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PROPOSITIONS ON FACTORS ENABLING TO SUSTAIN THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURE

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this paper is to look at the enabling factors for the sustenance of the social entrepreneurial ventures. This paper is derived from a research study conducted among 63 social entrepreneurs in India. The methodological approach used for the study was a close ended questionnaire with 33 items on a five-point scale. Friedman test was used to analyze the effectiveness of enabling factors for sustaining the social entrepreneurial ventures. The findings show that skills and strategies from the discipline of business administration, entrepreneurship and social work and social supports such as beneficiaries support, government support, and family members support facilitate to sustain the social entrepreneurial venture. This study is limited to Indian social entrepreneurs. This paper suggests to the aspiring and start-up social entrepreneurs to take into consideration the above stated enabling factors to enable them to sustain their venture. This paper is derived from an empirical research carried out to comprehensively describe social entrepreneurs in India.

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INTRODUCTION

The word sustainability indicates the ability to endure over a long time and be productive. For any person, who is initiating any type of venture, he or she will be preoccupied with the thoughts of sustainability and scalability of the organization (Dudnik, Nina, 2010). Social entrepreneurs sustain their ventures amidst many challenges specifically financial constraints, skeptical attitude, criticisms and lack of adequate support from different stake holders like family members, friends, people in the organization, the people whom they work for, and government. A study was conducted in Sweden with the research question of whether social enterprises were sustainable or not. The result of the study showed that 15 to 17 percent of the social entrepreneurial venture fail and exit from the market in every two years. The study concluded that the social enterprise had a long way to go to prove themselves that they would become sustainable (Jamburia, Giorgi, 2013). However, for a social entrepreneurial venture, sustainability is very much important for them to carry out their mission work. Also it is seen that the rapidly growing and sustainable social enterprise is the best vehicle for creating a social impact whether the social enterprise is for-profit or nonprofit (Kramer, 2005). With this background the present study tries to look at "what enables the social entrepreneurs to sustain their venture".

For the purpose of this article, sustainability of a social entrepreneurial venture means the very existence of the social entrepreneurs in the field of their service they are engaged in and their ability to meet their social mission.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Various authors have suggested the requirements needed for the social entrepreneurs to sustain their social entrepreneurial venture.

Skills and Strategies from Business Administration Facilitating the Sustainability

Kramer stated that the sustainability of the social enterprise is measured based on resource strategy, strength of management and operations and preparedness for shifting conditions. The resource strategy includes diverse and renewable sources of revenue aligned with business model. Strength of management and operations includes effective board of directors and management team, ability to recruit talent, insight into operating environment and a realistic growth strategy. Preparedness for shifting conditions means the ability to recognize probable challenges early and to respond to it flexibly. Further the author explains sustainability from the view point of funders that is the social enterprise is considered as sustainable only when it is able to continue its work even

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after the end of funder's financial support (Kramer, 2005). Generating surplus is necessary for social enterprises to ensure their sustainability for which they have to work in an entrepreneurial way as the traditional enterprises (Popoviciu and Popoviciu, 2011).

The social enterprise which adopts a mission-related business model attains sustainability to them and to the society (Vijayalakshmi and Narayanan, 2010). The social entrepreneurs apply sound business principles for blending the charitable donations, earned income or business profits to attain ultimate sustainability (Scofield, 2012). An integrated social entrepreneurship which blends profit making and social benefits either way enables the social entrepreneur to achieve social mission and enterprise sustainability (Fowler, 2000).

Involving in earned income strategy or commercial activity is the only means to achieve sustainability and self-sufficiency in the social enterprise (Boschee and McClurg, 2003; Hervieux and Turcotte, 2010). Linklaters classified social entrepreneur's organizations in two categories as not-for-profit hybrids and for-profit hybrids. The not-for-profit hybrids sustain their venture and meet their social mission through public funding and philanthropic contributions. On the other hand, the for-profit hybrids meet their social mission and sustain their venture by generating profits (Linklaters, 2006).

