of equitable and inclusive access to economic opportunities for all individuals, particularly women, who have historically been marginalized in India's economic development narrative. This article examines how social entrepreneurship can help to address the gender gap in economic involvement, income distribution, resource access, and decision-making.

In India, economic fairness entails not only equal income or job possibilities, but also addressing structural disadvantages—such as a lack of education, financial exclusion, and cultural barriers—that keep women from achieving financial independence. societal entrepreneurship strives to address such systemic societal concerns through innovative, sustainable, and community-driven ways.

Analysis and Interpretation:

This part provides a thematic analysis and interpretation of secondary data sourced from academic literature, institutional reports, and case studies. The findings are divided into main categories that represent how social entrepreneurship promotes economic fairness for women in India.

- **Employment and Livelihood Generation:** One of the most important contributions of social entrepreneurship to women's economic empowerment is the establishment of job and income opportunities. Organizations such as SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) and the Mann Deshi Foundation have integrated thousands of women into self-help organizations, cooperatives, and micro-enterprises, providing them with long-term economic opportunities. These platforms provide vocational training, access to raw materials, and market connections, allowing women to achieve self-reliance. Social enterprises have been beneficial in reducing unemployment among women, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. By focusing on skill development and entrepreneurship, these initiatives promote not only income generation but also long-term financial independence, which is essential for economic equity.
- **Access to Finance and Microcredit:** Historically, women's economic engagement has been limited due to a lack of credit. Many social enterprises have tackled this issue through microfinance and microcredit programs designed exclusively for women. The Grameen model, which has been adopted in many Indian contexts, enables women to obtain small loans without requiring collateral, frequently through peer-supported repayment mechanisms. Social entrepreneurship concepts enable more economic engagement by removing traditional financial constraints. Women who were previously barred from official financial institutions now could create and grow small companies, enhancing their bargaining power in both domestic and community settings.
- **Capacity Building and Skill Development:** Social enterprises frequently offer non-formal education and vocational training in fields like tailoring, food processing, digital literacy, renewable energy, and artisan crafts. SELCO India, for example, not only offers solar energy solutions but also trains rural women to become solar technicians and entrepreneurs. Interpretation: Skill development serves as the foundation for empowerment. These efforts improve employability, boost self-confidence, and assist women in transitioning from unskilled jobs to more valuable and sustainable economic activity.
- **Social Inclusion and Community Leadership:** Social entrepreneurship promotes inclusive activities beyond economics. Many organizations include social awareness, health education, legal literacy, and leadership training in their programs. Goonj, for example, prioritizes resource recycling and menstrual hygiene while empowering women to take on leadership responsibilities. Interpretation: Economic equity requires social transformation. Women's participation in decision-making and community leadership challenges established gender roles and influences broader society norms, resulting in more inclusive development outcomes.
- **Challenges with Scaling and Sustainability:** Despite their success, many women-focused social enterprises face challenges with scaling, finance, and long-term viability. According to studies (Battilana & Lee, 2014), there is often a trade-off between preserving social impact and guaranteeing financial sustainability. In addition, patriarchal customs, a lack of infrastructure, and limited access to technology frequently stymie expansion. Social companies have a positive influence at the grassroots level, but scaling operations requires institutional support. Stronger policy frameworks, public-private collaborations, and digital innovation can help overcome these constraints, expanding the accessibility and efficacy of such projects.
- **Policy and Institutional Support:** Stand-Up India, Mahila E-Haat, and the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) are government initiatives that aim to support women entrepreneurs. However, their performance is frequently dependent on implementation and collaboration with social enterprises. Social entrepreneurs bridge the gap between policy aim and impact at the ground level. Working closely with local communities and understanding grassroots realities can assist in translating government plans into actual possibilities for women.

Findings

Based on the examination of secondary data, literature, and case studies, the following important findings emerge about the significance of social entrepreneurship in advancing economic parity for women in India:

