



**Prem Chand Markanda  
S.D. College for Women, Jalandhar**



**Re-Accredited with 'A<sup>+</sup>' Grade by NAAC (Second Cycle)**

# **Sustaining Growth with Equity: Roadmap for Development of Entrepreneurship in Punjab**

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## A Case Study on The Role of Social Entrepreneurs In Disaster Resilience

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### **Abstract**

*An individual who seeks out innovative applications that could address issues in the community is known as a social entrepreneur. Social entrepreneurship aims to improve society, which is especially important in developing nations where government programs are ineffective. "Social isolation and/or inability to be able to fully participate in the standards and way of life of society" are terms used to describe social marginalization. The two condensed case studies of social entrepreneurs who improved the lives of underprivileged women in society are covered in this essay. The rural economies are being revitalized by Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP). Working in climate change-affected areas has enabled women to become farmers, entrepreneurs, and grassroots leaders who are resolving local problems through small businesses. Prema and her colleagues developed the SSP (Successful Women's Partnership) program to help 145,000 women in remote markets. In 1972, Barefoot College was established in Rajasthan with the intention of helping underprivileged and neglected rural communities. With the aim of providing the poorest people with access to practical skills and knowledge, the college trains illiterate people in areas like as solar energy, water, healthcare, rural handicrafts, communications, and women's empowerment.*

**Keywords:** Social Entrepreneurs, Rural, Women

### **Introduction**

An individual who seeks innovative applications that could address issues in the community is known as a social entrepreneur. These people are prepared to assume the risk and exert the effort necessary to use their initiatives to improve society. In the continuous process of innovation, learning, and adaptation, social entrepreneurs are innovators. They are creative because they develop original ideas, pioneer new techniques, and present novel approaches to problems. (Dees,



1998) More and more talent, funds, and attention are being drawn to social entrepreneurship. The need to promote social change is signaled by social entrepreneurship, which has the potential to yield long-term, profound benefits for society. Social entrepreneurship is a strategy used by entrepreneurs and start-up businesses to create, finance, and execute solutions for environmental, social, or cultural problems. Numerous organizations with different sizes, goals, and ideologies can use this idea. Social entrepreneurship aims to improve society, which is especially important in developing nations where government programs are ineffective. People leave the government and corporate sectors to handle the requirements of society. Social entrepreneurs are crucial to addressing the poor social conditions in developing economies, particularly given the resource scarcity and corruption that many nations are notorious for. The social entrepreneur, on the other hand, neither plans nor expects to generate a sizable profit for themselves or their investors, who are primarily government and charitable groups. However, it is quite challenging to obtain resources for social projects. This is because social businesses are constantly dependent on individuals, foundations, or the government for support, and thus have restricted access to limitless sources of funding. Bradach and Foster (2005). SE has been seen as a potential way to lessen the acute vulnerability caused by government failure because it offers to provide the poor with vital goods and services as well as a means of subsistence (Habaradas and Aure, 2016). However, because of substantial gaps in information, data, and funding on social impact, most social businesses are not scalable or financially viable, despite this intention (Ito and Shahnaz, 2019). Social entrepreneurs must combine market-based and socially motivated criteria during the venture development process because of the constraints imposed by sustainability, the environment, and social mission (Dees, 1998). Rather, a social entrepreneur seeks value in the form of a broad, transformative benefit that benefits either a sizable portion of society or society as a whole. Social entrepreneurs are able to develop novel solutions to social issues, put them into practice on a large scale, and alter the course of society. Marginalization is the process by which persons in positions of authority make a particular individual or group of individuals feel less significant. People who are marginalized are compelled to live on the outskirts of society. They are consequently denied access to the resources and opportunities that the non-marginalized segments of society enjoy. A combination of political, social, cultural, and economic elements contribute to the marginalization of particular social groupings. According to Anderson et al., social marginalization is defined as "social isolation and/or the inability to fully participate in the standards and way of life of society." It is often seen as a result of economic marginalization and is associated with social exclusion (Morgan et al.; Heikkinen; Anderson). In order to better comprehend the notion of social entrepreneurship, this study will aim to document brief cases of social entrepreneurs who have improved the lives of marginalized women in society.

**Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP):** This organization is revitalizing rural economies by empowering women. Working in climate change-affected areas has enabled women to become farmers, entrepreneurs, and grassroots leaders who are resolving local problems through small businesses. Prema and her colleagues developed the SSP (Successful Women's Partnership) program to help 145,000 women in remote markets. The proposal includes a rural entrepreneurship school, a market aggregator, a resilience fund for women-led businesses, and a network of 5,000 Self-Help Groups (SHGs). It has also spurred collaborations between companies, investors, and the government. Raised in Pune, Prema completed her education across India and earned a master's degree in social work. She traveled to nine states to meet with NGOs and learn about poverty and women. She co-founded the globally recognized non-governmental organization SPARC in Mumbai and holds an MPhil and postgraduate degree in social work. After learning about grassroots women and rural reality, she started working with rural areas in 1993. For over 25 years, Prema has been at the forefront of innovation to support women from marginalized groups as they transition into mainstream roles. Her market-based strategy for disaster resilience has been recognized by the Indian government and international organizations.

She has advised international institutions like the UNDP, World Bank, and Huiarou Commission on



women's leadership. Prema is an Ashoka and Synergos fellow who has received over 14 honors. SSP works with landless and marginalized farmer households, particularly those led by women, in drought-prone areas of seven Indian states. Women are especially vulnerable to food insecurity and climate shocks because they face barriers to accessing resources, money, and skills. Marathwada, the model's development zone, has little irrigation coverage and is severely water-short. Because resilient farming models provide women the power to decide what to grow, how to use inputs, and how much to sell, they significantly alter agriculture and livelihood. They aid farmers in refining their methods as well. Along with supporting small enterprises, the project aims to provide women with access to microfinance institutions for seed fund funding and company expansion loans, as well as leadership and entrepreneurship training. It also aims to facilitate women's access to rural marketing and distribution.

In the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, which has had the biggest rainfall shortfall in the past ten years, Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) aims to increase the resilience of the local population. The region's changing climate and women's limited decision-making power have disproportionately harmed women's families and health. SSP sees women as crucial change agents who can help address these issues. In rural India, women are increasingly taking on the roles of community health care providers and Arogya Sakhis, or community health entrepreneurs. These women receive training on how to use modern technology and diagnostic tools to deliver preventative healthcare services at the patient's door, increasing their income.

The initiative also prioritizes the production of nutrient-dense food, the development of women-led farming organizations, and the sharing of best practices in nutrition, hygiene, sanitation, and food preparation. Health leaders engage with women and adolescent girls through monthly home and school visits, encouraging behavior adjustment and healthy habits. At the core of this effort is strengthening women's leadership to enable decentralized climate risk governance and enhance the well-being of women, girls, and families. The development of the community's social capital is facilitated by their increased capabilities. female executives India's energy supply has greatly increased over the past 20 years, and more than 75% of its people now have access to electricity. Millions of households still lack access to contemporary energy services and are at risk from climate change, particularly those in rural areas. Due to limited access or a lack of knowledge, the demand for clean energy technologies and related products in rural India is not keeping up with the demand. The empowerment and empowerment of female clean energy entrepreneurs can enhance outreach and increase the accessibility of clean energy information and solutions for the "last mile." In 2012, the Partnership on Women's Entrepreneurship in renewable Energy (WPOWER) program increased the usage of renewable energy in rural communities. The Women's Entrepreneurship in Clean Energy program by Swayam Shikshan Prayog creates connections between female entrepreneurs, understanding of clean energy technologies, product accessibility, and assistance for rural communities. The program creates a scalable model of public-private partnerships and strengthens networks of women entrepreneurs by providing markets, finance, and technology. Sakhis, the program's central network, is supported by multisector partnerships that increase access to markets, funding, and technology. Solar water heaters, solar lamps, and advanced cookstoves are among the things that the Sakhi network supplies to rural communities. The program also trains and educates rural women in business management and renewable energy. Public awareness campaigns are used to promote renewable energy solutions, create clean energy hubs for marketing, training, and service, and facilitate business linkages among networks of female entrepreneurs. The best in a decade. Extreme droughts and the effects of climate change have occurred in the Marathwada region, where SSP was implemented in 1993. In 2015, there was the biggest rainfall shortfall in ten years, with 53% of the rainfall falling in one year. The region also has the greatest percentage of female suicides, the lowest per capita income in Maharashtra, and limited employment opportunities outside of agriculture. Inadequate health indicators exacerbate the issue. Over the past 20 years, thousands of women from 2000 climate-threatened areas throughout six Indian states have started businesses in the



fields of safe agriculture, sustainable energy, sanitation, and nutrition.