Social entrepreneurs can attain sustainability by using mixed revenue that is the combination of philanthropy, government subsidy and earned revenue (Patil, 2009). In order to create a sustainable social enterprise and social value, it is important to reinvest the revenue earned from the venture. In addition, the mixed sources such as commercial activities, voluntary work, donations in-kind or grant enable the venture to sustain in the future. Further the persistence of the social entrepreneurs in hunting for opportunities to create wealth will assure its sustainability and creation of social value (Chell, 2007). Author Kitzi (2001), had listed seven factors associated with the sustainability of social enterprise. They are: idea development - accessibility and availability of resources for research and development; startup - minimum cost to initiate the venture and also easy availability for seed funding; cost-to-benefit ratio - the expense of the program should be minimum and the social benefit should be high; organizational capability - the board members, staff and the volunteers must be competent enough and their adequacy in number must be aligned with area of service; income potential - the ability or the willingness of the target population to pay for the service; organizational capacity - the adaptability of the existing infrastructures, space and technology in the organization for a new service or expansion of services and finally funder interest - possibility of funders support for a longer period (Kitzi, 2001). In addition, Kitzi (2002) stressed on the importance of maintaining a good relationship with board members of the social enterprise because it is they who are playing a key role to further develop and sustain the social enterprise (Kitzi, 2002).

The Social entrepreneurs use different strategies to gain financial resource to sustain their initiatives and to solve the social problem based on the market. The market has been divided into three headings as no market, limited market and low-profit market. In the no market situation where the beneficiaries will not be able to pay for the service, the social

entrepreneurs depend on donation and grants to solve the social problem and to sustain their initiatives. In the limited market the beneficiaries have some ability to pay for the service. In such case the social entrepreneurs rely on some earned revenue, donations and grants both to solve social problems and sustain their initiative. In the low-profit market situation the beneficiaries are affordable to pay the full cost in such situation the social entrepreneurs depend on earned revenue to solve social problem and to sustain the initiative (Wolk, 2007).

It is important to capture markets beyond local market. The social entrepreneurs must take effort to reach out to the regional or even beyond the national markets to sustain their business (Wallace, 1999). For the social enterprise to sustain itself, access to market is playing a vital role (OECD, 2013). While thinking about sustainability of a social enterprise there is a tendency to think only in terms of finance but it is very much essential to think in terms of people too. It is very much crucial to attract more talented people into the field and advance the skills of the people already in it (CASE, 2008). The nonfinancial resources such as skilled or unskilled volunteers and one-time or recurring in-kind donations also facilitate the social entrepreneurs to sustain their initiatives (Wolk, 2007). Apart from financial resources, the social entrepreneurs need to develop strategy for acquiring human resources to the organizations for making the organization a sustainable one. Whether the organization meets its social objective through volunteerism or business venture it requires human resources to deliver the services on various levels in the organization (Doherty *et al.*, 2011).

Skills and Strategies from Entrepreneurship for the Sustainability

Various authors have identified key entrepreneurial qualities among successful social entrepreneurs and also suggested the importance of entrepreneurial skills for the sustainability of the organization. "*Money is important only to keep them alive*" but it is their commitment or love for their mission and tireless work towards their social mission make them effective and sustainable. Also the social enterprise should continuously maintain its innovativeness to sustain itself (Dees, 2001). The entrepreneurial behaviours specifically innovativeness, proactiveness, risk management and relentless effort are very much essential for a social entrepreneurial venture to achieve its desired social mission, to sustain the organization and to face environmental factors including competitiveness, complexity and the impact of the government. Along with this, clarity in the social mission is very important for the sustainability since it is being central part of the social enterprise (Weerawardena and Mort, 2006).

Skills and Strategies from Social Work and Social Supports for the Sustainability

The social entrepreneurs need to identify and ensure management succession in an orderly way to make their organization long-lasting, for which the author suggested two strategies. They are 1. developing a partnership with large companies and 2. building closer relationship with the government (Leadbeater, 1997). Obtaining and managing and utilization of socially embedded resources such as local support, networks of voluntary work, affiliations, public

funding, donations and grants assure the social entrepreneurial venture to be a sustainable one (Stryjan, högskola and Sweden, 2006). Building community networks that is, the supports between community to community is very much important to sustain the social business initiated by the social entrepreneurs (Schultz, 2009). According to author Jiao (2011), the social capital and human capital are playing an important role for the success and the survival of the social entrepreneurial venture. The social capital, that is, the networking relationship with other institutions is playing positive role for the survival of the social ventures. The higher level of human capital will ensure the success of the newly started social entrepreneurship activities. The human capital means the knowledge of the social entrepreneurs to understand the social need and to bring innovative solutions and the other is their competence to integrate various resources essential for their social entrepreneurial initiative (Jiao, 2011).

