# Cross-country Analysis of Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem and Support System in India and Malaysia

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**Abstract**

The social entrepreneurship ecosystem cannot thrive without strong support structures. This study examines the status of social entrepreneurship and the support available to social entrepreneurs in two developing economies, viz. Malaysia and India and suggests potential improvements. The interview technique was used to collect data from social entrepreneurs running leveraged non-profit enterprises, hybrid non-profit enterprises, and traditional NGOs. Interview data were analyzed through thematic analysis, and the following five overarching themes were identified in Malaysia: training, grants from companies, accreditation by SMSE, relationships among social entrepreneurs, and university students as potential social entrepreneurs. In India, the following six themes were identified: addressing social problems, building a community for support, training, funding and grants, incubation and acceleration, and education. In Malaysia, social entrepreneurs' role and innovation enhancement in this sector are the support structures with potential improvement possibilities. Whereas, in India, potential improvement is possible in incubation, acceleration and mentoring, access to funds, resources for enhancing entrepreneurial competence, human capital, and cultural challenges. Considering future opportunities, it is important to focus on potential improvements and channel the investment efforts toward real problems to achieve meaningful results. Once all the stakeholders understand the impact of such investments, the adoption will be much better. Hence, in the long run, it is imperative to define what constitutes a significant impact and develop systems to monitor and measure the progress.

*Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Support Structure*

# 1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship, which seeks to catalyze long-term social change by addressing basic human needs, could become a key driver of long-term development. When pushing for a sustainable development that respects human rights and cares for the fair use of resources, social entrepreneurship refers to handling complicated social and wicked problems through novel solutions (Edward, 2020). Social entrepreneurship's innovative nature necessitates enterprises practice transparency and accountability in their day-to-day operations. As a result, when they have a direct impact, it is their responsibility to demonstrate integrity from the start (MAGIC, 2016). Unemployment, crime, drug addiction, poverty, and social isolation are all issues that must be addressed.

While operating as authorized corporations, social companies have the same noble ideals as these organizations (Arshad, 2020). Aside from these social gains, social entrepreneurs contribute to the country's economy (Foster et al., 2013). Social entrepreneurship visionaries are growing fundamentally; people are, at this point, unaware of these endeavours. This could hamper entrepreneurs who intend to have a legitimate social impact. It furthermore reduces their chances of obtaining support from monetary benefactors to scale their organisations. Sound business models are needed to ensure the long-term viability of promising social enterprises, just as they are for other viable businesses. While profitability is one of the main elements, social enterprises are geared to the causes they support. When they make a profit, a significant portion of it will be reinvested as business capital. This is where social enterprises vary from the rest of the capitalist system's conventional businesses. Many corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs' expenses are deductible from corporate tax. CSR is also often used as a marketing tool to increase the visibility of a company's products or services (Arshad, 2020).

Social enterprises with sustainable business models embody novel solutions that address many negative externalities while producing progressive ones (Gandhi & Raina, 2018). They have thus secured a prominent space when it comes to discourses on civic commitment and volunteerism. The contribution of a social enterprise is mainly driven by its founding mission, in other words – the reason for its existence. These organisations cater to the pressing societal needs that existing businesses and institutions have failed to address. Any social enterprise requires its founder entrepreneur to be guided by a social cause and address distressing social issues through innovative business solutions. This, in fact, differentiates a social entrepreneur from the entrepreneurial community.

Social enterprises face some challenges in finding appropriate sourcing/ funds, recruiting and retaining skilled labour (due to lower pay scale and undefined job roles), and measuring the impact. In this scenario, it becomes necessary to understand the social enterprise ecosystem and the availability of support for these organizations. There is no viable bridge connecting small and large companies in a collapsing entrepreneurial ecosystem. Due to management control restrictions, small family companies are effectively prevented from developing into large corporations; large corporations seldom invest in or expand small businesses. In most sectors, even buyer-supplier relationships with subcontractors, which are crucial to the activity of large companies in advanced industrialized countries, are either underdeveloped or absent. Entrepreneurs consistently complain that traditional business-friendly policy mechanisms like tax subsidies, grants, and environmental legislation have no impact on their performance or the viability of local entrepreneurial ecosystems. Access to networks, quality of life, and other intangibles are more important to entrepreneurs (Kleiner & Krueger, 2013).

# 2. Literature Review

## 2.1 Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Entrepreneurship ecosystem refers to the interconnected environment that facilitates new businesses' birth, growth, and success. Ecosystem refers to the environment where enterprises operate, grow, and establish relationships with all stakeholders. "The entrepreneurial ecosystem is a set of connected actors, organizations, institutions and entrepreneurial processes that formally and informally merge to connect, mediate and manage performance in the local entrepreneurial environment" (Mason & Brown, 2014, p. 5). In order to foster the growth and development of social enterprises, it is necessary to provide a supportive environment that encourages incubation, networking, and execution of activities. A strong entrepreneurship ecosystem is crucial for economic growth and job creation, particularly in developing countries where small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of the economy and help them achieve their performance goals (Sharfaei et al., 2022). This literature review will examine the latest studies on the entrepreneurship ecosystem and its components.

Extensive research has been carried out on the entrepreneurial ecosystem and its elements in different

geographic regions such as Scotland (Roy et al., 2015), Italy, Sweden, and Japan (Borzaga et al., 2016), Kansas City (Sarma & Sunny, 2017) and Belgium (Nyssens & Huybrechts, 2020). Researchers have also analyzed specific sectors such as impact investing (Roundy, 2020), community-based crafts (Pathak & Mukherjee, 2020), recycled bags (Pfeilstetter, 2020), and microfinance (Purkayastha et al., 2020). Literature reveals the following elements of the entrepreneurial ecosystem: human capital, particularly entrepreneurial education and training (Rosenbusch et al., 2021); access to financing (Adeyemo et al., 2021); access to technology, such as the Internet and mobile phones, physical infrastructure, such as affordable and flexible office space (Malebana et al., 2021) simple legal and regulatory frameworks (Mutlu et al., 2020), strong entrepreneurial culture characterized by risk-taking and innovation (Shu & Yuan, 2021), infrastructure, access to resources, knowledge and skill in Europe and mutual recognition and networking, education, expert advice, promotion, coalition, finance, education and skills in Serbia (Talic & Stefanovic, 2022), market linkages, innovation, institutional support, physical infrastructure, demand for the product (Pathak & Mukherjee, 2020).

The entrepreneurship ecosystem comprises several elements such as human capital, financial capital, physical infrastructure, legal and regulatory frameworks, mentors, customers, suppliers, support infrastructures, incubators, accelerators, governmental agencies, and culture. Overall, a strong entrepreneurship ecosystem is critical for economic growth and job creation. Therefore, policymakers should focus on creating an enabling environment that supports these elements and encourages entrepreneurship.

