

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIAL BUSINESS: STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

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Abstract: *The paper is both conceptual and empirical because it presents concepts and ideas, borrowed referred and quoted from the existing sources. It is partially empirical because online questionnaire employed to collect information from thirty five individuals who are part of service sectors and promote social business. In-depth interview and focused group discussion with individuals and groups to reflect about the benefits of social media for social business in today's world gives deeper understating about the need for planned design and focused activity and audience to exploit the opportunity for the advantage of social business. Conceptual understanding about social media as a double edged sword and its impact on revolutionizing the human existence and communication system to improve human dignity and livelihood has been discussed in the paper. The paper also denotes that social media can be used and abused hence social entrepreneur need to possess thorough knowledge and understanding about the technology and device for better outcome. Social media as a gadget and technology is easily available and user friendly it has become the product of rich and poor alike, and in that senses it has reduced the gap between the haves and have-nots. It is also getting cheaper and cheaper hence making it effortlessly adoptable. Usage of social media has increased day by day and discounted cell phones accessories have made it possible to infiltrate even into the lower strata of society. The empirical research portrays that social media has empowered and at the same time enslaved human mind and action. It has been considered as a best modem of communication and the worst form of stress inducer. It has helped to get connected with people across the border and at the same time reduced the face to face interaction with our neighbour. The primary source of information reveals that all of the participants are familiar with Facebook and majority of the professional have Facebook account but they do not operate frequently. The participants also shared that it hooks viewer and so intentionally or non-voluntarily they tend to spend more time. The second reason was that by choice they want to have minimum access because as educationist they feel their priorities differ, so they use Facebook sparingly.*

Keywords: *Business, Entrepreneurship, Social Media, Strategies, technology*

1. INTRODUCTION

In our present competitive world the NGO's (Social Entrepreneur) environment has changed and the Community needs are growing in size and diversity. More nonprofit organizations are competing for government and Philanthropic funds. Traditional forms of funding are becoming smaller and less reliable. Now the business firms are competing with NGO's to serve Community needs. The funders and donors are demanding more accountability hence social media serves as a bridge to reduce the gap between the donors and implementing agencies. In the face of this new reality, an increasing number of organisations and professionals are beginning to appreciate the combination, that is, the very best of "not for profit" and the very best of "for

profit", to create a new wave of development, this combination is also extended to the very best of community based activities and technology based monitoring. Increasingly, they are reinventing themselves as social entrepreneurs, combining "the passion of a social mission with an image of business-like discipline, innovation, and determination". At present the social entrepreneur promote the earned-income venture to improve and support the already established social missions. Through this approach they try to solve social problems on a large scale by playing the role as social innovators, or social entrepreneurs. They have powerful ideas to improve people's lives and they implement them across cities and countries using powerful social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, online campaign, etc. Earned-income is a form of social entrepreneurship, an increasingly popular topic for discussion among Non Governmental Organizations.

2. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

The word entrepreneur is derived from the French Verb "entreprendre" which means, "to undertake". It can be defined as the ability to create and build something from practically nothing. Micro enterprise and micro-finance development have emerged as major strategies to combat the twin issues of poverty and unemployment that continue to pose a major threat to the polity and economy of our country. Population explosion has made it virtually impossible for the government and private sector to provide employment opportunities for all. Most of the Asian countries have of late adopted a deliberate policy of promoting and encouraging small enterprises as a strategy for the overall development of their countries. In the recent years, India has been engaged in the task of promoting and developing entrepreneurship. Priority has been accorded to the small-scale industries to stimulate entrepreneurship. Social media acts as a stimulus to make the social business appear "accessible and responsive" and social media users want such trusts and societies use social media for better service.