Integrated Factors for the Sustainability

Various authors have put forth the importance of integrated factors includes a combination of actors like entrepreneurial and business skills and strategies; or entrepreneurial and social work skills and strategies and social support; or business and social work skills and strategies and social support; or entrepreneurial, business and social work skills and strategies and social support which are important for the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture.

A combination of entrepreneurial orientation and business model is very much essential to sustain the social entrepreneurial venture (Zahra *et al.*, 2009). Author Kong has put forth three types of capitals, that is, intellectual capitals, relational capitals and structural capital. The utilization of these three capitals is important for the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture. 1. The intellectual capitals include knowledge and skills of various individuals. 2. Relational capitals are stakeholder relationship, partnership and collaboration. 3. Structural capital include the infrastructure development to facilitate innovation within the organization is very much important for the social enterprise to endure in the world of highly competitive environment (Kong, 2010). From an educational perspective the social enterprise practitioners and social entrepreneurs must nurture the following skills and competencies, specifically leadership skill together with managerial knowledge, entrepreneurial competencies and business skills to make their social enterprise to be an effective and sustainable one (Chell, Karata-Özkan and Nicolopoulou, 2007).

According to Spear *et al.* (2012) individuals with extensive combination of skills including life skills, social skills and work skills to promote social inclusion; entrepreneurial and managerial skills for marketing, finance, business planning and development and for growth and scale up; skills for workforce development are required to create, develop and sustain social enterprise (OECD, 2013).

According to authors Young and Grinsfelder the social entrepreneurial ventures are sustained through a combination of income sources, that is, income from business venture, government grants and philanthropy. Among these three income sources, the philanthropy is being prominent. It is because of which the new social venture may find it difficult to

capture the market in such situation it is the philanthropic contributions that enable them to meet their social mission until they become self-sustaining. As the sustainability of social venture requires a blend of resources in the same way it demands a mixture of skills comprising different sets of entrepreneurial skills as well as marketing skills, political skills and management skills. Marketing skills denotes the capability to locate market position and promote their products or services. Political skills signify building alliance, influencing and negotiating with important people such as volunteers, funders, government agencies and others. Management skills stand for prudent and accountable utilization of the resources those are essential for sustaining the social enterprise (Young and Grinsfelder, n.d.).

While analyzing the existing literatures, the authors have put forth the factors those are important for the sustainability of social enterprise from the perspective of business, entrepreneurial and social perspectives or in an integrated perspective.

From the business perspective, the factors including: attaining financial self-sufficiency through revenue aligned with business model or mission-related business model; generating surplus income; adopting mixed income strategy (blending the income from charitable donation, government grants and revenue earned from business model); reinvesting the revenue earned from the venture; working in an entrepreneurial or commercial way as the traditional enterprises; effective or competent board of directors or members and management team, staff and volunteers; maintaining a good relationship with board members; attracting more talented people; the social entrepreneurs' ability to recruit talent; and capturing markets beyond local market are the business factors emphasized for facilitating the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture.

From the entrepreneurial perspective, the factors comprising: commitment or love for the mission; tireless work towards their social mission; clarity in the social mission; innovativeness; continuously maintaining the innovativeness; proactiveness; risk management; ability to recognize probable challenges early and respond to it; utilizing the available infrastructure facilities effectively; and adopting existing technology are the entrepreneurial factors highlighted for fostering the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture.

From the social perspective, the factors covering: collaborative works by developing a partnership with large companies, by establishing relationship with government, by networking with voluntary organizations, by building community networks and gaining local support are some of the social factors emphasized for facilitating the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture.

