

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

“Inclusive and Sustainable Business – Creating Markets with the Poor”, 6th December, 2014



SOLIM

Solutions for Inclusive Markets

solim.asci@gmail.com

Administrative Staff College of India

Background

The emerging magnitude of “Sustainability and Inclusiveness” in Indian businesses calls for a synergistic approach where the Industry, Government, Entrepreneurs, Funding bodies, Research Agencies and Academicians join hands and evolve business models that are replicable and scalable. The workshop organized by Administrative Staff College of India on “Inclusive and Sustainable businesses – Creating markets with the poor” on December 6, 2014 aimed at creating a common forum for articulating the importance of such businesses, sharing the best practices, identifying the challenges for scale and discussing the way forward.

The workshop derived its focus from the following:

- Learning from experiences of inclusive market development to understand opportunities as well as challenges for replication and scale; and to ideate about business models and approaches that permit a win-win-win for the poor, the organizations and India’s inclusive development goals.
- Deployment of CSR funds for social and human development is a traditional and powerful method for attempting inclusiveness. The game changer and the need of the hour is active involvement by organizations in effective deployment of CSR funds in projects/programs and towards creation of markets that are inclusive and sustainable.

The workshop was well attended and well received by 15 eminent panelists and 23 other professionals. The day proved to be fruitful with Interactive sessions and active participation by CSR officers, social entrepreneurs, CEO of social businesses, academicians, and representatives from funding and development organizations. The areas of deliberations ranged from India’s development agenda, challenges involved in developing viable social ventures, behavioral understanding and best practices related to including the poor as producers, creating collaboration and enabling environment for social entrepreneurs.

The session wise compilation of discussions is presented overleaf.

Session 1 – Inaugural Session

Welcome Address and Introductory Comments by Dr. Y. Malini Reddy, ASCI
Inaugural Remarks by Dr. S.K. Rao, Director General, ASCI
Keynote Address by Dr. Jaco Cilliers, United Nations Development Programme, Country Director, India
Q & A, Interactive Session
Vote of thanks and plan for the day by Ms. Srilekha Ravvarapu, ASCI

Dr Y. Malini Reddy welcomed the participants and spoke on the shifting of emphasis from ‘high growth’ to ‘inclusive growth’. Noting that government alone cannot achieve inclusive growth, she stated that society and markets being other two pillars have to support the agenda.

While philanthropy can catalyze change, finding business opportunities in social problems leads to ‘Creating shared value’ by attempting to include the poor not only as consumers but also as producers, suppliers, employees, and business owners. Speaking about the importance of Inclusive Business models as the Intersection of development and business, she emphasized on the need for businesses to tackle social problems and an integral part of their competitive strategy in order to lead sustainable changes in the society

She set the tone of the workshop by identifying the following as key questions to be taken up for discussion during the day:

- How does one develop the mindset required to view ‘success for business and society’ as inextricably linked, an idea we call creating shared value?
- What are the systematic benefits of developing inclusive business models and therefore how do we build them?
- What are the good practices to learn from?
- How do we further stimulate further spread of CSR action, research, innovation and impact?
- What are some of the initiatives where multiple stakeholders can partner in a mutually beneficial manner to achieve inclusive growth?
- What are the challenges to scale and how do we overcome them?

Dr S. K. Rao, Director General, ASCI in his inaugural address highlighted successful case studies in the inclusive business space. In addition to emphasizing the relevance of the topic in current business scenario, he illustrated examples from across sectors such as education, water, agriculture and health. Speaking about education, he had highlighted the remarkable work done by Azim Premji Foundation. He narrated how the model was performance oriented and had brought in light to number of schools. In the water sector, he mentioned about the supply of clean drinking water by Naandi Foundation to the poor at affordable prices. He said that the model had rightly integrated the business efficiency and the social concerns, while focusing on self sustainability. Dr Rao had talked about the success of Rythu Bazaar or Farmers Market model in Agriculture sector in Andhra Pradesh. These markets provide an opportunity for the vegetable and fruit growers in the suburbs sell their produce directly to the consumers. The model aims at eliminating intermediaries and reduces the price spread, benefitting the small scale

growers as well as the consumers. Similarly, the dairy cooperatives model that involves small producers as owners of the business is also a good example for inclusive business models Dr. Rao said. As far as the Health sector is concerned, Dr Rao had illustrated the work done by L V Prasad Eye Hospital in providing affordable eye care to the underprivileged through their Vision Centres. He emphasized upon the important role that CSR can play in bringing inclusive development. Expressing concerns about the unimaginative ways in which laws are implemented and the need to discover business models that are replicable and scalable

Dr. Jaco Cilliers, United Nations Development Programme, Country Director, India shared UNDPs vast and valuable experiences in inclusive development. He also shared specific initiatives taken by UNDP in the inclusive markets space in Uganda, Ghana and Indonesia. Setting off on a positive tone, he said that while India may have 100s of problems, it also has 1000s of solutions and if India can get inclusive development right, it can set a stage for many other countries in the world.