Social entrepreneurs also serve large "markets" with limited resources. Foundation donors, philanthropists and policymakers will appreciate any new surge of activity. Hence the organizations are being pressed to demonstrate their efficacy. Faced with a wave of energetic social entrepreneurs who are building organizations that are strategic and fast moving, people managing sluggish, outdated institutions are losing their credibility. There is undoubtedly a lot of energy around the idea of social entrepreneurship, but the discussion should not be too much skewed towards the business and organizational side of things but on what we really want to achieve. That is building social inclusion based on Antyodaya (attention to the poorest of the poor) and Sarvodaya (win-win for all) principles of Mahatma Gandhi. If we really want to encourage people to bring about social innovation and change for the better, they need to know about more than business planning, financing, marketing and typical business topics. They also need to know about different forms of democracy, the nature of reconciliation, political processes, roles and responsibilities of governments, and so on. In other words, social justice needs takes the centre stage in social entrepreneurship and social media operates as the face of the social business. The following diagram on communication opportunities portrays the ways and means of utilizing social media to promote social business, attract stakeholders and partners, post information and events and get the society involved and engaged in the process.

Social Entrepreneur prepares individuals and groups to attack large scale problems with very little resources. They do not believe in developing human resources, but consider people as their

asset, capital and resource. They concentrate on abilities rather than pondering over the disabilities and helplessness. They are proactive and avoid at all cost the reactive strategies. They are opportunity seekers so they try to win optimum excellence in all that they do and advocate. They help small producers to capture greater profits. They promote the concept of "production of the mass" based on labour intensive as against the "mass production" based on capital intensive.

The presence of abundant natural resources, skilled and unskilled labour, capital in the form of cash and technology is not sufficient for development. The major element for change and development is the psychological motivation and preparedness to lead a new way of perceiving any situation. A successful entrepreneur is aware of the new developments and change that take place around the society and is prepared to adopt the changing needs of the society. They combine talents, abilities and transform the resources into profitable undertakings. A social entrepreneur is a social leader who identifies and applies practical solutions to social problems by combining innovation, resourcefulness and opportunity by adopting best social media for convergence of action.

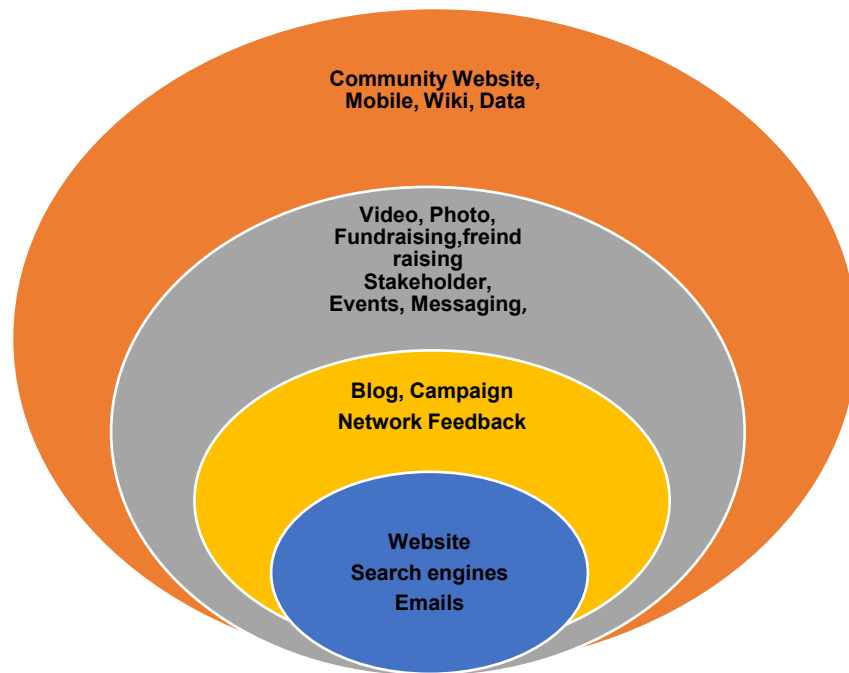


Figure-1: Communication Opportunities

3. SOCIAL BUSINESS

Development of social entrepreneurship and promotion of social business industries are considered the priorities of any development process. It is a vital factor for the growth of a

