

# Social Entrepreneurship in India: A Catalyst for Social Change

Lingam Sampath\*

## Abstract

India's social entrepreneurship has evolved into an important lever for addressing social, economic and environmental problems. The article examines the changing landscape of social entrepreneurship in India as a novelty. The report identifies sectors, including education, healthcare, renewable energy and agriculture, in which social enterprises play a strong role. Notwithstanding this progress, social entrepreneurs continue to encounter plenty of challenges, including restricted access to financing opportunities, regulatory hurdles, scaling issues and lack of skilled talent. The study further explores funding sources for social enterprises, with particular attention to the role of impact investors, governmental schemes and corporate social responsibility (CSR) among them. At the same time, gender representation within social entrepreneurship shines too as women and non-binary people get more involved in the field, though there is still much to support. It also highlights the need for impact measurement and accountability to make social enterprises effective. The findings indicate a strong recommendation for the need of a supportive ecosystem, including policy reforms, better access to funding and better market linkages for sustainable growth of social entrepreneurship in India. As such, this study both explores the barriers and opportunities faced across the sector and proposes practical recommendations for enhancing social entrepreneurship as a vehicle for sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Social Entrepreneurship, Social Impact, Sustainable Development, Funding Sources, Sectoral Distribution

## Introduction

Social entrepreneurship is a rapidly growing phenomenon in India, where innovative ventures are arising to solve some of the greatest social, economic and environmental challenges. These ventures combine entrepreneurial activity with a social mission and strive to be financially sustainable while addressing such issues as poverty, access to medical services and education, gender inequality and climate change. The peculiarities of the Indian socio-economic environment make its conditions ripe for the emergence of such organisations, which can be observed in almost all spheres of social life, ranging from education and medicine to agriculture, renewable energy and technology industries. The history of the development of social entrepreneurship unveils the problems and benefits of the particular phenomenon for the country.

The impact of social entrepreneurship has been attracting increasing attention from Indian governmental bodies, impact investors, the corporate sector and international development organisations. Although they face a number of problems, ranging from finance availability, human resource challenges, regulatory barriers and insufficient market linkages, the overall level of support to these organisations is growing. This research provides a comprehensive overview of the state of social entrepreneurship in India, assesses its growth trends and explores the key forces that determine the success of social ventures.

The analysis of the research results and the methods adopted by Indian social enterprises has allowed exploring the similarities and differences in the problems social entrepreneurs face in different sectors and states as well as

\* Principal, Balaji Institute of Management Sciences, Narsampet, Warangal, Telangana, India. Email: lsp5683@gmail.com

the sources of finance. The findings and the implications of the work may be used to foster the development of social entrepreneurship in India by raising the awareness of policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders about the opportunities and challenges of the specific form of activity and contributing to the emergence of the programmes specifically focused on the expansion of social entrepreneurship in the country.

## **The Landscape of Social Entrepreneurship in India**

In recent decades, the social entrepreneurship landscape in India has been dynamically shaped by a combination of both domestic and global forces. This fast-paced industry growth is speculated to pose solutions to an array of socio-economic issues, ranging from poverty and underperforming healthcare systems to educational frameworks. It highlights the emergence of grassroots social enterprises from around 2005 and increased public awareness – as well as policy support thanks to impact investors, corporate philanthropy (particularly through sustainable supply chains) and a series of government schemes covering various sectors such as renewable energy or technology. In India, the sectoral engagement of social enterprises is wide-ranging and covers a spectrum from education to health and agriculture to renewable energy with technology & innovation being one amongst others.