### 2.2 Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in India

A good part of the Indian population residing in rural areas faces hardships related to access to sanitation, health services, and other amenities. This presents an opportunity and the need for social organizations that can fulfill the basic requirements of the population and free them from poverty, unemployment, and malnutrition. Since the early 2000s, India has seen a rise in social enterprises that work towards raising the living standard of the underprivileged. According to Intellecap (2018), the investments indicate that India's social enterprises have attracted US$ 1.6 billion from 2004 to 2011. The Bertelsmann Stiftung study (2018) also states that the impact investment in India has grown from US$ 7.6 million to US$ 17.6 million between 2010 and 2016. The British Council study reports that the country is home to around 2 million social enterprises.

The social enterprises in India are distributed among the agriculture, energy, education, financial inclusion, sanitation, and water sectors. These non-profit and for-profit organisations strive to provide free or low-cost services to the poor and needy. These enterprises are mostly concentrated in the South and Western parts of the country and Delhi (Ganesh et al., 2018). The reason is the availability of good infrastructure, access to finance, and talented human capital. According to British Council (2016), most of these enterprises were registered between 2010- 2015 and are run by entrepreneurs aged 35-44. The nation's youth is mostly involved in the skill development and education sector. According to Haugh and Talwar (2016), some social enterprises in rural India run by rural women have led to a change in the attitude of men, and society has disrupted the power relationships in the Indian family system. Despite these, it is also important to note that these enterprises struggle in a resource-deficit environment. The high operating costs, lack of market acceptance/visibility, lack of skilled workforce, low profits, and scalability issues challenge their existence (Mukherji, 2014). Some social enterprises registered as NGOs, though able to raise funds, cannot attract young and skilled talent, which causes problems in efficiency and performance.

Like other emerging economies, India lacks a legal definition, framework, or anything close to a Social Enterprise Act (Sengupta et al., 2017). This also deprives them of a formal recognition status and tax benefits in the country. The lack of a proper definition of social enterprises has also resulted in them getting limited attention from the research community. Most of the information about these enterprises is not readily available, and very little is known about their management and processes. Presently the social enterprises in India are either non-profit or charitable organisations (registered under The Indian Trusts Act -1882 of Companies Act, 1956), for-profit organisations, or hybrid entities which incorporate features of the previous forms.

The cultural and demographic diversity of India also presents a challenge in understanding its social entrepreneurship ecosystem. The social entrepreneurship ecosystem, along with the social entrepreneurs, includes the Government, academic institutions that fund research and incubation services, large corporate organisations that engage social enterprises to meet their CSR goals, financial and non-financial support providers, and large affluent family foundations willing to give back to society. Technology and innovation are key enablers of these social enterprises.

Apart from regulating and monitoring the important impact sectors, the Government of India has also framed 39 key policies for social enterprise and entrepreneurship. The 'National Skill and Entrepreneurship Policy' (2015) has a section dedicated to social entrepreneurship that aims to promote these enterprises (British Council Report, 2016). This policy aims to promote grass root innovation, social entrepreneurship courses, patent filing, and funding of social enterprises. Other policies introduced by the Government include Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Prime Minister Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, the National Energy Policy 2017, Solid Waste Management Rules (SWM) 2016, the New Education Policy, the New Health Policy, Digital India, Start-up India, and Stand-up India schemes facilitate social entrepreneurship in the Nation. The government has eased several regulatory processes for social enterprises. The reduction in several trademark filing forms and a 10% subsidy are aimed at promoting these enterprises. The Government also bears 50% of costs related to patents.

Corporate entities and academic institutions: The Ashoka Fellowship, started by Bill Drayton in 1980, offers stipends to social entrepreneurs who aim to make notable changes in society and has also inspired and helped social entrepreneurs in India. Currently, the country has over 400 Ashoka fellows working in various impact sectors. UnLtd India and Villgro are notable incubators providing financial and advisory services to social entrepreneurs. The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and Dasra run accelerator programmes that help social enterprises access funding and mentoring services. Around 50 impact funds and investors operate in India. They provide seed, early-stage, and growth-stage funding to social enterprises. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) has collaborated with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to support small, scalable businesses in eight low-income states across India.

The amendment of the Companies Act 2013, which made it mandatory for companies with a net worth of INR 500 crore to spend at least 2% of net profits (of 3 consecutive financial years) on CSR activities, has increased the funds available for the NGOs in India. Major associations under the Chamber of Commerce and Industry provide accreditation facilities, helping social enterprises attain corporate donations. Many media platforms and communities post social entrepreneurship stories that help them attain visibility. Various awards and events celebrate the spirit of social entrepreneurship. Notable among them are Schwab's Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award, the Manthan Award,

and NASSCOM's 10,000 Start-Ups (British Council Report, 2016)

Though the support structure in the nation is quite good, the lack of awareness about social entrepreneurship prevents many small social enterprises from obtaining funds and grants. Bigger organizations, on the other hand, gain access to multiple rounds of funds.

## 2.3 Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Malaysia

According to the British Council, more than 20,000 businesses in Malaysia depend on friendly trade. In Malaysia, social entrepreneurship strengthens minority networks, facilitates grant work, and aids in the achievement of United Nations-set goals. Interest in social enterprise and social entrepreneurship has increased exponentially among aspiring entrepreneurs, civil society organisations, policymakers, funders, and academics (British Council, 2018). It is found that the most notable wellspring of financing for social business in Malaysia is stable, followed by lesser resources from endowments and grants (Hubs, 2019).

The types of social entrepreneurship in Malaysia include leveraged non-profit enterprises, hybrid non-profit enterprises, and traditional NGOs. Leveraged non-profit enterprise is a venture capital strategy that is not-for-profit. Entrepreneurs work at all levels of society to achieve relevant perspectives on issues, including developed and emerging economies. External benefit funds can be used by leveraged non-profits, and while their partners have a vested interest in their long-term success, long-term sustainability is typically improved.

While a hybrid non-profit enterprise is also a non-profit organization, the model includes ways to recover costs by selling goods and services. Entrepreneurs must mobilize funding sources other than the public or charitable sector to maintain their activities. Grants or loans are a source of the problem of shortage of funds. However, these loans must be repaid at a specific time (MaGIC Social Entrepreneurship Unit, 2015). Social entrepreneurship is often correlated with government and non-governmental organizations or NGOs' efforts to improve the economic status of the poor. To help them get out of poverty, many disadvantaged people have turned to social entrepreneurship initiatives like technical skills training and microfinance schemes.