They affirmed their identity as farmers, trained thousands of people, and transitioned from independent contractors to more diverse enterprises. Of the 900 recognized women leaders in climate resilience, 500 are also involved in local government. Organic farming has been established on 30,000 acres of once desert land, and family incomes have improved by 45–55%. Alongside their financial success, SSP's grassroots female entrepreneurs are making a positive impact on their communities. As it works with the government to broaden its model and transform India, SSP is demonstrating that supporting rural women businesses can be a smart move.

Barefoot College was established in 1972 in Rajasthan with the intention of empowering marginalized rural underprivileged groups via the use of a learning-by-doing methodology. With the aim of providing the poorest people with access to practical skills and knowledge, the college trains illiterate people in areas like as solar energy, water, healthcare, rural handicrafts, communications, and women's empowerment. Gandhi's teachings and the village's independence serve as its inspiration. Illiteracy does not stop disadvantaged populations from bettering themselves, as demonstrated by Barefoot College, which demonstrates that individuals with literacy skills may spread even highly advanced technologies.

Thousands of people are trained each year for a range of careers, including engineering, teaching, and medical. Built by low-cost masons and architects, the Barefoot campus is the only college in India that runs entirely on solar electricity. It has also helped electrify 35,000 households in 37 countries using solar energy, saving 4.6 million gallons of kerosene. Since 1986, Barefoot engineers have collected rainwater in 901 remote village schools, providing clean water to 2.65 million rural pupils. In addition, 1,513 rainwater collection systems have been built, generating 96.65 million liters of water annually.

A village solar committee is formed with the goal of powering villages that are not yet connected, and female solar engineers return to their areas to set up a rural electronic workshop (REW) and install free solar equipment. Beneficiary households contribute a set amount each month to the committee's shared account. This makes it possible for the committee to regularly compensate the female solar engineers and finance the purchase of spare parts and new batteries. Two continuing initiatives financed by ONGC are solar elution in eight Assamese settlements in Hailakandi and solar elution in fourteen Pacific Islands. The first project aims to employ women with solar engineering training to electrify 2800 homes and produce mosquito nets, candles, and sanitary napkins.

Twelve rural women receive training in women's health, financial literacy, and leadership development during the second program. Renowned social entrepreneur Sanjit Roy has been a major force in the community movement for over 40 years. Influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's sustainability philosophy, Roy has been recognized as one of the 100 most significant individuals globally and one of the 50 environmentalists in the world. The SUEZ Environment-Water for All Foundation Special Prize, the Condé Nast Traveler Environmental Award, the Ashden Award for Sustainable Energy, the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, the St Andrews Prize for the Environment, the Tech Museum for Innovation Award, the SUEZ Environment-Water for All Foundation, and the ALCAN Award for Sustainability are just a few of his numerous accolades.

## Conclusion

The need to promote social change is signaled by social entrepreneurship, which has the potential to yield long-term, profound benefits for society. Under the direction of SSP, thousands of women from 2000 climate-threatened communities in six Indian states have initiated collaboration in safe agriculture, clean energy, sanitation, and nutrition over the past 20 years. They affirmed their identity as farmers, trained thousands of people, and transitioned from independent contractors to more diverse enterprises. Of the 900 recognized women leaders in climate resilience, 500 are also involved in local government.

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*Price : 249/- Only*

978-81-986495-5-3



9 788198 649553

*Published by : Aastha Prakashan Grih  
Raja Garden, Jalandhar- 144001  
M : 99880-16399, 98145-27152*