

Foundations for Social Entrepreneurship

An Integrative Indian Perspective

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CENTRAL PROPOSITION

Understanding the intention to serve.

An integrative Indian perspective explores the deeper motivations of social entrepreneurship.



Read the research

01 Background and question

Social entrepreneurship brings social purpose into economic activity, yet its definitions and research traditions differ. The chapter asks what lies beneath an entrepreneur’s willingness to serve society.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can Indian philosophical perspectives help explain motivations and intentions in social entrepreneurship?

02 Conceptual framework

Worldview

Assumptions about reality and purpose.

Service

Action directed towards wider benefit.

Five principles connect unity, embodied knowing, holistic life goals, all connectedness and doing without doership. Together they orient inquiry towards motives as well as visible behaviour.

03 Evidence and method

Conceptual interpretation of Indian philosophical sources, placed in dialogue with social entrepreneurship literature.

The authors use worldview questions and illustrative organisations to develop an integrative paradigm. They propose a research process that examines the object, purpose and coherence of inquiry, without treating the examples as a validation study.

04 Making worldview assumptions visible

The chapter uses worldview questions to connect philosophical assumptions with the purposes of action.

Table 9.2 Prominent references relating to worldview elements of Indian philosophy

Worldview question	Sources from Indian philosophy
Explanation: <i>Advait/Dvait</i> — <i>Yat pinde Tat Brahmande</i> —Integral root (Advait) with diverse manifestations (Dvait)	4 Maha Vakya— • <i>Prajñānam brahma</i>—“Consciousness is Brahman” (Aitareya Upanishad 3.3, Rig Veda) • <i>Ayam ātmā brahma</i>—“The self (Atman) is Brahman” (Mandukya Upanishad 1.2, Atharva Veda) • <i>Tat tvam asi</i>—“Thou art that” (Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7, Sama Veda) • <i>Aham brahmāsmi</i>—“I am Brahman” (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10, Yajur Veda) • 18 Puranas
Etiology: • Divine Creation, Nada Brahman • Cyclic—beginning to end beginning Futurolology: • Cyclic—beginning to end beginning • The position of the observer is based on his/her perception Axiology: • Natural code of conduct—dynamic and contextual • Dharma—self-righteousness or self-responsibility • Karmic cycle—cause and effect cycles Epistemology: • Established by self-experience through: Pratyaksh (observation), Anumaan (inference) and Agama/ Shabda (oral traditions, scriptures, guru lineage) • Knowledge categorized around 4 Varna, 4 Ashram and 4 Purushaarth	• 18 Puranas • Neeti Shastra: for example: Vidur Neeti (from Mahabharata), Panchtantra (Vishnu Sharma) • Patanjali Yog Sutra • Madhavacharya’s Sarvadarshan Sangrah • Swami Prakashanand Saraswati, n.d. The True History and the Religion of India

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Original Table 9.2, first part, [1], p. 170. The table continues on p. 171; this panel faithfully reproduces the source artwork.

Five integrative principles

Unity · embodied knowing · holistic goals · connectedness · doing without doership

05 Findings and contributions

A Plural forms of enterprise

Integral unity allows different expressions of social entrepreneurship to be understood within a wider whole.

B Knowing through action

Embodied knowing and holistic life goals connect experience, material needs and spiritual aspirations.

C Motivation beyond the ego

Connectedness and doing without doership direct attention to service and the actor’s inner orientation.

06 Discussion

The framework makes assumptions about purpose explicit. It suggests that research should examine how entrepreneurs understand their responsibilities, learn through experience and relate their work to a wider social or spiritual horizon.

07 Limitations and next steps

The chapter develops propositions rather than testing them. Motives and inward experiences are difficult to infer from behaviour alone; comparative qualitative and participative research are proposed.

CONCLUSION

Understanding social entrepreneurship requires inquiry into the worldview, experience and intention that give service its meaning.

SELECTED REFERENCES

[1] Nandram, S. S., Bindlish, P. K., Purohit, H., Joshi, A., & Hingorani, P. (2019). Foundations for Social Entrepreneurship: An Integrative Indian Perspective. In *Servant Leadership, Social Entrepreneurship and the Will to Serve*, 161-186. Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-29936-1_9.

[2] Bacq, S., & Janssen, F. (2011). The multiple faces of social entrepreneurship: A review of definitional issues based on geographical and thematic criteria. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 23(5-6), 373-403.

[3] Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research*. Allen & Unwin.

[4] Aerts, D., et al. (1994). *Worldviews: From Fragmentation Towards Integration*. VUB Press.