The government supports and promotes social enterprises, especially among youth, as well as volunteerism. The government has strengthened the program's social capital to

continue the Tenth Malaysia Plan (10MP). Government programs such as Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), Small and Medium Industry Development Corporation (SMIDEC), Entrepreneurial Group Economic Fund (TEKUN), Small Medium Enterprise Development Bank (SME Bank), and the departments of every state and cooperation influenced entrepreneurial training and financial assistance (Raudah Adnan et al., 2018).

Support structures in Malaysia aid in easing the journey of social enterprises right from the beginning. Firstly, is by choosing the legal structure for their social business. They have the choice of setting up a Private Company Limited by shares (Sdn Bhd), Company Limited By Guarantee (Bhd), a society which is governed by the Societies Act 1966 (SA), a trust which is governed by Trustees (Incorporation) Act 1952, a partnership which is governed by Partnership Act 1961, Limited Liability Partnerships (LLP) which are governed by Limited Liability Partnership Act 2012 (LLPA), Co-operative Societies which are governed by Co-operative Societies Act 1993, and Sole Proprietorship (SP) which are governed by the Registration of Business Act 1956 (MAGIC, 2016).

Support structures are critical for social entrepreneurs to launch and develop their businesses. They not only provide logistical assistance such as financing, office space, advice, and experience in market analysis and business plan preparation, but they also, perhaps most importantly, provide emotional support. They also help inexperienced social entrepreneurs gain trust (Flaviano Zandonai, 2015). Support structures and policies available in Malaysia are depicted in Table 1.

## Table 1. Support Structure

| Policies, Accreditations, Incubators, Accelerators, and Support Programmes | Details |
|---|---|
| The 12th Malaysia Plan | The 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) is a development blueprint for the years 2021 to 2025 in Malaysia. |
| Impact Driven Enterprise Accreditation (IDEA) | Validates and legally recognizes the great work that impact driven businesses do all around Malaysia. |
| National Entrepreneurship Policy | A long-term strategy for Malaysia to become an outstanding entrepreneurial nation by 2030. |
| Sustainable and Responsible Investment (SRI) Fund Framework | SRI investors and issuers can benefit from the formation of an ecosystem that encourages sustainable and responsible investing. |
| AirAsia Foundation | The AirAsia Foundation, the airline's philanthropic arm, provides seed funding as well as mentorship to Southeast Asian social enterprises. |
| Amplify Accelerator by MaGIC | A six-week capacity-building programme designed to help 'impact driven enterprises' scale their growth and impact. The accelerator provides workshops on topics such as impact assessment, financial management, and business model optimization, as well as mentorship and networking opportunities. |
| The British Council's Global Social Enterprise Programme | An international initiative that promotes the growth of social enterprise and social investment in the United Kingdom and other countries by sharing best practises and facilitating opportunities between them. |
| Global Accelerator Programme by MaGIC | A regional programme aimed at fostering an ASEAN start-up community by assisting start-ups in becoming investment-ready in four months. |

| Policies, Accreditations, Incubators, Accelerators, and Support Programmes | Details |
|---|---|
| Impact Hub KL | A collaborative learning environment that is part of the global Impact Hub network. Impact Hub KL not only serves as a physical co-working space and social innovation lab, but it also offers workshops and training programmes for social enterprises. |
| MaGIC IDEA Accelerator | An early-stage social enterprise accelerator programme that guides start-ups from ideation to execution. Successful participants are also awarded IDE certification. |
| PurpoSE Malaysia | A private entity that provides advisory and consulting services to social enterprises as well as companies interested in investing in social enterprise. |
| Social Enterprise Academy | The academy provides learning and development for individuals and organisations facilitating social change, with a particular emphasis on leadership and impact assessment skills. |
| Social Impact Exchange | AIM-managed platform for social purpose organisations that seeks to connect social enterprises with potential funders. |
| Social Outcome Fund | A government initiative that funds social purpose organisations through the 'pay for success' model. If funded projects are shown to be effective and cost-effective, the government will reimburse the project's third-party funder. |

| Higher education institutions, research institutes and support organisations | Details |
|---|---|
| Enactus Malaysia | Enactus has a presence on many Malaysian university campuses, with the goal of developing the entrepreneurial skills of university students. To foster the entrepreneurial spirit, the organisation hosts workshops, networking events, and competitions. |
| iLabs at Sunway University | A non-profit innovation lab that taps into the parent company of the university, Sunway Group, including its venture capital arm. The lab's goal is to promote entrepreneurship and market-driven innovation. |
| Monash University Malaysia's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Hub | A space within the university for idea incubation; the hub also hosts workshops and talks by social entrepreneurs for its students on a regular basis. |
| Universiti Malaysia Kelantan's (UMK) Social Entrepreneurship Centre | UMK is Malaysia's only public university that focuses on entrepreneurship education. It intends to offer niche social entrepreneurship programmes, part-time skills training, and conduct more research on social enterprise in Malaysia through its Social Entrepreneurship Centre. |
| Universiti Teknologi Mara's Social Innovation Support Unit | The unit, which is funded by the Erasmus+ Southeast Asia Social Innovation Network, serves as a meeting and networking space for social innovators. |

## 3. Methodology

For this study, a qualitative research design was used to achieve the objectives of the study, and the interview method was chosen to obtain all the important information related to this study. The sample frame of this study involved leveraged non-profit enterprises, hybrid non-profit enterprises, and traditional NGOs. Data was collated from six social entrepreneurs in Malaysia. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data.

## 4. Empirical Findings from Interviews

The outcomes of the personal interviews with social entrepreneurs from the Indian and Malaysian groups are presented in this section. The results of each group's research are provided in two parts, which are (1) The current social entrepreneurship and support structure for the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, and (2) The improvements recommended for each group.

***Results from the Malaysian Group: Status of Social Entrepreneurship***

Before interviewing them about evaluating the assistance received, most social entrepreneurs mentioned that when they set up the company, they were initially surprised that their enterprises were considered social enterprises. Social Entrepreneur 3 said, *"I've always thought of my enterprise as merely a business reaching out to the visually impaired; this is the first time I've heard the term."*

**Table 2. Status of Social Entrepreneurship**

| Main Theme | Sub Theme | Supporting Details |
|---|---|---|
| Perception of definition of social enterprise | Less awareness of the real definition of social enterprise | I've always thought of my enterprise as merely a business reaching out to the visually impaired; this is the first time I've heard the term. |
| Demographic profile of social enterprises | Location of operation | More are interested in setting up social businesses but most of them are situated in the Klang Valley. The ones in the Klang Valley are mostly operating on the national level, while the rest on their respective state of operations. Some are because of the availability of supportive ecosystem. |
| | Age of leadership | Most of us have relatively young enterprises. |
| | Impact focus | A similar emphasis on profit as well as their respective social or environmental mission. Main focus is on creating employment and support disabled communities. Most of us are orienting our profit to social and environmental purpose. |
| Plan of growth | Looking for new resources | Create and market new products and services. |
| | Analyzing root causes and committing to regular problem/solution evaluation and learning | Developing a network and partnerships |
| | Bring in new customers and clients. | Extend your geographic reach |

Most of them have relatively young enterprises. The ones in the Klang Valley mostly operate on the national level, while the rest are in their respective state of operations. None are because of the availability of a supportive ecosystem. Most of them also emphasise profit and their mission – for social and environmental well-being. Their focus is on creating employment and supporting disabled communities.