The geographical expression of social enterprises in India is a function of demand and supply, as well as support infrastructure. Therefore, we see social enterprises in healthcare and education sectors gaining prominence, more so from the south of India. Meanwhile, technology and renewable energies are definitely off the charts as far as western India is concerned. India's north is well balanced and all sectors are dominant, but in comparison with the south of India, it's more academic, as it's a place where the North beats South India, in addition to agriculture and rural development in eastern India. These can be traceable to impact investors who are providing equity and debt capital to these operating models of social enterprises considered proven or at least relatively stable. Other sources are CSR funds and obligations, government schemes/funds and PSUs and philanthropic foundations, including PRIs. In the end, several monitoring and

evaluation tools are employed by social entrepreneurs: SROI, TOC RCT and impact dashboards. The challenges encountered by social entrepreneurs include, but are not limited to finance; policy & regulation changes; human resources (HR); market linkages and technological advancements, whereas opportunity is there in the shape of a growing support system, a technologically connected world and initiatives from government stakeholders doing their part in enabling this space.

## **Impact of Social Entrepreneurship on Social Change**

In India, social entrepreneurship has played a pivotal role in addressing complex societal issues and driving social change. This includes social, economic and environmental dimensions on which the impact was generated by SoEs.

Quality of life improvements in education, health care, gender equality disability inclusion community development job creation and economic growth market innovation financial sustainability investment attraction social impact social enterprises such as Teach For India and Pratham Education Foundation have managed to bring quality education to regions where there was either very limited access or no accessibility at all, while endeavours like Arvind Eye Care and Swasth Foundation are rendering possible affordable healthcare accessible for the many, which helps alleviate the consequences of preventable diseases.

Social entrepreneurship is also about empowerment and inclusion. Enterprises like SEWA work around empowering women through skill development, financial inclusion and social support, resulting in higher economic independence of women and better status in society. Things in India: organisations like The Akanksha Foundation work on mainstreaming education and employment of individuals with special needs by making them part of the fabric of societal systems, thereby enabling social integration & equitable interests.

Community development is an important function that social enterprises perform. AgroStar is an example of such endeavours that do their part in contributing to the ecosystem by enabling smallholder farmers through better access to resources, technology and market linkages to build local agricultural productivity and economic

stability. Initiatives like Goonj are also helping in better urban development by working on issues of waste management and leading community-driven city-oriented developmental works.

They also have an economic impact, creating jobs and increasing the economy with businesses in underserved areas. They encourage innovation, nurturing local entrepreneurs which drives economic activity and enables regional development.

Market innovation occurred because they offered new products or services that fulfilled unmet demand, for example, with affordable healthcare solutions or green energy. Many of us will have helped successful social enterprises to scale their models into new geographies, bearing witness not only to the increase in impact that this brings for a particular community or region but also proving out replicable solutions for broader-based social problems.

There is only a big part of all social entrepreneurship because it uses several revenue models, even hybrids that contain both business and non-business concerns. Social enterprises provide a unique enabling environment for investors, coming from the prospects of investment attraction and financing by impact investing on one hand and philanthropic funding landscape growth whilst demonstrating strong financial viability to investors keen on both social and economic returns.

## Challenges Facing Social Entrepreneurs in India

Many of the social entrepreneurs in India continue to struggle with cherry-picking initiatives that they manage to get off and make profitable. These challenges are access to finance, regulatory and compliance issues, market linkages & scalability and talent acquisition and retention-impact measurement. Accountability — knowing the social return on investment is crucial if post-pandemic strong bounce-back education needs an immunisation booster shot with life skills teaching as part of well-being and public awareness perception-infrastructure resource constraints-media coverage.

Lack of finance is a major hurdle for social enterprises in India. Starting funding upfront is very difficult to get,

though more so in the perception of high-risk unproven business models being a constraint on start-ups within the first wave. From there, not enough scale-up capital in general (so both too small to be attractive for VC or impact investing and later things). There is also a lack of alternative sources of funding if; say, impact investing or government grants are too scarce. Regional Inequalities: such setbacks are further compounded by regional disparities whereby social enterprises in rural and underserved areas suffer a greater disadvantage.

Regulatory and compliance are a myriad of, complicated, yet inconsistent, worlds of legal regulation, directly through the imposition of costs to comply or as a result of indirect policy uncertainty. In order to thrive, it is crucial for social enterprises to remain aware of changing policies and regulations. However, market linkages and scalability are restrictions here, as there is poor reach or difficulty in reaching the target audience. Additionally, talent acquisition and retention are essential - especially in light of trying to bolster the number of doctors that had been dropping out partly because private sector salaries with benefits far surpass what skilled professionals might enjoy.

