

Social Entrepreneurship and Women: Innovating for a Better Tomorrow

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Abstract

The study closely monitors the role of women in entrepreneurship. Globally people are showing keen interest on organization run and established by women. The organisation does come across challenges such as getting enough money, mentors, and school materials (Ahl, 2006; Chappuis et al., 2015). New ideas create ways to better health, education, and the environment (Dempsey, 2016; Georgieva, 2019).

Further, mentions approaches which improve women development in the process of becoming social entrepreneurs. This can be mentorship networks for women. It can be government programs as well as educational programs. This synchronized approach leads to better leaders further for tomorrow along with developing their skills (Bornstein, 2004; Mair & Marti, 2006). The study's results reflect that social businesses run by women are quite important. They are vital for generating long-term change in society. Their work challenges the common belief. It inculcates the belief that something can be detrimental to society leading to beneficial to the economy simultaneously.

Keywords: Creative concepts, Community empowerment, Social entrepreneurship, Women entrepreneurs, Economic expansion

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Introduction

Women entrepreneurs do have leadership issues and challenges. Taking the right decision at the perfect moment is important for maximum reach and impact. Further, a coordinate approach considering the entire workforce as well as a disciplined team standing for each other. Studies reflect that women often adopt a transformative leadership style. This concentrates on caring for others. Working as a

team along with full concentration of vision for the future. Leadership, Coordinated Team application and futuristic view are few qualities which make a social entrepreneurship successful.

Review of Literature

Studies have suggested that social entrepreneurship acceptance is more appealing because of problems with both ordinary business models and

government help programs. It combines the mission-driven approach of non-profits with the efficiency and growth potential of for-profit businesses to make the world a better place through market-based solutions. Experts in this field, such *Bornstein (2004) and Yunus et al. (2010)*, have mentioned in their works social enterprises a mix to different types of businesses. Further, strategy to make money. Most of the time, they work at the intersection of these several fields.

Women have long battled for social justice and gotten involved in grassroots action. Its quite sensible option women would show interest in social business. Since the early suffragettes and community organisers, women have worked hard to help poor communities attain their rights and fix social problems. (*Lerner, 1986*).

Jacqueline Novogratz (Acumen), Leila Janah (Samasource), and Jessica Jackley (Kiva) are three women renowned in the world of social enterprise. They reflect social enterprises can reach more people. It has a stronger effect on both male and female CEO's. These leaders have showcased a lot of other people. As to successfully run a business while along with assisting others. Open Innovation is the one and only way to resolve the challenge. (*Novogratz, 2010; Janah, 2015; Kiva, 2021*). Women business owners at times does have challenges to get funds, identifying good skill manager and abiding the rules even when their organization is doing reasonably well. According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2020) and other international polls mentions women steadily starting their own businesses. The percentage is rising, statistics predicts around 40% enterprises are taken care by women. Women run business faces challenges such finance generation, promotion and marketing of the product, Logistics and distribution and growth. More research in this field is required to identify the gender disparity affecting social entrepreneurship.

Research Gap

Research studies indicate social entrepreneurship in recent years has gotten a lot of attention, but there isn't much research on the unique problems and hurdles that women confront in this industry. Existing research studies suggest social entrepreneurship as a way to uplift people without dividing the data from gender disparity angle. (*Dees, 1998; Leadbeater, 1997*) or introspects women's entrepreneurship as a traditional business without considering social mission aspect (*Brush et al., 2009; Ahl & Marlow, 2012*).

Women entrepreneur have challenges of leadership. Undertaking right decision at perfect moment, co-ordination and taking the entire work force as a team *Eagly and Carli (2007)*. Studies have reflected women often adopt to transformative leadership style. It focuses on caring for others, working as a team along with full concentration of vision for the future. Leadership, Team work and vision are the qualities which makes a social entrepreneurship successful. Literature mentions studies have concentrated on Urban areas and in developed nations were high salary, growth, business dynamism, technology and exposure are there. The studies have hardly focused on rural indigenous areas or conflicted areas. To be honest social entrepreneurship would have been really successful in those areas.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) mentions tendency of women towards starting their own businesses all around the world. The growth rate is different everywhere. It's not always talked about sufficiently in mainstream literature that cultural and social norms make it hard for women who wish to establish their own enterprises. Women's business pathways are different from men's because of patriarchal views, different expectations for women when it comes to

caring, and constraints on women's capacity to move around and be financially independent.