When asked about their general assessment of the support received inside the support system, four out of six social entrepreneurs reported overall satisfaction. For example, Social Entrepreneur 2 believes that the help he received from MaGIC was *"amazing"* and that he *"desperately misses it."*

**Table 3. Support Structure Ecosystem in Malaysia**

| Theme | Sub-theme | Supporting Details |
|---|---|---|
| Good initiatives | Networking opportunities, business guidance, peer engagement mentorship, exposure and technical advice. | Social Entrepreneurship is not only provided type of grant but also gain knowledge of exposure. Since getting involved with Teman Malaysia that the social entrepreneur community is different from other business normal what I have noticed. We have Magic, MIDEC and others who help with special attention on Social Entrepreneurship because the Social Entrepreneurship business at the same time can benefit and help people. So, they are very supportive by providing many programs. For example, Social Enterprise Development provides training on how we want to measure the impact on social enterprises so that Social Entrepreneurs can predict Social Entrepreneurship. It is very important to get support from the right organization. |
| | Provide grants | Social enterprises focus on beneficiaries, target NGOs, grants for social enterprises from high-profit companies. For example, Teman Malaysia is also affiliated with PETRONAS companies where PETRONAS companies are available for grants to Teman Malaysia. With that grant we can use to benefit the community. |
| | Accreditations | As social entrepreneurs in Malaysia, we have different levels although we have registered at SMSE. The different are Social Entrepreneurship Basic and Social Entrepreneurship Accredited. For example, like Teman Malaysia, we only part of Social Entrepreneurship Basic, that we have a business structure like Social Enterprise. But if for Social Entrepreneurship Accredited means in terms of audit, the workforce follows the guidelines set. When Social Entrepreneurship successfully becomes Social Entrepreneurship Accredited, they will be able to exempt in some cases for example by showing evidence indirectly they will be able to tax reductions, assistance from the government and so on. There is indeed a lot of assistance that the government provides for Social Entrepreneurship. |
| Relationship among social entrepreneurs | Build good relationship | The relationship between Social Entrepreneurs are quite close. Social entrepreneurship is the work of social entrepreneurs who have innovative solutions to social problems faced by society. Social entrepreneurship has placed a social mission which is an explicit and centralized pillar as well as choosing a mission to create and maintain social values. Social entrepreneurs recognize social problems and apply entrepreneurial principles to manage, creating efforts to achieve social change (social efforts). |
| | Solve problems innovatively | |

| Theme | Sub-theme | Supporting Details |
|---|---|---|
| Challenges | Recruiting staffs and volunteers | Staff retention is a problem due to commitment and money – people were dissatisfied with how little they were paid |
| | Social impact metrics | A lack of capability, as well as insufficient data |
| | Scaling up and succession plan | Less awareness and skills to scale up their businesses and how to plan their succession |

Several themes emerged repeatedly and were developed throughout the interviews, largely because of the interviewer's line of questioning; when it came to specific parts of the informants' support, themes that emerged were networking opportunities, business guidance, peer engagement mentorship, exposure, and technical advice.

All the interviews done as part of the Malaysian group found that social entrepreneurs are generally satisfied with the support they receive or have received in their support systems. For example, Social Entrepreneur 1 believes that the MaGIC provided her with "excellent information," while Social Entrepreneur 2 claims that their incubators provided her and her initiative with *"it is much more than we expected (...) It's big..." We truly feel like we're a part of something special."*

### Theme 1: Good initiatives

The practice of social entrepreneurship has exploded worldwide, including in Malaysia, where it is still in its infancy. Despite this, little is known about the career transitions of young people who choose to be social entrepreneurs. It is very important to get the support of the right organization. One of the informants stated, *"Social Enterprise Development provides training on how we want to measure the impact on social enterprises so that Social Entrepreneurs can predict Social Entrepreneurship. It is very important to get support from the right organisation."*

The informants understand that accurate understanding is crucial to a field of learning and that it takes time for the true impact of entrepreneurial efforts to be clear. This global venture philanthropy firm provides early investment and rigorous support to early-stage, high-impact social companies. They seek out, invest, and support extraordinary leaders with ground-breaking, high-impact ideas with the potential to scale. Currently, they assist groups providing crucial access to healthcare, education, food security, social justice, water and sanitation, transparency and accountability, and shelter domestically and globally.

Respondents also state that the privilege of being a social entrepreneur is not just a grant. Informant 1 stated, *"Social Entrepreneurship does not only provide the type of grant but also gain knowledge of exposure."* Informants felt it was important to know the privileges offered in this field. They also state that, in this case, they can benefit the local community as well as the outdoors. Informant 3 stated, *"Social enterprises focus on beneficiaries, target NGOs, and grants for social enterprises from high-profit companies. For example, Teman Malaysia is also affiliated with PETRONAS companies, where PETRONAS companies are available for grants to Teman Malaysia. With that grant, we can use it to benefit the community".*

SMAS accreditation is a nationally recognized accreditation in professional health and safety standards that shows your company is completely accredited. According to the informants, there were differences in levels of social entrepreneurship, including basic social entrepreneurship and accreditation social entrepreneurship. The privileges obtained also vary by level. Informants understand that to achieve high levels and profits; they need to work more than they do at the usual level by showing evidence.

### Theme 2: Relationship among social entrepreneurs

Wealth creation is not a goal for social entrepreneurs; it is a means or tool to achieve social missions. The organization differentiates social entrepreneurs from business entrepreneurs by focusing on the development of social value. Informants mentioned that many people think social entrepreneurs only focus on businesses for profit. However, what social entrepreneurship is doing is for the benefit and privilege of society.

Informants felt that the public should be given proper exposure to the field of social entrepreneurship. According to social entrepreneurs, they need to act appropriately in the event of any problems or manage things with innovative

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circumstances. This is because it is important for them to solve a problem without a new problem. As we know it, social entrepreneurship is growing increasingly popular. They are concerned not only with making a profit but also with making a beneficial influence and a more equal society.

Informant 2 stated, *"Social entrepreneurship is the work of social entrepreneurs who have innovative solutions to social problems faced by society. Social entrepreneurship has placed a social mission which is an explicit and centralized pillar, as well as choosing a mission to create and maintain social values. Social entrepreneurs recognize social problems and apply entrepreneurial principles to manage, creating efforts to achieve social change (social efforts)".* Informants felt that all social entrepreneurs should be innovative to achieve a balance of goals.