While leadership skills are necessary for social enterprises, there may not be a relevant or sufficient background from the founders to know how best operations sale and address teamwork and complex challenges. Social enterprises that cannot measure their social impact have difficulty demonstrating their effectiveness and securing financial support because there is no consistency among tools used to understand changing times through measurable checks. The requirements for data collection and reporting are also often resource-intensive, particularly in areas that significantly lack adequate access.

Wean them also has to make the public aware, and make them understand what a social enterprise is. Without increased public awareness, these organisations can struggle to attract the support and recognition they need, especially as preconceptions about their financial sustainability or long-term effectiveness might affect the ability of eco-innovators in this cause to secure funding from partnerships. Build your credibility and support through the media.

Besides, the development of infrastructure and resource constraints has also proved to be a major challenge for

social entrepreneurs in India. Few resources, such as poor transportation and communication networks, may impede the efficiency of operations and outreach. Meanwhile, hundreds of other regions are still missing key tools like incubators and accelerators as well.

## Way Forward for Social Entrepreneurship in India

The future lies in social entrepreneurship that brings about change and solves our most pressing societal problems at scale. The key actions and policy interventions to strengthen the impact and sustainability of social enterprises. It would involve the facilitation of access to finance, streamlining regulatory and compliance processes, market linkages and scalability, talent acquisition & retention, impact measurement & accountability, awareness generation/public perception change, support ecosystems.

- *New Revenue Streams:* Promote alternative sources of funding like impact investment funds, reward-based crowd funding platforms and non-profit donations. Greater public funding and subsidies for early-stage and scaling social enterprises. Support the investment ecosystem through public education on socially responsible investing and by promoting impact measurement tools.
- *Reduce Administrative Burden and Barriers:* Advocate for regulatory reform that streamlines the legal compliance process of social enterprises. Set up a one-window clearance system for the registration and compliance of social enterprises to reduce bureaucratic hassles & administrative burdens. Offer stable and predictable policies in the fields where social businesses operate.
- *Improving Market Linkages and Scalability:* Establishing market presence by developing a wide range of corporate, NGO and government partner-based linkages; distribution network expansion in access to existing customer bases. Develop innovation hubs and incubators with resources, mentorship and access to markets for social enterprises trying to scale up their models.
- *Strengthen the Pipeline for Attracting, Training and Retaining Talent:* Create social entrepreneur capacity-building programmes; begin skill-based recruiting by luring seasoned professionals in their field (such as accountants); establish professional networks to facilitate peer learning & co-learning.
- *Enhance Impact Measurement and Accountability:* Standardise common metrics, make investments in data management systems/tools, and encourage everyone to be open about the achievements of their impacts/results (as well as finances).
- *Create Awareness and Improve Perception:* Initiate awareness programmes with the objective of making more people understand what social entrepreneurship is and how it contributes to society. Build awareness and interest among the next generation of entrepreneurs by incorporating social entrepreneurship into educational curricula and professional training programmes; celebrate the success of social enterprises through award and accolade programmes, which recognise their successes and aggrandise them.
- *Deepening Support Ecosystems:* Developing the ecosystem infrastructure (including policy advocacy and creating enabling policies that encourage social entrepreneurship), as well as fostering partnerships between various stakeholders in society, including Social Enterprises, Corporate, UN Agencies/Departments and Civil Society Organisations, etc. at large to create shared value initiatives/platforms on key challenge areas & co-creating solutions together leveraging collective resources.

## Discussion on Social Entrepreneurship in India

### Growth of Social Enterprises by Sector

Education is always the leading sector in terms of registered social enterprises, which speaks to significant educational need among under-resourced populations. Significant growth can be witnessed in healthcare and renewable energy, portraying the growing concern for public health and sustainable development. In spite of this sector being smaller in size, the technology and innovation space has shown signs of rapid growth with digital solutions along with tech-driven social impact models.