In brief, social entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly popular in schools and government, but there is not enough research on the individual experiences and contributions of women in this field. Some notable gaps are:

- There isn't enough data on social entrepreneurship that is divided by gender.
- There haven't been many studies in the real world about how women-led enterprises are run, how they come up with new ideas and survive and promote business.
- Hardly research have been conducted on the problems and opportunities that are different in each place.
- Rarely studies have gone looked at long-term effects or effects over time.
- Not enough information and knowledge have been gathered towards digital technologies are transforming women labor in the field.
- There isn't enough overlap between fields to build a full theoretical framework.

Objective of the Research

A dynamic and ever-evolving area, social entrepreneurship unites fresh perspectives, community engagement, and long-term transformation. The importance of studying and enhancing women's position in this profession is growing as its popularity grows globally. Preparing the direction and inclination of the investigation crystal clear motto of clearly stating robust research objectives. Research tries fill gaps in our understanding of women's social

entrepreneurship by shedding light on their unique perspectives, experiences, and challenges.

Objective 1: To look closely at how women's roles in social entrepreneurship are changing affecting social innovation

The first goal is to examine how women are changing the world of social entrepreneurship by becoming leaders, coming up with new ideas, and making sure everyone does work for them. Gender wise both men as well as women does have different ideas of the meaning of an entrepreneur. Their experiences in their communities, generating fresh unique ideas focusing on helping others, and leadership styles that are cognizant of social issues typically shape this outlook. Notably, *Eagly and Carli (2007)* highlight that women are often transformative leaders who work together, get people involved, and are good at reading people's emotions, bringing unique perspectives providing diversity in entrepreneurship in the social environment.

Objective 2: To uncover and research the unique challenges faced by women social entrepreneurship.

Studies of many research identified that women face several gender-based obstacles that make it difficult for them to start their enterprises. It includes issues of very less representation of women in leadership roles, limited access to formal finance, social expectations regarding caregiving, and insufficient government support tailored to women (*Brush et al., 2009; Verheul et al., 2015*). The goal is to eliminate cultural and structural barriers in various regions and socioeconomic conditions.

Objective 3: The aim of this examination is to explore the innovative models, methods, and digital tools that women use to start and expand

social businesses.

Women who establish enterprises to serve their communities often discover creative and cost-effective solutions to societal problems. This study will investigate the various ways women collaborate to achieve their goals, including cooperative structures, impact-focused hybrid models, and community-based governance. It will also analyze how new revenue generation methods, service delivery approaches, and marketing strategies can help women build successful enterprises.

Objective 4: The objective of this research to understand and identify social businesses led by women impact the economy and the environment in their communities and beyond.

Traditionally, entrepreneurship is measured by financial success. However, social entrepreneurship also considers the effects on individuals, the economy, and the environment. The result of women-led social enterprises, study involves methodologies for assessing impact, including Social Return on Investment (SROI), the Theory of Change, and stakeholder mapping.

Objective 5: To make policy and institutional solutions that enable women in social entrepreneurship to thrive, stay in business, and get noticed.

The necessity to develop actionable plans based on study results gives rise to this objective. An effective strategy to increase equity in entrepreneurship still involves modifying existing policies. The lessons learned from objectives 1-4 will inform this aim's recommendation of policy and structural changes.

Research Methods Undertaken

This study employs a multi-layered qualitative research approach. It examines the involvement of women in different social entrepreneurship program from various angles, involving interpretive analysis, contextual depth, and case-driven insights.

Research Plan

The study is designed as an exploratory and interpretive inquiry, aiming to develop a solid understanding rather than testing pre-existing hypotheses. It employs an inductive strategy, allowing the data to reveal its own patterns, narratives, and frameworks. This approach is particularly important when examining women in social entrepreneurship, as there are relatively few of them, and their experiences are shaped by distinct cultural contexts that require a nuanced perspective. Exploratory qualitative research enables the investigator to explore how women's business experiences are influenced by their individual goals, the dynamics between institutions, community interactions, and the broader social and economic structures at play.

Data Collection Process

The study draws upon a diverse array of secondary data sources, selected for their reliability, comprehensive coverage, and significance. The data set includes:

- Peer-reviewed articles from academic journals available on platforms such as JSTOR, Science Direct, Springer
- Link, and Taylor & Francis
- Publications released annually by organizations such as the Global

Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank, and the OECD.