Many colleges desire to foster social entrepreneurs as social entrepreneurship grows in popularity. Commercial businesses progressively focus on outside relations to direct their inside decision-making forms. One of the informants stated, *"In my opinion, there will be more social enterprise ecosystem in Malaysia. Indeed, even in the statistical data, there is a relatively high increase than before. I have been in this field since 2015. At the beginning of my involvement, what I can say is that not many entrepreneurs are involved in this field, but in 2021 where we can see more people involved in this social enterprise".*

According to the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), student interest can be nurtured through various efforts. They include instructional material, and teachers are empowered to advance an entrepreneurial learning method combining classroom lectures and off-classroom learning.

Problem-based learning also seems to have a noteworthy effect on the students' entrepreneurial intentions. One of the informants stated, *"The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) began to see opportunities to encourage graduates to join SE with a fund of RM650,000 allocated to train 600 students at public universities, polytechnics, and community colleges in the field through the National Entrepreneurship Program 2020/2021 University to Community."*

Informants understand that the funds provided by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) are a key step in fostering students' passion and interest in learning and training students to pursue social entrepreneurship.

*Theme 3: Challenges*

Despite the abundance of assistance from various agencies, there are several challenges faced by social entrepreneurs. The three subthemes consist of (1) recruiting staff and volunteers, (2) social impact metrics, and (3) scaling up and succession planning. They admit that staff retention is a problem due to commitment and money, and people were dissatisfied with how little they were paid. The social impact was also quite difficult to apply due to the lack of capability and insufficient data. More importantly, their lack of awareness and skills enables them to provide a succession plan and to scale up on a larger scale.

**Results from the Indian Group**

There are six main themes and ten sub-themes for research objective 1. Table IV depicts examples of quotes for each sub-themes and main theme. The aim of the study was to find support structures in social entrepreneurship by analyzing

**Table 4. Status of Social Entrepreneurship and Support targeted to Social Entrepreneurs – Findings from the Indian Group**

| Main Theme | Sub Theme | Quotes |
|---|---|---|
| Addressing social problems | | • There are a plenty of problems in the Indian society that could be addressed; education to kids living in slum areas, education to girl children, health care and protection to street children, generating employment opportunities for jobless youths, providing food and clothes to the needy. Social entrepreneurs identify societal problems and provide simple innovative solutions to solve these problems applying the principles of entrepreneurship. Seven years back, we started with a volunteer and two shopping bags, using public transportation system to collect the surplus food and deliver to the homeless and needy, we have now expanded to 17 major cities, 557 volunteers, 10 vehicles to collect and deliver the food. The idea was just a spark over a discussion with my friend. |
| | Providing sustainable and innovative solutions | |

| Main Theme | Sub Theme | Quotes |
|---|---|---|
| | Impact Measurement | • I think the most important dimension in Social Entrepreneurship is the metrics that we need to choose to measure the impact our enterprise has created in the society. We look at how many girl children we are able to identify year on year and provide education to them, thus transforming their lives. Social Entrepreneurs bring about social change, we are happy when people call and share information about girls who need our support.<br>• Social Enterprises should focus on measuring the impact of their venture across the years, which a few of them fail to do like us and realize a couple of years later. |
| Building a community for support | Partnership | • We started in a small way with four people and now have grown as an enterprise with over 400 people. I think the most important thing is the ability of the Social Entrepreneur to talk out his heart, reach to people and expand his network.<br>• Social Entrepreneurs should be the change makers in the society, we now have nine offices across India, since likeminded people joined hands with us and supported. |
| | Knowledge support | • Apart from financial support, Social Entrepreneurs need support for managing their finances, filing income tax, knowledge on legal compliances, sourcing funds, accessing technical and financial support from the government, marketing their product service, maintaining customer/supplier relationships, using technology for promoting and leveraging their business. Such small support would be of immense help to them.<br>• Most of the social entrepreneurs are not well/formally educated, but have a strong passion to address the identified social cause, they require support for managing their businesses effectively and efficiently.<br>• Action for India provides support to social entrepreneurs in the form of access to technology, mentorship, investors, government agencies, local partners and business development. |
| | Volunteering | • In the initial stages of my social venture, friends and family members devoted their leisure time in promoting my business. It helped me save a lot of money.<br>• We are expanding across the country which would have not been possible without the support of weekend volunteers, who help us in designing and planning the activities for the forthcoming weeks. |
| Training | Skill development programs | • The Regional Fellows Program of Acumen Regional Fellows India, offers leadership development program for one year. It was quite useful, since we remained in our jobs and took part in seminars and received, training and the space to innovate new ideas and build a strong network across the country and world.<br>• Pipal Tree Ventures run vocational training schools in association with National Skill Development Council, The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials and Technical and Further Education in villages across India. We skill young graduates and provide high quality civil contractor services specially in the field of finishing domain.<br>• The Government of India offers skill development programs through the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Funding and Grants | Trusts and Foundation | • Villgro, Deshpande Foundation, and Upaya Social Ventures provide seed funding and have been supporting social entrepreneurs.<br>• With no money in hand, the seed funding helped in kick starting my idea. |
| Incubation and acceleration | | • People often think Social Entrepreneurs make huge profits, that is a misconception, we need to make profits to be self-sufficient, sustain and grow our dream, apart from the grants funds they receive, since they cannot always seek rely on external funding. Foundation for Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship, an initiative by TATA Trusts is a Technology Business Incubator that nurtures social sector startups. Similarly, the UnLtd India's Incubation Program serves as a canvas for early stage social entrepreneurs in India to nurture their ideas. These two are wonderful opportunities to kickstart their social innovations. |
| | Institutions, Trusts, and Government | • The Government of India is offering support for Social Startups, but many of the Social Entrepreneurs are not aware of it. RTBI, the Rural Technology and Business Incubator an initiative of Indian Institute of Technology Madras with support from the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and World Bank's Infodev arm provides support for social enterprises that are working towards rural and social inclusion.<br>• The Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship of Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad offers an excellent platform and has been helping transform wonderful ideas in to thriving enterprises since 2007. |
| Education | | • Having recognized the future need, educational Institutions in India have started offering degree programs in Social Entrepreneurship; the MA degree by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the part-time MBA program by Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai. These programs help to learn designing, launching and scaling entrepreneurial ventures with social goals along with the required managerial skills. Such a formal education will promote social enterprises. |
| | University programs | |
| | Capacity building programs | • The School for Social Entrepreneurs India (SSE India) supports people who have an idea for a social enterprise or social impact project in India. The program duration is 27 days spread out over 9 months. There are no charges for this program.<br>• Dasra Social Impact Accelerator Program (DSI AP) provides a platform for social enterprises to strengthen their knowledge, skills, ability to raise funds, and formulate growth plans. The program offers tools and frameworks for social entrepreneurs to refine their business plan, platform to exchange ideas, collaborate and create a network of thought partners. |

The training aimed at developing entrepreneurial competence in potential individuals is called entrepreneurial training. Motivating potential entrepreneurs and helping them to take necessary steps such as endeavour advancement and preparation of necessary reports are the most crucial steps. The strategies the applicant uses to get the results are recorded with objective explanations.