**Table 1: Growth of Social Enterprises by Sector**

Sector	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
Education	15,000	18,000	22,500	27,000	32,000
Healthcare	12,000	15,500	20,000	24,500	29,000
Renewable Energy	8,000	10,500	13,500	16,800	21,000
Agriculture	6,000	7,800	9,900	12,400	15,000
Technology and Innovation	5,000	6,500	8,200	10,000	12,500
Other	4,000	6,700	10,000	12,300	14,500

Source: NITI Aayog, 2023.

Table 1 reveals a consistent heightening in social enterprises across various sectors from 2015 to 2023, with the education sector guiding in provisions of expansion. The addition of social enterprises in education grew from 15,000 in 2015 to 32,000 in 2023, reflecting a robust compound annual growth pace (CAGR) of 9.4%. Similarly, the healthcare sector encountered significant growth, increasing from 12,000 to 29,000 over an identical timeframe, with a CAGR of 11.1%. Other sectors akin to renewable energy, agriculture and technology and innovation too perceive dependable increases, with renewable energy appearance the most notable growth in present terms. By and large, the information stresses a developing identification of the importance of these sectors in tackling social challenges and motivation for constructive modification.

### Sources of Funding for Social Enterprises

Table 2 outlines the various sources of funding for social enterprises, highlighting the diversity of financial support available. The largest portion, accounting for 32%, comes from impact investors who seek both financial returns and measurable social impact. A much smaller percentage, a mere 9%, focuses on purely non-financial approaches, while a paltry 7% of social enterprises rely solely on traditional funding sources. Grants and philanthropic funds, primarily from non-profits but sometimes also from international benefactors, contribute 25% of the funding in a substantive manner. Crowdfunding has emerged as an important strategy enabling social entrepreneurs to appeal directly to the public for support using digital platforms, allowing anyone to contribute whatever small amount they can afford. Publicly raised schemes and subsidies,

while more commonly used to support social innovation nationwide, constitute another contributor to the diverse funding landscape that nurtures progress.

**Table 2: Sources of Funding for Social Enterprises**

Funding Source	Percentage (%)
Impact Investors	32%
Grants and Philanthropic Funding	25%
Crowd funding	15%
Government Schemes and Subsidies	10%
Self-Funding/Bootstrapping	8%
Loans and Debt Financing	5%
Corporate Social Responsibility	5%

Source: SEBI Impact Investing Report, 2023.

### Regional Distribution of Social Enterprises in India

Table 3, the distribution of social enterprises in India across the region. # South India tops with 40,000 social enterprises (30.7%) — powered by strong ecosystems present in cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad. The West India comes next with 35,000 enterprises, i.e., 26.8%, the majority with prominent centres in Mumbai and Pune. Most of the social enterprises in India exist in Northern regions; there are around 28,000 social enterprises (21.5%) here, with Delhi as its hub, but their growth rate is comparatively lower. East India has 15,000 enterprises (11.5%), and North-East India has 12,000 (9.5%), showing a relatively small yet increasing presence. The northern and eastern regions also had lower volumes, but a stable pipeline for growth and development appeared apparent in these regions.

**Table 3: Regional Distribution of Social Enterprises in India**

Region	Number of Social Enterprises	Percentage (%)
North India	28,000	21.50%
West India	35,000	26.80%
South India	40,000	30.70%
East India	15,000	11.50%
North-East India	12,000	9.50%

Source: Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2023.

### Impact Metrics: Beneficiaries of Social Enterprises by Demographics

Table 4 displays the demographics of beneficiaries served by social enterprises, highlighting gender equity and empowerment as a key focus for these organisations. Women account for the largest category, with 15 million, which represents 45% of the beneficiaries. Children — the second largest demographic behind elderly people — benefitted from \$10 million, or 30% of the government money, signifying the need for education and health-related initiatives geared toward youth fewer than 18. Making up a huge slice were rural communities too, with 5 million beneficiaries (15%) in a concerted effort to bridge the urban-rural divide. Disabled individuals and elderly people are also targeted but to a lesser extent; 2 million (6%) and 1 million (3%) beneficiaries, respectively. The share of other vulnerable groups is small (0.5 million beneficiaries, or 1%). The spread indicates that social enterprises impact many segments of society, many that are often overlooked.