- Case studies and reviews of prominent social enterprises, including Kiva, BRAC, Acumen, Women for Women International, and Pro Mujer, which are publicly accessible.
- Biographies, TED Talks, interviews, and speeches from women social entrepreneurs making a positive impact, such as Leila Janah, Jacqueline Novogratz, Maya Penn, and Jessica Jackley
- Policy papers, strategic frameworks, and position papers released by national governments and global development forums addressing the need for gender equality in business.

Case Study Method-Application

The study uses an embedded case study method to explain how certain events at the micro level fit into bigger patterns. Each case study must possess certain criteria for selection.

- Studies indicates major evidence that society has an impact, and individuals can achieve success over time.
- New ways for the company to reach out and new ideas for its model.
- Different places and different social and economic positions.

We examine the chosen case studies as discrete units of analysis and then utilize cross-case synthesis to uncover lessons, similarities, and contrasts. For example, Maya's Ideas in the U.S. and Pro Mujer in Latin America can be compared

to demonstrate how they empower women in their respective countries in different ways.

Ways to Analyze

We look for themes in the data using *Braun and Clarke's (2006)* six-step process. The steps are getting to know the material, coding it, coming up various themes, reworking on those themes, strategic those themes, and reporting. Some key new ideas are making money more accessible, using hard times to be creative, gender-responsive leadership, digital transformation, and community-based scalability.

Lenses and frameworks for theory and analysis

Multiple number of frameworks that make interpretation even more strict:

- Criterion Institute's Gender Lens Investing Framework (2015) stresses how crucial it is to look at money flows and business success from a gender-equity point of view.
- SROI looks at both financial and non-financial returns, which gives a better idea of how well women-run firms are doing.
- Institutional Theory studies how norms, both official and informal, affect women's businesses and the help they obtain from institutions.
- Theory of Change (ToC): This helps us understand how being an entrepreneur may bring about long-lasting improvements in society, particularly interested in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Objective-Wise Empirical Analysis

Objective 1: To extensively examine how women's involvement in social entrepreneurship is changing and how these changes effect social innovation

Empirical evidence from secondary literature and case studies reveals women in social entrepreneurship is on the rise bringing transformative change through empathetic, inclusive, and community-rooted approaches. Case examples such as Leila Janah (Samasource) and Jessica Jackley (Kiva) demonstrate that women's leadership style aligns with transformational models (*Eagly & Carli, 2007*). The infusion of emotional intelligence and participatory development into social innovation has led to greater inclusivity in solving local and global problems. Digital platforms like crowdfunding (e.g., SheEO) and social networks (#WomenSupportingWomen) have further facilitated women's entry and impact.

Objective 2: To uncover and research the unique challenges that women social entrepreneurs face because they are women

The study shows that despite notable progress, women face institutional, financial, and cultural obstacles. The capital access gap is profound, with less than 5% of global venture funding directed to women-led enterprises (*World Bank, 2019*). Culturally rooted expectations around caregiving and gender roles continue to restrict women's mobility and entrepreneurial autonomy. Structural limitations also include limited access to mentorship and exclusion from elite entrepreneurial networks.

Objective 3: To examine the innovative models, methods, and digital tools that women utilize to start and expand social businesses

Women social entrepreneurs frequently uses business models of hybrid type that blend non-

profit missions with for-profit revenue generation. For example, BRAC and Maya's Ideas demonstrate impact-driven innovation. Empirically, women often utilize community-based governance, participatory planning, and localized delivery mechanisms. Digitally, they harness platforms like Kiva for microfinance, employ mobile health apps for outreach, and leverage e-commerce to scale impact.

Objective 4: To find out how social businesses run by women affect the economy and the environment in their own communities and beyond

Empirical findings indicate significant contributions to economic empowerment, sustainability, and social inclusion. Initiatives like Pro Mujer enhance financial independence, health access, and skill development for over two million women across Latin America. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, greater gender inclusion in business could add \$12 trillion to global GDP by 2025. Environmentally, women-led businesses often integrate sustainable sourcing, low-waste production, and green technologies, advancing the SDGs while building resilient economies.

Objective 5: To make policy and institutional solutions that enable women in social entrepreneurship to thrive, stay in business, and get noticed

The study recommends ecosystem-level interventions rooted in empirical findings. This includes gender-sensitive policies such as targeted credit lines, inclusive incubators, mentorship hubs, and supportive legal frameworks. Reports by UN Women and the World Bank underscore the need for integrated approaches involving government, private investors, and civil society. Real-world examples suggest that such collaborative frameworks foster sustained growth and equity in

women-led enterprises.