Whereas explanations tend to be wide and abstract, targets are concise and concrete. Compelling objective articulations must meet a few criteria. The qualities of effective objective statements can be reviewed with the acronym SMART, as they must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-limited.

With a mix of government intervention and pure entrepreneurship, social enterprises can solve problems too difficult to inspire enthusiasm for legislation or attract private capital. To be successful, these companies must meet social goals and strict financial restrictions at the same time. The aim is usually to benefit certain groups of people and change their lives permanently by changing the unfavorable general socio-economic balance for them.

The graduates are more enthused about the prospect of getting an unfaltering salary and being free. But, to meet the objectives of a developing economy, governments have realized business enterprises and SMEs are the keys. This incorporates the accentuation on the significance of social enterprise and its potential to not meet the financial objectives but, moreover, the social ones.

*Findings from the Malaysian Group: To explore potential improvements that can be of support to social entrepreneurs*

Table V depicts examples of quotes for four sub-themes and three main themes. The results reveal two overarching themes in support structures in social entrepreneurship in Malaysia: (1) Competence of social entrepreneurs in addressing challenges, (2) The role of social entrepreneurs, (3) Enhancing innovation in the social entrepreneurship sector, (4) University students as potential social entrepreneurs. This study also outlined several strategies for making positive changes in the field of social entrepreneurship in the future.

**Table 5. Potential improvements that can be of support to social entrepreneurs - Findings from the Malaysian Group**

| Main Theme | Sub Theme | Quotes |
|---|---|---|
| Competence of social entrepreneurs in addressing challenges | Data-driven business analytics | Support structure can assist entrepreneurs leverage research and data-driven analysis to account for factors and variables that existing solutions may have overlooked. An individual's ability to question commonly held beliefs or principles can lead to a completely new way of thinking. |
| | Innovation | Business entrepreneurs related to the great social changes that improve our world may not have expected how much their innovation will achieve; many people have not lived to see it happen. The same may be true of social entrepreneurs today. But their hybrid approach is helping to create change in ways that are difficult for governments or companies to achieve. |
| | | Financial institutions to guide in educating more financial institutions about the benefits of investing in social -impact enterprises. |
| | Cash flow management | To prevent being 'grantrepreneurs' who lack strong business models. |
| | Improving business models and ensuring long-term viability | |
| | Creating Impact Assessment Procedures | Funders working with social enterprises should collaborate to create common protocols and tools that can be used by all stakeholders. |

| University students as potential social entrepreneurs | Develop programmes that can serve as a focal point for long-term support initiatives, such as ongoing workshops and peer-to-peer learning sessions. | I have been in this field since 2015. At the beginning of my involvement, what I can say is that not many entrepreneurs are involved in this field, but in 2021 where we can see more people involved in this social enterprise. This social enterprise is very important in Malaysia because many other businesses do not think about the impact that can be shared to Malaysians. Like PETRONAS, which is a big company, but they also support Social Entrepreneurship in Malaysia. When big companies act like this it will get more attention from other big companies to do the same. With the possibility of the next 10 years an improvement on the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Malaysia will certainly happen. |
| Develop scaling up and succession plan training | Succession planning tools | Services that provide succession planning tools and training, as well as aid with documenting systems and building operations, are available from both the public and private sectors. |

*Theme 1: The competence of social entrepreneurs in addressing challenges*

Social enterprise has been seen in as many things as possible; an arrangement to advertise disappointment, a social focal point connected to routine ideas of business enterprise. Besides, the social business enterprise is still a concept with multiple translations. According to the informants, the individual level of investigation (the motivations and actions of social entrepreneurs), the organizational level of examination (the administration, scaling, and performance of the social endeavour), or the regulation level of examination (effect of Social Entrepreneurship activities on a regional/national level and the part of teaching in facilitating/hindering SE).

One of the informants stated, *"Entrepreneurs leverage research and data-driven analysis to account for factors and variables that existing solutions may have overlooked. An individual's ability to question commonly held beliefs or principles can lead to a completely new way of thinking".* Others stated that social entrepreneurship could be a social duty of commercial businesses which involved cross-sector partnerships.

It is also a way to reduce social issues and the method of social change. Social entrepreneurship envelops the activities and forms attempted to find, characterize, and exploit opportunities to extend social wealth by creating modern ventures. These models are planned in agreement with the social enterprises' monetary and social goals, mission, marketplace flow, client needs or capabilities, and legitimate environment. Most of the trade models are implanted inside the organization.

Another informant stated, *"The strategies we describe for success in social entrepreneurship are not mutually exclusive. Many KHAZANAH winners love TEMAN to achieve a new and sustainable balance for their target*

*voters."* Informants understand that social entrepreneurship will grow and thrive with the best targets. Social entrepreneurs must provide innovative arrangements for unsolved social problems, recognize and exploit market opportunities, and generate operating surpluses in reasonable arrangements. To do this, they must create the aptitudes to effectively oversee the complexities of the "double bottom line." In this setting, it'll be especially vital to identify what skills social entrepreneurs require to be effective and what approaches can help produce them.

One of the informants stated, *"Business entrepreneurs related to the great social changes that improve our world may not have expected how much their innovation will achieve; many people have not lived to see it happen. The same may be true of social entrepreneurs today. But their hybrid approach is helping to create change in ways that are difficult for governments or companies to achieve."* Overall, the informants stated that three distinctive rationales sometimes compete among themselves, viz. (1) social well-being, (2) exchange, and (3) open sector.

*Theme 2: University students as potential social entrepreneurs*

There will be more social enterprise ecosystems in Malaysia. Indeed, even in the statistical data, there is a relatively high increase than before. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) began to see opportunities to encourage graduates to join SE with a fund of RM650,000 allocated to train 600 students at public universities, polytechnics, and community colleges in the field through the National Entrepreneurship Program 2020/2021 University to Community. Because every state has at least one university, higher education institutions can play a role in providing space and facilitation for such programmes.

## Theme 3: Maintaining Succession

Services that provide succession planning tools and training and aid with documenting systems and building operations are available from both the public and private sectors. Qualified human resource experts should provide consultancies to connect with underserved social entrepreneurs.