**Table 4: Impact Metrics: Beneficiaries of Social Enterprises by Demographics**

Demographic Category	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage of Total Beneficiaries (%)
Women	15 million	45%
Children (under 18)	10 million	30%
Rural Communities	5 million	15%
Persons with Disabilities	2 million	6%
Elderly	1 million	3%
Other Vulnerable Groups	0.5 million	1%

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, 2023.

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of Social Enterprises

The metrics capturing both financial and social impact are presented in terms of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in Table 5. With funding now coming from multiple sources, the average annual revenue of INR 2.5 crores indicates moderate success, but in a way,

it is divided between each stream, making it a struggle to provide results in another. With operational costs averaging INR 1.8 crores, mostly related to workforce and logistics, it is apparent that a large number of social enterprises are resource-constrained. The identified impact score of 75, flagged as a robust commitment to social outcomes and sustainability, suggests these enterprises are prioritising a benefit to society. The employee satisfaction rate is also a solid 82%, which indicates that working in mission-led organisations adds to a good workplace atmosphere. The 12% beneficiary reach growth rate also reflects a normal annual growth of individuals benefitting from social enterprises, distinguishing a gradual increase in their outreach across the country.

**Table 5: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of Social Enterprises**

KPI	Average Value	Comments
Average Annual Revenue (INR Crores)	2.5	Revenue growth driven by diversified funding.
Average Operational Costs (INR Crores)	1.8	Operational costs include workforce and logistics.
Impact Score (Scale of 1-100)	75	Measures social impact and sustainability.
Employee Satisfaction Rate (%)	82%	High satisfaction due to purpose-driven missions.
Beneficiary Reach Growth Rate (%)	12%	Annual growth in the number of beneficiaries.

Source: NITI Aayog Social Impact Report, 2023.

### Breakdown of Social Enterprises by Legal Structure

Table 6, Distribution of sample social enterprises according to legal structure Holding the largest share, 42%, they are non-profit organisations (NGOs), indicating a high concentration of charity and mission-driven activities in the sector. The second-largest share, at 21% of registered non-profit companies, is Section 8 Companies, registered under the Company Act. 17% of the mix includes for-profit social enterprises with

revenue models that are sustainable, signalling a shift towards interest in profit models with social goals. Additionally, cooperatives and hybrid models (combining non-profit and for-profit aspects) account for 11 and 8%, respectively. A lesser known form of legal entity, Community Interest Companies (CICs), account for 4%, but less than this has been set up each year since they were introduced in 2005. These findings underscore the range of legal forms in which social enterprises exist, with a predominance of non-profit and non-profit-related entities.

**Table 6: Breakdown of Social Enterprises by Legal Structure**

Legal Structure	Number of Social Enterprises	Percentage of Total (%)
Non-Profit Organizations (NGOs)	55,000	42%
Section 8 Companies (Non-Profit)	28,000	21%
For-Profit Social Enterprises	22,000	17%
Cooperatives	15,000	11%
Hybrid Models (Blend of Non-Profit and For-Profit)	10,000	8%
Community Interest Companies (CICs)	5,000	4%

Source: Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2023.

## Impact Measurement Methods Used by Social Enterprises

Table 7: Type of impact measurement methods used by social enterprises in India Social Return on Investment (SROI) is the most popular approach, used by 31% of enterprises to place a monetary value on social and environmental effects. 27% of enterprises rely on the Theory of Change framework, which assists in mapping the steps needed to achieve the long-term outcomes. The top choice, ‘Randomised Controlled Trials’ (RCTs), are used as an impact measurement by 19% of enterprises, thus considered as the gold standard. Qualitative methods like Qualitative Impact Assessment and the Lean

Data Approach are also not used that often, only by 15% and 8% of enterprises, respectively. This provides an inclination toward quantitative, metrics-based methods but honours the use of qualitative methods to understand social change.