country. India has many natural resources, which are untapped. Human resources, agricultural produce, forest products, rural market potential, capital formation are some of the resources, which are grossly under-utilized. It is necessary to harness the vast untapped resources of our country and to channelize them towards accelerating total human development. It is a purposeful activity of an individual and group or a group of associated individuals to undertake economic activities for economic empowerment. They are regarded as an important element of development strategy. Economic development in the country can play social and political role in creating local employment, balancing regional development, generating income among poor, thus promoting a positive change among people. All these considered being the social business needs platform for open discussion and mutual understand. Blogs, chat, twitter, Facebook etc serves as the launching pad for social entrepreneur to showcase their efforts and initiatives. A healthy nonprofit organization engaged in social business often has highly diversified sources of funding, for example, from individual donors, foundations, corporations and governments. NGO leaders who are looking to diversify their funding base and decrease their reliance on donors often develop earned-income ventures where they generate profits which, in turn, are spent on improving the nonprofit's services to the community. The visibility created and posted in social media serves as a referring point for the donor in a remote place. Social media has become one of the most powerful tools for monitoring and evaluation, discussions and deliberations. Social media by and large has been employed by the social business partners in addressing some of the issues namely; Poverty, Water and Sanitation, Health, Education/illiteracy, Sustainable production and consumption patterns, Climate change and energy systems, Chemicals, Urbanization, Ecosystems, biological diversity and land use, Utilization of sea resources, Food and agriculture, Trade Justice, Social stability, democracy and good governance, Peace and Security, etc.

The issues such as democracy, participation, social justice, displacement, human rights, peace building, etc are the ones they will address. Otherwise many promising social entrepreneurial initiatives will end up as large, bureaucratic organizations focused on financing, marketing, growth strategies - remarkably similar to what are often thought the worst characteristics of the existing large development agencies. No one dispute that social entrepreneurs need to be 'businesslike' and acquire business skills. But we need to get the balance right, assuming that we really do want to change the world rather than tinkering around. Social entrepreneurs need to focus primarily on their social mission, which is at the heart of their actions. All what is' being done has to be measured against the advancement to realize a social goal. Business and entrepreneurial skills is only a tool to fuel, or to simplify, the accomplishment of a far-reaching social innovation. Yet when we are committed to a social mission we need to know how far and how well we are treading on this path. The degree to which a social goal has been fulfilled depends on the patterns, which stem from an understanding to allocate the resources to the target population. This understanding will be confronted with the constraints and opportunities of the local reality. Therefore Social entrepreneurs need to be equipped with business skills along with technology skill as well.

4. PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL BUSINESS

Social business is created and designed to address a social problem and it is a non-loss and non-dividend company. It is financially self-sustainable and profits realized by the business are reinvested in the business itself or used to start other social businesses, with the aim of increasing

social impact. Unlike a business venture, the prime aim of a Social Business is not to maximize profits (although generating profits is desired) but maximizing the social service to reduce poverty and other social evils. Furthermore, social business owners do not receive any dividend out of the business profits, if any. On the other hand, unlike a non-profit, a Social Business is not dependent on donations or on private or public grants to survive and to operate, because, as any other business, it is self-sustainable. Furthermore, unlike a non-profit, where funds are spent only once on the field, funds in a Social Business are invested to increase and improve the business' operations on the field on an indefinite basis.: A charity dollar has only one life; a Social Business dollar can be invested over and over again (Yunus,2000). The following basic principles of social business make it sustainable and mission oriented.

- Business objective will be to overcome poverty, or one or more problems (such as education, health, technology access, and environment) which threaten people and society; not profit maximization
- Financial and economic sustainability
- Investors get back their investment amount only; no dividend is given beyond investment money
- When investment amount is paid back, company profit stays with the company for expansion and improvement
- Environmentally conscious
- Workforce gets market wage with better working conditions
- Do it with joy

5. SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIAL BUSINESS

Social media as online communication channels for input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration is becoming an integral part of life. Social websites and applications proliferate in service and business sectors are used to get connected to people all over the world. The most important idea behind social media is for purposeful engagement of people, community, country and state for change development. The other aspects are to encourage participation and promote participatory culture and transparency. This wider participation and transparency endorse collaboration and partnership for change. Social media is successful because of the adoption rate of technology amongst the world and “More people have smartphones and computers in the home, and that has really changed the landscape of the web dramatically over the last two years.” “Social media gives an opportunity to connect in a very personal and meaningful way with likeminded people. It also provides opportunity to respond quickly and support issues, share and praise compliments, and provides right information to people who are in search of job, justice, rights, equality etc. Any social media site can be effective for social cause, but it is necessary to understand what type of content performs well, who the audience is, and get creative about providing right content in a way it is appreciated, accepted and adopted by the user. Social media proactively used as an educational tool can be extremely positive. Awareness creation through social media changes the focus from single person to groups. Social media enhances individual and group participation in any given issue and in enhances collaboration and commitment. Social media is a vital tool for imparting information, evidence based data and get people connected to voice their opinion and suggestions for development and change. It serves as a platform for mutual and regular communication between top level workers and field level coordinators. Majority (90%) of the people filled the questionnaire have endeared on social

media such as Facebook, because it seems to be user friendly and widely used and more popular all over the world. The following diagram reflects the reasons for adapting Social Media by firms of Social Business. NGO’s staffs from Erode, Madurai and Chennai involved in social business provided the following data which forms the basis for our reflection and analysis. These service providers are in the process of promoting entrepreneurs and have initiated income generation activities and are familiar with financial services provided by various financial institutions. The multiple responses generated via email from 35 respondents reveal the following information.