From an integrated perspective, the factors including: entrepreneurial orientation and business model; the knowledge and skills from various individuals, stakeholder relationship, partnership, collaboration, and infrastructure development to facilitate innovation; the skills and competencies specifically leadership skill, managerial knowledge, entrepreneurial competencies and business skills; extensive combination of skills including life skills, social skills and work skills to promote social inclusion; entrepreneurial and managerial skills

for marketing, finance, business planning and development, and skills for workforce development; and blend of resources, mixture of skills comprising entrepreneurial skills, marketing skills, political skills and management skills. To conclude, the literature has highlighted different business, entrepreneurial and social work skills and strategies, social supports and integrated factors. This study aims to foster an integrated model required for sustaining the social entrepreneurial initiative together with the learning derived from the review of literature and from the learning obtained while interacting with social entrepreneurs. The integrated model would explain the importance of entrepreneurial, business and social work skills and strategies and social supports for the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture based on their effectiveness from the perspective of social entrepreneurs in India (see figure 1).

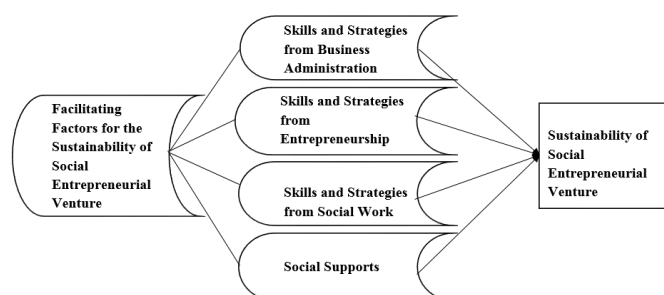


Figure 1 An Integrated Model for the Sustainability of the Social Entrepreneurial Venture

METHODOLOGY

This paper explores the various factors that facilitates the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial ventures. The study was conducted among 63 social entrepreneurs who had completed four years of their entrepreneurial life. The years of working in the field of social entrepreneurship for these social entrepreneurs' ranged from 5 years to 40 years. They carried out their social entrepreneurial ventures in different parts of India. They were located in 15 different Indian states namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. Of the 63 social entrepreneurs, 26 worked with the social mission of Community Development, others included Child Welfare (6), Women Welfare (2), Disabled Welfare (5), Health Care Services (5), Environment Protection (3), Unorganised Workers' Development (3), Youth Development (3), Farmers and Agricultural Development (4), Senior Citizens Welfare (1), Welfare of the Women affected by HIV/AIDS (1), Entrepreneurship Development (1), Disaster Management (1), Training and Development on Leadership Skills (1) and Sports Development (1).

Together with the factors identified from the literature, few more factors were identified while interacting with social entrepreneurs. With this learning, a close-ended questionnaire with 33 items on a five-point scale was prepared and data collected from social entrepreneurs whose venture had completed four years. All the 33 variables are grouped into four factors. They are named as skills and strategies from business administration, skills and strategies from entrepreneurship, skills and strategies from social work and social supports.

RESULTS

Facilitating Factors for the Sustainability of the Social Entrepreneurial Venture

The facilitating factors for the sustainability of social entrepreneurial venture were measured on a five-point scale where "Not at all" ranked as "1", "A little" ranked as "2", "To certain extent" ranked as "3", "Much" ranked as "4" and "Very much" ranked as "5". For the purpose of analysis, the responses were grouped in two categories. The responses under "Not at all" are named as "Not Facilitated" and the responses under other options such as "A little - Very much" were named as "Facilitated" in Table 1. One could infer from the Table 1, that all the 33 variables have contributed to the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial ventures.

Table 1 above shows the factors namely business, entrepreneurial and social work skills and strategies and social supports that facilitate the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture. Further the table elucidates the level of contributions of these factors on sustainability. The Friedman Test was carried out on these factors to find out the level of their contributions to the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture. The test result shows that, the calculated chi-square value (415.089) is more than the expected value (60.275) at the significant level of .000 hence there is significance difference between these factors on the level of their contributions. Based on the mean rank, these factors were grouped into three in accordance with the level of their contributions. The mean ranks of these factors ranged from 8 - 25. The Friedman Test Mean Rank indicates that higher the mean ranks the higher will be the contributions of these factors on the sustainability. The factors that have scored the mean ranks of 18 and above are considered as the most effective ones for facilitating the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture; the factors that have scored the mean rank between 13 - upto 18 are considered as the second level facilitating factors and the factors that scored between 8 - upto 13 are considered as the third level facilitating factors.