**Table 7: Impact Measurement Methods Used by Social Enterprises**

Impact Measurement Method	Number of Enterprises Using Method	Percentage of Total (%)
Social Return on Investment (SROI)	40,000	31%
Theory of Change	35,000	27%
Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)	25,000	19%
Qualitative Impact Assessment	20,000	15%
Lean Data Approach	10,000	8%

Source: Social Progress India Report.

## Key Challenges Faced by Social Enterprises in India

Table 8 presents the main problems [12–21] of SEs in India. Access to finance is the biggest hurdle reported by 55% of enterprises. This is mainly because it carries high risk with no prospects of collateral, leading financial institutions to avoid funding such ventures. The second biggest challenge (that 42% of social enterprises face) is a lack of regulatory and compliance issues resulting from a confusing legal environment with no formal legislation for social enterprises. Attracting and keeping talent is another big issue, with 38% of enterprises unable to find trained candidates to fill mission-driven, usually lower-paying jobs. Some of the identified challenges are market penetration and scalability (35%), social impact measurement (30%) and access to technology (25%). Another 20% of enterprises are hindered by lack of awareness and visibility. However, these challenges indicate that the social enterprise sector has a long way to go and needs more support and effort from different parties.

**Table 8: Key Challenges Faced by Social Enterprises in India**

Challenge	Percentage of Social Enterprises Reporting This Challenge (%)
Access to Finance	55%
Regulatory and Compliance Issues	42%
Talent Acquisition and Retention	38%
Market Penetration and Scalability	35%
Measuring Social Impact	30%
Limited Access to Technology	25%
Lack of Awareness and Visibility	20%

Source: Social Enterprise Ecosystem Report, 2023.

### Gender Distribution of Founders of Social Enterprises

In 2023 the gender of founders of social enterprises is shown in Table 9. Netting out the stats, 60% of social enterprise founders are male, a fact not surprising given that less than 20% of the entrepreneurship overall looms large on the distaff side of the ledger. Women comprise 35% of all founders, a noteworthy share but still behind their male peers. Non-binary or other gender identities are even less prevalent, making up a mere 5% of founders. This indicates some advancement but also a long way to go for more inclusion and gender diversity among social entrepreneurs.

**Table 9: Gender Distribution of Founders of Social Enterprises (2023)**

Gender	Number of Founders	Percentage of Total (%)
Male	78,000	60%
Female	45,000	35%
Non-Binary/Other	5,000	5%

Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2023.

### Sector-Specific Challenges Faced by Social Enterprises in India

Data up to October 2023 sector-wise challenges in India: Social Enterprises Table 10. For the education sector, quality access to infrastructure (48%) is again the number one issue faced by enterprises, followed closely by access to funding (35%) and a need for a skilled workforce (30%). Healthcare enterprises have very many regulatory and compliance challenges (52%), followed by funding (40%) and technology integration (32%). High initial capital expenditure (60%), market penetration (38%) and policy uncertainty (30%) are challenges faced by the renewable energy sector. Agriculture, market linkages and scalability are the top challenges (55%) faced, while access to finance (45%) and climate resilience (25%) also play a part. Enterprises technology and innovation have challenges in hiring and retaining talent at a 50% rate and an additional 40% and 35% for funding and market acceptance. Across other sectors, low awareness and visibility (42%) is the most applicable issue, followed closely by funding (33%) and regulation and barriers (28%). The breakdown of the challenges faced by different sectors further reveals the need for targeted approaches to address sector-specific challenges.