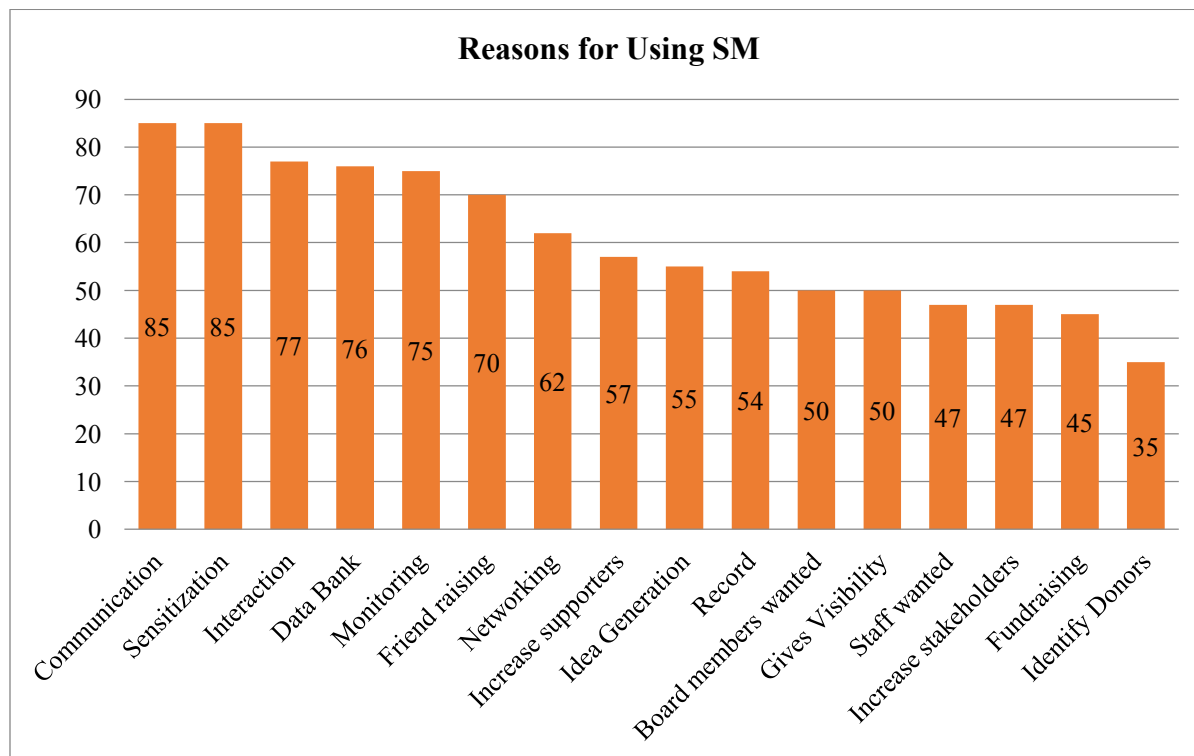


Figure-2: Multiple responses in %

The researched had taken a position and formed a construct that the entire social entrepreneur engaged in social business will have social media account and they must be frequently using some of them to promote their business activities. (Since it was not viable to test hypothesis the research has taken a position/construct) The data revealed that social media has not been used widely used for promoting social business. The members also added that they are not aware of opportunities, benefits, utility value of these technologies.

Social media have been proved to be an easiest and simplest modem of uniting the entire planet as a “global village”. It has made both localization and globalization as a process of connectivity and we are unable to understand its effect and impact. The user may not be able to comprehend where the process begins and when it ends. A vicious cycle created, hooked to the data and information the user automatically get connected in the process and driven to a new world of knowledge and information. It is knowledge explosion, proliferated thoughts and philosophies, exposure to new ideas and culture. The distance hardly exists, for even across countries we chat

and share, transfer ideas and funds. It is a blessing device for monitoring and getting feedback immediately from anywhere in the world.

Table-1: Items and Remarks

Items	Remarks
Communication Sensitization Interaction Data Bank Monitoring Friend raising Between 85 and 70%	Recent applications such as WhatsApp, xender, YouTube, Wi-Fi, Facebook, etc are often used for updating information, sending photos and getting connected to the agency. Seldom used for higher purpose of advancing the cause of improving the social business or increasing its capacity and volume. It was informed that the staff are not yet prepared and trained to use certain applications. There are other personal and social factors such as fear, anxiety, related to the use and abuse of social media. Most often it is used for social interaction and sharing of information among members of the same institutions.
Networking Increase supporters Idea Generation Between 69 and 55%	The members also feel social media helps them to network with other likeminded people and get support for certain issues related to identifying resources, getting new ideas and recognizing markets.
Record Board members Gives Visibility Between 54 and 50%	The members also feel information shared in email serves as a record for verification. And Some of them feel social media especially Facebook has given visibility to the NGO and so the board members insisted them to create website and to conduct promotional activity using social media. They have produced documentaries and photo galleries for reference and evaluation.
Increase stakeholders Fundraising Identify Donors Staff wanted Below 50%	Less than 50% of the respondents have shared about the importance of increasing the stakeholders and utilizing it for the fundraising purpose. The members also feel social media seldom serves as a stage to identify potential donors. The respondents have shared that people using social media in Tamilnadu is not highly positive except Chennai. Members from other cities communicated that people still use conventional method of communication and only low percentage of people use internet. Other problems are internet connectivity and lack of technology up-gradation that makes it Irrelevant and non-feasible to use social media.

Institutions involved in social business often invite all stakeholders to join hands and help in the transformation of its projects and programmes. Stakeholder's inputs and ratings sought on various aspects of the organisation and the collective inputs often reviewed directly by top officials to revamp the system and management. The digital strategy helps to make social business service oriented to eradicate poverty. They also create local circles and take business to the next level using digital strategy and make it participatory for communities, governance and utility. It enables citizens to connect with communities for most aspects of urban daily life like Neighbourhood, Constituency, City, Government, Causes, Interests and Needs, seek

information/assistance when needed, come together for various initiatives and improve their urban daily life. Local Circles is free for citizens and always will be.