The factors namely the commitment of the social entrepreneur towards the cause (24.67), the persistence with which the social entrepreneur continued to try to achieve the mission (23.94), encouraging creative thinking in the organization among the employees (21.65), being focused on the vision (21.51), creative thinking of the social entrepreneur (20.14), continued innovative ways of working (19.77), the social mission of the social entrepreneurial venture (19.08), social entrepreneur's ability to deal with challenges (18.81), utilizing the available resources to the maximum (18.60) formed the factors towards understanding the skills and strategies for entrepreneurship; the factors such as harmonious relationship with stakeholders and board members (19.83), working in teams (19.65), building a team to function even in the absence of the social entrepreneur (19.33) and staff's dedication towards the cause (18.63) formed the factors for skills and strategies required under business administration; collaborating with other organizations (19.46), thorough knowledge of the concerned social issue (18.74) and involving communities in the work of the social entrepreneurial venture (18.01) formed the factor for skills and strategies from

social work. These are the top most facilitating factors for the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture.

The factors namely, adopting the existing technology (12.27) and inventing new technology (8.93) from the factor named

Table 1 Facilitating Factors for the Sustainability of the Social Entrepreneurial Venture

S. No	Facilitating Factors	Not Facilitated	Facilitated	Mean Rank	Chi-Square Value	P Value
Skills and Strategies from Business Administration						
1.	Harmonious relationship with stakeholders and board members	6 (9.5)	57 (90.5)	19.83		
2.	Working in teams	7 (11.1)	56 (88.9)	19.65		
3.	Building a team to function even in the absence of the social entrepreneur	5 (7.9)	58 (92.1)	19.33		
4.	Staff's dedication towards the cause	5 (7.9)	58 (92.1)	18.63		
5.	Ability of the social entrepreneur to retain talented workers	7 (11.1)	56 (88.9)	15.41		
6.	Competency of the social entrepreneur in managerial and business skill	8 (12.7)	55 (87.3)	14.14		
7.	Ability of the social entrepreneur to attract talented workers	10 (15.9)	53 (84.1)	14.08		
8.	Ability of the social entrepreneur to market the product/service easily	11 (17.5)	52 (82.5)	13.88		
9.	Competency of staff in managerial and business skill	10 (15.9)	53 (84.1)	13.50		
10.	Financial self sufficiency	13 (20.6)	50 (79.4)	10.44		
Skills and Strategies from Entrepreneurship						
11.	The commitment of the social entrepreneur towards the cause	--	63 (100.0)	24.67		
12.	The social entrepreneur kept on trying until achieved the mission- Persistent	--	63 (100.0)	23.94		
13.	Encouraging creative thinking in the organization among the employees	2 (3.2)	61 (96.8)	21.65		
14.	The social entrepreneur always being focused on the vision	2 (3.2)	61 (96.8)	21.51		
15.	Creative thinking of the social entrepreneur	1 (1.6)	62 (98.4)	20.14	415.089	.000
16.	Continuous innovative ways of working	4 (6.3)	59 (93.7)	19.77		
17.	The social mission of the social entrepreneurial venture	4 (6.3)	59 (93.7)	19.08		
18.	Social entrepreneur's ability to deal with challenges	2 (3.2)	61 (96.8)	18.81		
19.	Utilizing the available resources to the maximum	6 (9.5)	57 (90.5)	18.60		
20.	Bringing innovative solutions at the time of crisis	2 (3.2)	61 (96.8)	17.71		
21.	Entrepreneurial skills of the social entrepreneur	2 (3.2)	61 (96.8)	17.56		
22.	Social entrepreneur's tolerance towards unexpected risks	6 (9.5)	57 (90.5)	17.31		
23.	Adopting the existing technology	21 (33.3)	42 (66.7)	12.27		
24.	Inventing new technology	29 (46.0)	34 (54.0)	8.93		
Skills and Strategies from Social work						
25.	Collaborating with other organizations	2 (3.2)	61 (96.8)	19.46		
26.	Thorough knowledge on the concerned social issue	4 (6.3)	59 (93.7)	18.74		
27.	Involving communities in the work of the social entrepreneurial venture	4 (6.3)	59 (93.7)	18.01		
28.	Social work skills of the social entrepreneur	7 (11.1)	56 (88.9)	16.26		
29.	Charismatic leadership skill of the social entrepreneur	9 (14.3)	54 (85.7)	14.61		
Social Supports						
30.	Support received from the family	9 (14.3)	54 (85.7)	15.78		
31.	Support of the beneficiaries at the time of crisis	11 (17.5)	52 (82.5)	13.94		
32.	Support received from the government	19 (30.2)	44 (69.8)	8.94		
33.	Educational background of the social entrepreneur	12 (19.0)	51 (81.0)	14.43		