Analysis & Findings

This part looks at the main points from the literature study, which is backed up by a more in-depth look at secondary data and case studies. The main topics that came up in the research include the structural problems that women social entrepreneurs face, the creative ways they find to succeed, the measurable effects of their businesses, and their role in empowering communities.

Systemic Problems That Women Social Entrepreneurs Face

Even if more people are recognizing them, women in social entrepreneurship still have to deal with many problems. These problems come from structural, cultural, and institutional impediments that make it hard for everyone to participate fairly and sustainably.

A significant and ongoing challenge is the difficulty of obtaining sufficient funding. The capital gap is stark: women entrepreneurs globally receive less than 5% of total venture funding, according to the World Bank (2019). This issue is even more pronounced for social entrepreneurs, who must justify why their business strategies prioritize their social missions over profit-making. Cultural and social barriers: Patriarchal traditions and deeply ingrained social expectations frequently make it hard for women to move around, make decisions, and lead. In many societies, entrepreneurship is still seen as a man's job, and women are expected to take on professions that support or care for others. This kind of stereotyping can hurt their confidence, make them less visible, and make it harder for them to interact with others.

Limited Access to Networks and Mentorship: Women typically cannot get to the important professional networks, incubators, and mentorship programs that are necessary for growth and new ideas. Being alone makes it harder to find out about best practices, market trends, and ways to get money.

Improving community involvement and giving people authority

Women social entrepreneurs put community involvement at the heart of their plans. They don't see beneficiaries as passive recipients; instead, they see them as active collaborators in coming up with solutions.

- **Participatory Development in Action:** Pro Mujer and other groups use approaches where the people who benefit from the programs help make them, operate them, and give feedback on them. This method makes sure that the project is culturally relevant and encourages community ownership and long-term success.
- **Building Local Capacity:** In addition to their primary objectives, women entrepreneurs invest in training, education, and health services, which enhances the human capital within their communities. They empower others to become leaders, particularly women and young people, thereby creating a pipeline of individuals eager to make a positive impact.
- **Advocacy and Systemic Change:** Many of these executives serve as advocates, thus their influence often goes beyond their businesses. They use their positions to affect public policy and fight against unfair conventions. Their successful businesses are real-life examples that fight stereotypes and call for changes to the way things are done.

The Many Ways Women-Led Businesses Affect the World

Women-led social enterprises impact the economy, society, and environment, creating lasting value.

- **Economic Empowerment and Growth:** These businesses are great at creating jobs and bringing in money, which makes homes stronger and enhances living standards. The McKinsey Global Institute says that on a larger scale, improving gender equality may add \$12 trillion to the world's GDP by 2025.
- **Promoting Social Inclusion and Fairness:** One thing that makes women-led social enterprises stand out is that they focus on groups that are often left out, like survivors of violence, single mothers, and indigenous women. Pro Mujer, which works in many Latin American countries, tries to help over 2 million women with microfinance, health care, and business training. Their impact reports show that the families they help have better access to education and higher incomes.
- **Promoting Environmental Sustainability:** Women-owned businesses tend to prioritize sustainability in their operations. These businesses often set long-term ecological goals that focus on environmentally friendly practices, reducing waste, and sourcing materials in a fair and equitable manner.

Making it easier for people to get involved in their communities and feel empowered

Women social entrepreneurs put community involvement at the heart of their plans. They see beneficiaries not as passive recipients but as active collaborators in producing solutions.

Participatory Development in Action:

Pro Mujer and other groups use approaches where the people who benefit from the programs help make them, operate them, and give feedback on them. This method makes sure that the project is culturally relevant and encourages community ownership and long-term success.

Building Local Capacity:

In addition to their main goal, women entrepreneurs always put money into training, education, and health services, which helps the human capital in their communities expand.

Advocacy and Systemic Change:

Many of these executives serve as advocates; thus, their influence often goes beyond their businesses. They use their positions to affect public policy and fight against unfair conventions.

Research Findings

The study reveals significant insights into the evolving roles of women in social entrepreneurship. It highlights several key points: Women social entrepreneurs possess a distinctive leadership style characterized by empathy, collaboration, and openness. This approach not only influences their teams but also shifts perceptions in broader contexts.