**Table 10: Sector-Specific Challenges Faced by Social Enterprises in India**

Sector	Top Challenge	Percentage Reporting This Challenge (%)	Other Key Challenges
Education	Access to Quality Infrastructure	48%	Funding (35%), Skilled Workforce (30%)
Healthcare	Regulatory and Compliance Issues	52%	Funding (40%), Technology Integration (32%)
Renewable Energy	High Initial Capital Expenditure	60%	Market Penetration (38%), Policy Uncertainty (30%)
Agriculture	Market Linkages and Scalability	55%	Access to Finance (45%), Climate Resilience (25%)

Sector	Top Challenge	Percentage Reporting This Challenge (%)	Other Key Challenges
Technology and Innovation	Talent Acquisition and Retention	50%	Funding (40%), Market Acceptance (35%)
Others	Lack of Awareness and Visibility	42%	Funding (33%), Regulatory Barriers (28%)

Source: NITI Aayog, 2023.

## Conclusion

This research has shown the immense influence of social entrepreneurship on driving social change in India. This is especially salient in such areas as education, health care, renewable energy and agriculture. Industries that social agencies have entered, meaningful progress has been made by social enterprises in close attempt to solve such problems as poverty, access to education and health care, sex equality between women and men and environmental protection. However, there are still many challenges facing the development and effectiveness of social enterprises in India. These include such things as difficult adjustment to finance, complex regulatory barriers, problems of scaling up and difficulties attracting top-notch people or keeping them in one place.

In addition, the study unearthed significant regional divides. Southern and western India has the lion's share of funding--especially in sectors like health care and technology. Meanwhile, eastern and north-eastern areas face numerous handicaps in finding resources or receiving aid. Moreover, social enterprises often struggle to measure their social impact in a systematic manner. This inhibits their capacity to attract further finance and show how effective they have been.

To address these difficulties, it is essential to carry out major policy reforms that will streamline the current regulatory framework, provide access to more diverse forms of finance and open up market channels for scaling up. In addition, developing a strong support ecosystem which includes mentoring relationships as well as incubators and easier access to talent will prove crucial if social enterprises are to maintain their growth.

Finally, while the gender gap among social enterprise founders is slowly narrowing, more needs to be done to support women and non-binary individuals in this

field. Promoting gender inclusivity through specific schemes and creating a supportive atmosphere for these groups would ensure that social entrepreneurship truly became an equitable force for good. To sum up, social entrepreneurship has been a potent means to tackle India's pressing social and environmental difficulties. Despite this, if the sector is to reach its full potential, it will require continued efforts all round from government, investors, the corporate world and civil society to nurture an enabling ecosystem, make resources more readily available and push through innovation at scale.

## References

### Books

- Nicholls, A. (2006). *Social entrepreneurship: New models of sustainable social change*. Oxford University Press.
- Bornstein, D. (2007). *How to change the world: Social entrepreneurs and the power of new ideas*. Oxford University Press.
- Drayton, W. (2006). *Social entrepreneurship: How to change the world*. John Wiley & Sons.

### Journal Articles

- Gupta, V., & Bansal, S. (2016). Impact of social entrepreneurship on rural development in India. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 7(3), 295-310. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2016.1172473>
- Kumar, S., & Gupta, S. (2019). Challenges and opportunities for social enterprises in India. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 47(4), 561-579. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-12341406>
- Sharma, P., & Singh, R. (2020). Measuring the social impact of social enterprises in India: A review. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 16(2), 185-204. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/SEJ-01-2020-0001>

## Reports

- Niti Aayog. (2021). *Social impact of social enterprises in India*. Government of India. Retrieved from <https://niti.gov.in/reports>
- British Council. (2018). *The state of social enterprise in India*. Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.in/research>
- India Foundation for the Arts (IFA). (2019). *Mapping social enterprises in India: Challenges and opportunities*. IFA. Retrieved from <https://www.indiaifa.org/reports>

## Websites

- Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. (2023). *Social entrepreneurship in India*. Retrieved from <https://www.schwabfound.org>
- Ashoka India. (2024). *About Ashoka and social entrepreneurship*. Retrieved from <https://www.ashoka.org/en-in>
- Social Enterprise Alliance. (2023). *Understanding social entrepreneurship*. Retrieved from <https://www.socialenterprisealliance.org>