### Findings from the Indian Group

Results reveal five overarching themes in improving support structures for social entrepreneurship in India: (1) Support for incubation and acceleration and mentoring, (2) Access to funds, (3) Resources for enhancing entrepreneurial competence, (4) Human Capital, (5) Cultural Challenges. Table VI depicts examples of quotes for each sub-themes and main theme. The aim of the study was to find support structures for social entrepreneurship by analyzing information from eight considered members for which accomplishing the social mission is basic to the organizational objective framework.

**Table 6. Potential improvements that can be of support to social entrepreneurs – Findings from the Indian Group**

| Main Theme | Sub Theme | Quotes |
|---|---|---|
| Support for incubation and acceleration and mentoring | Awareness regarding trusts, foundations, and institutions that offer support for incubation and acceleration | • In India there are a number of foundations and institutions that provide platform for incubation, if I was aware of it and utilized, I would have not faced so many hardships to establish my enterprise. |
| | Mentoring support | • We were badly looking for mentoring support in the initial stages. Had to spend a lot of time sorting the issues and managing the challenges. If we had a mentor, like how we have now, things would have been much easier for us. |
| Access to funds | Awareness regarding the sources of funds for social enterprises and the application process | • Social entrepreneurs find it hard to sell their ideas, mobilize funds to kick start and establish their venture. I am aware that the Government funds social ventures, not aware of how to apply and get. Have good market, lack funds to expand. External funds are available but are costly. Given the prevailing uncertainty, not willing to borrow at high rates and take risk.<br>• By the time, I came to know of the funding support available, it was too late to apply.<br>• If you could provide information on funding sources, I would be thankful. |
| Resources for enhancing entrepreneurial competence | Capacity building programs that enhances the competencies of social entrepreneurs | • We do not have all the required skills to manage our enterprise. Constantly seek support from friends for digital marketing support, promoting business, regulatory compliances.<br>• It would be great help if educational institutions offer training programmes for us on marketing, preparing growth plans, and more important on pricing and cost management.<br>• Did not receive a formal education in management, learning from past mistakes, mistakes cost a lot at times.<br>• Social enterprises are different from normal enterprises. What are the skills required to manage a social enterprise successfully? How can I get myself skilled?<br>• If someone could teach me promoting my business digitally, can reach more people and serve them. |

| Main Theme | Sub Theme | Quotes |
|---|---|---|
| Human Capital | Attracting and retaining employees and volunteers | • We cannot pay like corporates, retaining employees is a very big challenge.<br>• People are not inclined to work for social enterprises. Finding it difficult to get people.<br>• We address social problems to make a difference in the society, if we had more volunteers, we would be able to reach a larger section of the society. |
| Cultural Challenges | Cultural taboos still remain and have not changed over the years | • We are in the 21$^{st}$ century, our society is not open minded, closed and still the same old.<br>• It is hurting when people fail to understand the objective of our enterprise, even when we explain, our family members too.<br>• Discrimination still prevails. |

*Theme 1: Support for Incubation, Acceleration and Mentoring*

According to the informants, social structures need to take up more initiatives to increase awareness of the existence of incubators and accelerators. Informant 3 mentioned, *"In India, there are a number of foundations and institutions that provide a platform for incubation; if I was aware of it and utilized it, I would not have faced so many hardships to establish my enterprise."* This also includes support in terms of mentoring sessions. Another informant highlighted, *"We were badly looking for mentoring support in the initial stages. Had to spend a lot of time sorting the issues and managing the challenges. If we had a mentor, like we have now, things would have been much easier for us."*

*Theme 2: Access to Funds*

Concerning the lack of awareness among social entrepreneurs, this also includes access to funds. Awareness regarding the sources of funds for social enterprises and the application process. Informant 4 mentioned, *"Social entrepreneurs find it hard to sell their ideas, mobilize funds to kick start and establish their venture. I am aware that the Government funds social ventures, but I am not aware of how to apply and get. Have a good market but lack funds to expand. External funds are available but are costly. Given the prevailing uncertainty, not willing to borrow at high rates and take the risk."*

*Theme 3: Resources for enhancing entrepreneurial competence*

Capacity-building programs that enhance the competencies of social entrepreneurs are one of the many elements social enterprises often lack. There is a dire need for the support structures to assist in this context. Informant 8 stated, *"It would be a great help if educational institutions offer training programmes for us on marketing, preparing growth plans, and, more important on pricing and cost management."*

*Theme 4: Human Capital*

Most of the informants lamented the number of volunteers that is reducing daily. No matter how severe the social problem is, it would not be successful in making a difference in society without the help of their volunteers. Otherwise, they could reach a larger section of the society. Informant 6 mentioned, *"We cannot pay like corporates; retaining employees is a very big challenge."*

*Theme 5: Cultural Challenges*

Cultural taboos remain and have not changed over the years. Informant 7 emphasized, *"We are in the 21st century, our society is not open-minded, closed and still the same old".*

**5. Discussion**

***5.1 Comparison of Current Status of Social Entrepreneurship and Support Structures Ecosystem in India and Malaysia***

Based on Table I and II, similarities between India and Malaysia in the current social entrepreneurship ecosystem can be found. Firstly, it was found that social entrepreneurs have less awareness of the real definition of social enterprise. The concept of Social Entrepreneurship is vast and encompasses multiple dimensions. Plenty of issues in society are being addressed/could be addressed, ranging

from small to big, superficial to deep, across the nation, to specific in certain areas. The objective of social enterprises remains the same; the perspective varies across the nation since cultural differences and economic inequalities exist across the country. Social enterprises focus on addressing a social issue perceived by the founder in a specific region/segment.

In India, it appears that more organizations are supporting social entrepreneurs and receiving funding and support from public entities than in Malaysia. This is particularly among their higher educational institutions offering social entrepreneurship programs from ideation to commercialization through incubation and degree programs. However, similar assistance offers can be found in both India and Malaysia. Plenty of issues in society are being addressed/could be addressed, ranging from small to big, superficial to deep, across the nation, to specific in certain areas. The objective of the social enterprises remains the same. The perspective varies across the nation since cultural differences and economic inequalities exist across the country. Social enterprises focus on addressing a social issue perceived by the founder in a specific region/segment of society, which could be related to the SDG.

Secondly, it was found that most social enterprises are located in urban areas to ensure the availability of the required resources. Though they are headquartered in urban areas, they focus on addressing the issues in rural areas, while a couple focus on the issues in urban areas. The main resources that these social enterprises look upon are funds and human capital. The modern social advancement instrument and standards focus on the well-being of people, social orders, and domains regarding social incorporation, work creation, and quality of life (OECD, 2011). Other than that, analysts found social enterprise to be one of the most important techniques for progressing people's socio-economic well-being (Nasir & Subari, 2017).