- **Persistent Structural Challenges:** Women still face systemic challenges such as not having enough money, not having enough mentors, not getting enough help from institutions, and cultural norms that are biased against women.
- **Technology as an Equalizer:** Women can now connect with people worldwide without relying on traditional gatekeepers, thanks to digital tools and platforms such as crowdfunding sites, social media campaigns,

and e-commerce.

- **More than just money:** Social enterprises run by women tend to make significant impacts in society. Their work on education, healthcare, gender equality, and giving people control in their communities provides long-lasting advantages that make life better for everyone.
- **Need for Ecosystem-Level Support:** The proof demonstrates that we need an ecosystem that is helpful and has legislative changes that are sensitive to gender, support systems in institutions, ways to include everyone in the economy, and formal mentorship networks.

Conclusion

Women in social entrepreneurship are no longer on the sidelines; they are now the leaders of change who are trying to solve some of the most difficult and long-standing concerns in society. Their projects assist the economy in getting stronger, encourage social inclusion, and have a huge impact on sustainable development. Their approach, which often includes compassion, openness, and creativity, improves the way business can be done for the better.

But the problems with the institutions they still have to deal with often make their efforts less important. This highlights how crucial it is to get rid of structural barriers so that women who own businesses may compete on an equal level. It is not just fair to deal with these issues; it's also healthy for the economy and the government.

The study's results demonstrate that social businesses run by women are vital for generating lasting changes in society. Their work challenges the common belief that something can be detrimental to society and beneficial to the economy simultaneously. So, if governments,

institutions, and corporations want to see growth and development that includes everyone, they should make aiding women in this field a primary priority.

Recommendation and Suggestions

We need to focus on different areas as well as continuing doing so over time to fully use the strength of women in social entrepreneurship making difference. Filling the gaps that are already there and make the atmosphere more encouraging, the following ideas are suggested:

- **Set up unique social impact funds, blended finance models, and subsidized credit lines for firms led by women.** These are new financial tools that include everyone. Governments and international groups should give tax exemptions and other guarantees to attract private investment in these initiatives.
- **Integrated Mentorship and Peer Learning Networks:** There should be national and regional mentorship hubs that connect experienced business owners with women who wish to be leaders. Peer learning circles and co-working spaces can help people feel less alone, build community, and create a space where everyone can learn and grow together.
- **Changing the curriculum and making sure that gender studies and social entrepreneurship are part of regular lessons are two things schools need to do.** Young women can learn how to think like an entrepreneur by doing things like starting their firms, working in incubators, and taking part in real-life projects.
- **Enabling Regulatory and Legal Frameworks:** Governments need to modify the law so that women-run social businesses are recognized, protected, and given rewards. These include

better options for women company owners to establish their firms, parental and maternity leave, land ownership rights, and ways to handle disputes quickly.

Scope of Future Research

This discovery makes a lot of new study possible in the future. We need to constantly ask questions about social entrepreneurship continuously changing. Identifying its affect on men and women differently. Some essential things to look at in the future are: We need detailed case studies from each country specific of women's experiences in social entrepreneurship.

- Research in future needs to work on establishing gender-sensitive ways to quantify the social, economic, and environmental consequences of women-run social businesses. Further, introspect the SROI which is Social Return on Investment and gender-sensitive impact matrices are helpful.
- Women Entrepreneurs and Technology: Researchers should look into how new technologies like AI, blockchain, digital finance, and mobile platforms are transforming the opportunities and challenges that women confront in this field.
- Cross-Cultural Comparative Analyses: By looking at different geographic places, we can see how cultural, institutional, and policy issues affect women's participation, leadership styles, and impact.
- Longitudinal Research: Long-term studies that look at the life cycle of firms run by women can illustrate how they can develop, change, and stay in business through different stages of growth and external shocks like pandemics or economic crises.

Limitations

This study provides valuable insights, but it's important to recognize its limitations. Primarily relying on secondary sources means that it cannot capture real-time events or provide personal narratives from the field. Additionally, there is a risk of bias in the selection of literature, as most of the data originates from affluent countries, which could influence perceptions of the world.

Without primary data—such as interviews, ethnographic reports, or surveys—it's impossible to understand how gender intersects with other identity markers like caste, race, class, and age. Furthermore, the report does not address the experiences of indigenous, rural, or disabled women in social entrepreneurship, even though each groups may face challenges along with possessing different skills.

While the essay touches on technology. It fails to explore the difficulties of women face. While accessing or utilizing digital tools. Studies in the near future can get benefited from fieldwork and mixed-method research to integrate these aspects, creating comprehensive source of understanding.

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