Figure-3: Social Entrepreneurship & Social Media

Social entrepreneur could take advantage of the fact and use social media as a platform for communication, learning and collaborations. People we have never met in person who are far away in an unknown island and country are in touch with each other through virtual media. They have taught the world to develop programmes projects, technology, applications etc through a popular social network. Social media is a double edged sword and it has revolutionized the human existence and communication system. It has been both used and abused. Since social media as a gadget and technology is easily available and user friendly it has become the product of rich and poor alike, and in that senses it has reduced the gap between the rich and the poor haves and have-nots. Social media as a technology and device are getting cheaper and cheaper day by day and discounted cell phones accessories have made it possible to infiltrate even into the lower strata of society. Social media for social business is about chances and choices, which refer to the responsibility of an individual and group who are taking advantage of the digital strategy, device and technology to reduce poverty, injustice, illiteracy and any forms of social evils. The strategy also supports and improves quality of life by providing job opportunity better living standard. The chances refer to accidental and unplanned engagement which begins to emerge as a process of getting involved in the business to effect change either as volunteer, or as

partner, either as spectators or participant. Whether it is a chance or choice social media make people get involved for better or worse. Social entrepreneur need to follow strict guidelines to adapt digital strategy and social media for social change and business.

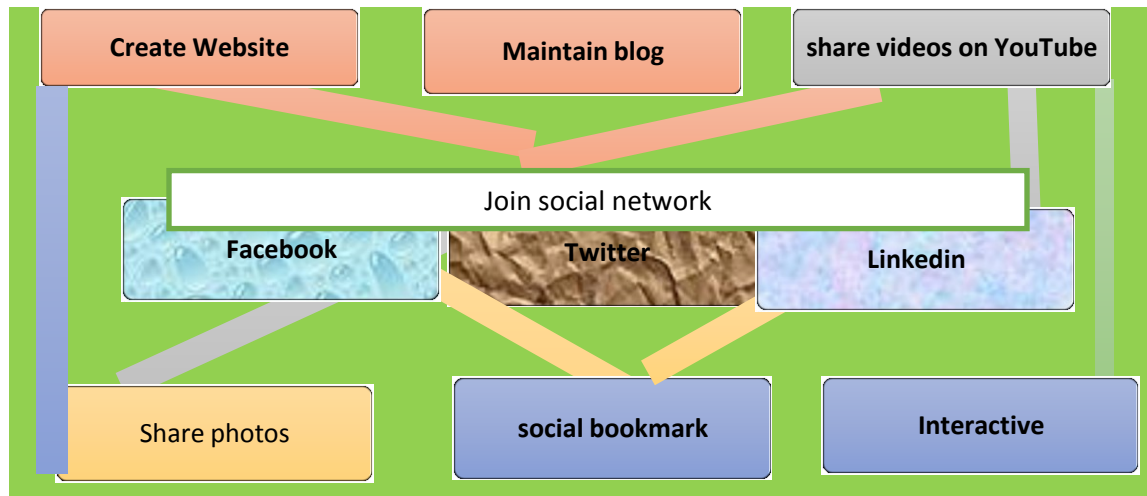


Figure-4: Social Media Platforms

6. CONCLUSION

Social media activities should aim at creating awareness, generating interest, encouraging sharing, and enlisting support and participation for initiatives. The purpose is to first grab the attention and then sustain it through compelling, continuous and committed communication. Social Media can help to get connected with the right viewers to build a strong social image. This will enable the entrepreneur to raise funds garner support for their cause and initiatives. It is also important to tell about the project (social business) in an interesting manner using pictures, and videos. Showcasing benefits and results, benefits and outcome creates a positive ripple among the viewers and the NGO can easily find online Collaborators. There are possibilities to get connected to related organizations with a wider audience base. It should encourage viewer to show support to cause and initiatives. It should encourage two way communications and should be a platform for engaging interaction among members and give credibility to the NGO and the partners in social business. The profile, pictures, photo gallery should reflect the uniqueness of the organization and captivate interest for the audience at first sight. The paper also suggests certain best practices to take full advantage of the social media as a tool and technique for personal, social and business management and some worst mistakes to reduce the wastage of human resource, time and talent. The social entrepreneurs need to dedicate time and efforts to make the social media more stimulating, by regularly sharing information and events. Updating new initiatives and posting exciting information motivates people to be connected always. It is about reaching the desired target audience and making it worthwhile to interact on a social media platform.

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