The second level facilitating group of factors for sustainability includes bringing innovative solutions at the time of crisis (17.71), entrepreneurial skills of the social entrepreneur (17.56) and social entrepreneur's tolerance towards unexpected risks (17.31) from the factor titled skills and strategies from entrepreneurship; ability of the social entrepreneur to retain talented workers (15.41), competency of the social entrepreneur in managerial and business skill (14.14), ability of the social entrepreneur to attract talented workers (14.08), ability of the social entrepreneur to market the product/service easily (13.88) and competency of staff in managerial and business skill (13.50) from the factor titled skills and strategies from business administration; social work skills of the social entrepreneur (16.26) and charismatic leadership skill of the social entrepreneur (14.61) from the factor entitled skills and strategies from social work; educational background of the social entrepreneur (14.43), support received from the family (15.78) and support of the beneficiaries at the time of crisis (13.94) from the factor titled social supports.

skills and strategies from entrepreneurship; financial self-sufficiency (10.44) from the factor named skills and strategies from business administration; support received from the government (8.94) from the factor named social supports are the third level facilitating group of factors for the sustainability of the social entrepreneurial venture.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, on an average 88.5 percent of the social entrepreneurs have opined that these factor namely business, entrepreneurial and social work skills and strategies and social supports together have facilitated them to sustain their social entrepreneurial venture. As the social entrepreneurs have multifaceted objectives to run their organization efficiently like, getting support from various stakeholders and meeting their social mission, it is required to compulsorily acquire various skills and utilize various strategies from three different disciplines. These disciplines are namely Business administration, Entrepreneurship and Social Work.

The Skills and Strategies from Business Administration such as attracting and retaining talented workers for their organizations by adopting innovative human resource management strategies; marketing their products easily by adopting different and innovative marketing strategies; motivating the employees to work in teams; building a team to function in the absence of the social entrepreneurs, maintaining harmonious relationship with the board members, motivating the staff's dedication towards the social mission of the social enterprise, and developing the social entrepreneurs' and staff's competency in managerial and business skills and thereby run and manage their social enterprise efficiently.

The Skills and Strategies from Entrepreneurship enable the social entrepreneurs to face any type of difficulty they face from their organizations, from their beneficiaries and from the external agencies and facilitate them to meet their social mission effectively. The entrepreneurial qualities of the social entrepreneurs include their commitment, persistence and focus towards their social mission; their entrepreneurial skills in general and in particular the creative thinking of the social entrepreneurs, their ability to bring innovative solutions at the time of crisis, their ability to deal with challenges and their tolerance towards unexpected risks; the entrepreneurial strategies consist their continuous innovative ways of working, encouraging creative thinking among the staff in the organization, utilizing the available resources effectively and adopting or innovating appropriate technology.

The Skills and Strategies from Social Work include the social work skills in general and their charismatic leadership skill enable them to get support from various stakeholders. The social work strategies such as the collaborative work with government, non-governmental organizations, corporates, social enterprises, and other neighboring institutions and organizations enable them to gain support from them; and having thorough knowledge and establishing appropriate mission statement in accordance with the social problem or need towards which they are working and involving the beneficiaries or communities in the work of the social enterprise enable the social entrepreneurs to gain support from their beneficiaries.

Apart from the above said skills and strategies, the social supports namely the support of the beneficiaries at the time of crisis, the support received from the government and the support received from the family members have also facilitated the social entrepreneurs to sustain their social entrepreneurial venture.

Therefore, one could confidently conclude a combination of above said factors including skills and strategies from the disciplines of business administration, entrepreneurship and social work and social supports such as beneficiaries support, government support, and family members support are essential for the social entrepreneurs to sustain their social entrepreneurial venture.

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