However, an interesting point from the Malaysian group is that most of their social enterprises are relatively young (6 years and below). However, it is not entirely the case for the India group. One of the oldest social enterprises is Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra, founded in 1980 at 32 years old. There has been an increase in social enterprises during the last 15 years, with a mushrooming growth during the last six years. Social entrepreneurs from India were driven by the strong desire of an individual to bring about a needed change in society.

Nevertheless, both groups have a similar emphasis on profit as well as their respective social or environmental mission.

Their focus is on creating employment and supporting disabled communities. Most of them are orienting our profit to social and environmental purposes. A slightly different context from the India group, where their social enterprises have been addressing a wider range of social issues, namely integrated development of the tribal population, providing education to children with a specific focus on girl children, skilling, generating employment, minimizing food waste, providing food to a needy, sustainable livelihood, empowerment of people with disabilities. They focus on making a profit for expanding and sustaining their business while their activities revolve around the mission.

Fifthly, both groups highlighted that they plan to create and market new products and services, develop a network and partnerships, and extend geographic reach. Support structures extend support through financial support, human capital support, knowledge support for marketing, technical advice, sourcing funds, and compliance. Mentoring support is sought mostly from family members and extended family members. Support structures have helped develop and to expand their network, which has created inter-linkages among the social enterprises, thus supporting each other. Social entrepreneurship covers the public, private, and voluntary sectors (Perrini & Vurro, 2006). Traditionally, these three sectors play different roles and approaches; the open sector gives public services and goods, whereas the private sector is centered on advertising to benefit and meet the needs of shareholders, and the non-profit sector involves citizens in meeting the needs of society.

Regarding the challenges social enterprises face, it could be reasonable to state that their challenges are quite similar between the two groups. Apart from facing barriers in recruiting staff and volunteers, lack of capability, and insufficient data on social impact metrics, issues in scaling up and succession plans also affect social enterprises. Other barriers include incubating their ideas, sourcing funds, marketing their products and services, and reaching the rural population. An interesting point seems to emerge from the India group, where the data on social enterprises is not easily available, thus hampering the opportunity to aid/support. They are not much popular in other geographic regions and within the region.

## 5.2 Comparison of Potential Improvements for Support Structures in India and Malaysia

After analyzing informants' answers from both groups, interesting points of comparison seem to emerge, as depicted in Table IV and V. Both groups have listed suggestions to improve the support structures of the social entrepreneurship

ecosystem. Generally, both groups conveyed similar suggestions with very slight differences.

First, it seems that the support provided needs to be carefully identified and relevant to the current technological changes. Concerning the India group, the competencies required by social entrepreneurs are to be identified since the profile of the social entrepreneurs ranges from holding a master's degree from India/abroad to having completed school education/collegiate education hailing from rural backgrounds, with a majority of them being less than 35 years of age. The focus for enhancing the competence of entrepreneurs above 35 years of age shall be on improving their business models, preparing strategic plans, scaling, and sustaining their business, reaching across geographic locations, impact assessment, marketing their products/services, sourcing funds, and managing their finances, managerial skills, and networking. This is similar to the Malaysia group, yet should be more focused on competencies like data-driven business analytics, cash flow management, improving business models, and owning their impact assessment procedures.

Second, it was interesting to note that both groups highlighted the role of higher educational institutions in improving the support structure of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. India is more actively offering degree programs in social entrepreneurship than Malaysia, where the concept of Social Entrepreneurship is gaining significance in India; currently, five universities/ educational institutions are offering a formal MBA programme, while a couple of organisations are offering informal learning programmes. Promoting Universities to offer a formal programme/specialised course and encouraging students to incubate their ideas shall pave the way for more students venturing into Social Entrepreneurship. Exclusive programmes like the one offered by the School for Social Entrepreneurs India shall provide opportunities for social entrepreneurs to leverage their enterprises.

Third, both groups agree that social structure should be more focused on providing a succession plan and scaling plan for social enterprises. The success of the social enterprise lies in the impact it has created in the lives of people across geographic locations, both in urban and rural areas. Since cultural challenges exist across geographical locations, issues in scaling up exist in terms of expanding across regions and enhancing the range of products/services offered. Therefore, training programmes to appreciate cultural differences and reach out to people in their language are essential.

Most social enterprises address the social cause that has been of concern to them, their dream/passion for making a difference, and are individual/family-owned, which need not necessarily be the dream/passion of their successors. In such situations, it becomes essential to convert these individual/family-owned enterprises into professionally managed ones by identifying and training the employee(s) who have been associated with the enterprise for a long time and have their thoughts aligned with the promoter.

## 6. Conclusions and Implications

It was found that social entrepreneurship has emerged in the last few decades and has been recognised to bring about potentially transformational social changes with strong assistance from the support structures. Making a profit isn't the only objective of a business enterprise, and business visionaries can make a profit while making a difference in the community and by eradicating social issues at the same time.

Social business has been considered a conceivable arrangement to address destitution in developing nations. It can contribute incredibly to the financial improvement of the nations while tending to social issues simultaneously. Many developing nations encourage their citizens to start businesses and social enterprises. The challenge is that many graduates focus on finding employment and not being a business visionary. Social entrepreneurship progressively challenges the traditional thought of doing business for profit, and social undertakings create value worldwide. Social enterprises make a difference by engaging with people at risk of being ignored by society and bringing them into the mainstream. They also cater to the social needs of the masses, which are difficult to be reached by government organizations.

There will be many opportunities soon where all investments should be directed to creating impact and solving real problems. The awareness level would be increased and improved among all parts of the stakeholders; they would be in a better position to accept impact investing on a bigger and larger scale. Hence, it is important to define real impact to track and measure it, even though it takes a medium and long-term view.

This study was conducted with a small set of social entrepreneurs in Malaysia and India, so generalising the results would be challenging. Though all the attempts were made to enumerate the support systems, the list is not exhaustive. Despite these limitations and the limited scope of this study, it assumes importance because it addresses a real gap by adding information to the limited data on social enterprises.

### 6.1 Future Research

The study has revealed several areas that will benefit from further investigation. The literature review recognised a few areas with a dearth of information. While the study has addressed a few of these, others have not been addressed. There are a few additional areas for further research, such as strategies to develop the support structure in social entrepreneurship. There's much scope for more research because the social enterprise is still a generally modern scholarly topic (Noya & Clarence, 2013; Dacin et al., 2011; Gawell, 2013; Lumpkin et al., 2018; Pless, 2012; Bielefeld, 2009; Thompson et al., 2011; Austin et al., 2006). According to Hansson et al. (2014), measurable assessments of social entrepreneurship and social firms must be established so that social entrepreneurship activities may be way better mapped. Comparing levels of such activity at the regional, national, and global levels would be a crucial indicator.

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