- **Social entrepreneurship provides meaningful economic opportunities for women:** Social businesses offer women—particularly those from rural and underprivileged communities—opportunities for income production through employment, self-employment, and entrepreneurship. Initiatives such as SEWA, the Mann Deshi Foundation, and Rangсутra have demonstrated that community-based approaches can enable significant numbers of women to participate in both the formal and informal economies. Social entrepreneurship improves women's economic involvement and reduces gender-based barriers to employment.
- **Access to finance is an important enabler of women's empowerment:** Many social companies use microfinance, savings groups, and loans into their business structures. These financial services enable women to start and sustain small enterprises without relying on traditional male-dominated banking systems. Social enterprises provide women with access to microcredit and financial literacy, leading to greater financial independence and resilience.
- **Skill Development and Capacity Building are Critical to Sustainable Empowerment:** Social entrepreneurship frequently incorporates non-formal education and vocational training. Women learn tailoring, handicrafts, agriculture, renewable energy, and digital services, which increases their market competitiveness. Research indicates that developing skills through social enterprises improves women's employability, confidence, leadership, and decision-making abilities.
- **Social entrepreneurship promotes social inclusion and leadership:** Beyond economic impact, social entrepreneurship promotes social empowerment by encouraging community leadership engagement, fostering gender equality, and tackling concerns such as education, health, and human rights. Social entrepreneurship combines economic growth and social inclusion to empower women and increase their visibility in communities.
- **Structural and cultural barriers persist:** Despite advancements, women-led or women-focused social enterprises confront several challenges, including insufficient finance, inadequate infrastructure, gender bias, and difficulties scaling operations. External obstacles such as patriarchal attitudes, limited access to financing, and inadequate government assistance might hinder the growth and impact of social entrepreneurship.
- **Partnerships with the government and non-governmental organizations Enhance Impact:** Collaborations between social entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government programs (NRLM, Stand-Up India) increase reach and sustainability. However, integration is typically disjointed and varies by location. Effective cooperation between social entrepreneurs and public policy frameworks is crucial for scaling and sustaining women-centric economic ventures.
- **Digital Technology: An Emerging Tool for Inclusion:** Some modern social entrepreneurs are using mobile platforms, digital marketplaces, and fintech technologies to bring women into e-commerce, digital payments, and online learning. While technology-enabled social entrepreneurship can reach underprivileged women, gaps in digital literacy and infrastructure still exist.

Suggestions

- **Strengthen Capacity Building Programs:** Social businesses should extend and diversify their skill development initiatives, particularly in developing industries such as digital marketing, renewable energy, e-commerce, and sustainable agriculture. Tailored training for various age groups and educational levels will make the programs more inclusive and effective. Suggestion: Create gender-sensitive and market-relevant skill development programs that promote employability, leadership, and creativity among women.
- **Increase access to finance and credit:** Create women-friendly financial solutions with low interest rates, simple procedures, and low collateral requirements. Collaborate with banks, microfinance institutions, and

fintech platforms to provide financial access for budding female entrepreneurs. To improve women's access to capital, consider promoting targeted microfinance and digital banking through public-private partnerships.

- **Improve Policy Support and Government Integration:** Governments at the national and state levels should actively incorporate social enterprises into development programs like the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and Skill India. Simplify the regulatory system that allows social companies to receive funding, tax breaks, and legal recognition. Suggestion: Establish a strong policy environment to assist women-led social entrepreneurs through financial incentives, incubation support, and legal reforms.
- **Encourage public-private-community partnerships (PPCPs):** Encourage collaboration among social enterprises, NGOs, government agencies, and corporations through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) projects. Joint activities can help scale methods, share resources, and have a larger impact on women's economic empowerment. Consider creating multi-stakeholder forums to connect grassroots social entrepreneurs with industry executives, legislators, and financiers.
- **Promote digital inclusion:** Increase access to digital tools, mobile internet, and digital literacy training for women, especially in rural regions. Utilize technology to provide remote training, telemedicine services, e-commerce options, and online marketplaces for female craftsmen and entrepreneurs. Suggestion: Use digital innovation to reduce geographic and educational barriers, making social entrepreneurship more accessible and scalable for women.
- **Encourage monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessments:** Set up mechanisms for regular monitoring and evaluation of women-focused social enterprises to ensure transparency and impact measurement. Share success stories, data, and case studies to encourage replication and guide policymaking. Suggestion: Implement data-driven evaluation tools for social entrepreneurs to track progress, improve procedures, and advocate for support.
- **Address Sociocultural Barriers:** To overcome prejudices and opposition, engage local communities, male family members, and opinion leaders in gender sensitization campaigns. Promote women entrepreneurs' success stories to shift mindsets and encourage future generations. Suggestion: Promote female entrepreneurship through awareness campaigns and community debates.

Conclusion

Social entrepreneurship can improve economic justice for women in India by tackling several disadvantages through innovative, inclusive, and community-based approaches. While it has transformational potential, attaining long-term impact requires supportive ecosystems, policy integration, and continual efforts to address deep-rooted social and economic disparities. Social entrepreneurship offers significant potential for advancing economic fairness for women in India. By tackling structural obstacles and establishing sustainable possibilities, social companies may reshape the economic environment for women. Nonetheless, their success is contingent upon a conducive ecology comprising financial backing, skill enhancement, and facilitating policies. As India progresses towards gender equality, promoting social entrepreneurship will be an essential tool for attaining inclusive economic growth. To fully realize the promise of social entrepreneurship for women's economic equality in India, a multifaceted and collaborative approach is required. Empowering women through social enterprises necessitates not just financial resources, but also educational, digital, social, and policy interventions. With the correct support mechanisms, social entrepreneurship has the potential to become a long-term path to inclusive growth and gender justice in India.

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