He emphasized that just doing developmental activities is no longer relevant for economies like India. A much larger perspective is required with an ability to look at the big picture in the global context. Drawing a comparison between private sector participation in development as equivalent to the importance of yeast in makes the bread rise, he emphasized on the need for greater engagement of private sector in inclusive development.

Speaking about the new companies Act and CSR, he stated that CSR as charity can never achieve long term development goals. Private sector participation by finding development solutions through core business principles and through strategic thinking and planning was stated as a requirement and a challenge. UNDP's work with private sector in inclusive markets is important and he introduced UNDP's initiatives in connecting business and communities: (a) Growing Inclusive Markets – Income generation opportunities; (b) Business Call to Action – Encouraging businesses to come up with real actions. Welcoming the move of the mandatory 2% of profits towards CSR activities, he hoped that it would soon rise to 10% in order to achieve some meaningful change.

Mr. Jaco mentioned the UN Global Compact (10,000 signatories, 140 countries, voluntary alignment, human rights, labour, environment, anti corruption etc.) and said that how one looks at the planet while looking at developmental issues is important. He identified the challenges involved as: finding the balance between the Profit, Planet and the People (PPP); connecting business and communities in such as way that communities get involved in decision making and designing solutions; bringing the private sector collaboration and having like minded people on board. He concluded by saying that there is a difference between 'something must be done' to 'I will do something'. I WILL, he said, is a powerful statement.

Ms. Srilekha Ravvarapu, conducted the Q&A session, proposed the vote of thanks and presented her concluding remarks. She also discussed the plan for rest of the day.

Session 2 – Inclusive & Innovative Best Practices: Experiences & Lessons

Panel Chair: Richard B. Saldanha, Executive Chairman, Trans Maldivian Airways

Panelists

1. Ms. Juhee Ahmed, Senior Manager Communications, CSR and Outreach, Microsoft
2. Mr. Venkat Changavall, GVK EMRI
3. Mr. Shridhar Venkat, CEO Akshaya Patra Foundation
4. Mr. Selvaraj Aravazhi, COO innovations at ICRISAT
5. Mr.V. Srinivas Chary, Director - Urban Governance, Infrastructure, Environment and Energy, ASCI

Mr. Richard B. Saldanha, set the tone for the session by stating that there is no such classification of public, private and social sector. These are silos that exist only in our own mind and one needs to demolish the silos. He said that we are all part of organizations that have vision, mission and basic intention to serve. The spirit of service however is lost. He recollected the time he spent working with the poor to teach them about how to be more hygienic and how it made him realize that whatever we do with marketing and things like that, if we lose the sense of improving the quality of life, the consumer or the customer in the value chain is not served. Urging organizations to conduct their activities in a responsible manner, he quoted from a booklet authored by him, “We believe the truest form of value creation is the enhancement of human dignity, self-esteem, self-worth for a noble cause”.

Ms. Juhee Ahmed, highlighted the various initiatives of Microsoft Foundation: supporting Vision Rehabilitation Centers at L V Prasad Eye Hospitals; Youth and Skilling charter to help build vocational skills of young people; Shiksha to enable teachers with use of technology in teaching to impact more that 30 million students in India so far; and Project Jyoti in which 1500 training centres provide facilities to students creating more than 70000 jobs so far. She also spoke about the Innovation Centres that are created for business incubation, usually by partnering with educational institutions. She spoke about CSR at Microsoft Foundation and the process of involving multiple stakeholders such as not-for-profit organizations, Charities Aid Foundation and so on. She emphasized upon the importance of tight validation and due diligence with regard to partnerships.

Citing the example of India Development Center’s “Vision Enablement” with LV Prasad Eye Hospital and Shankara Eye Care she identified how Microsoft works with its partners: set objectives and raise funds; co-developing mobility and sensory techniques for vision impaired; developing a mobility park in Vijayawada; raising funds for LV Prasad for a computer training skill centre; conducting workshop on assisted technologies; creating rehabilitation centres at LV Prasad and Shankara; and lending support to the visually impaired trainers at the training centres.

She highlighted the best inclusive practices in Microsoft as robust training process; selecting locality specific impactful areas to work on; focus on long term impact; and providing opportunities to employees to contribute and participate including the ‘Giving Campaign’ where employees can nominate an organization that can be contributed to.

Mr. Venkat Changavall shared the inclusive practices that he had established as CEO of EMRI (Emergency Management Research Institute) – Patient care, ambulance service, capacity building. He briefed the participants about the genesis of EMRI - the felt need, the thinking, the founders and also about his motivation and drive to associate with the cause. He described the journey of EMRI highlighting the challenges involved and steps taken to address them. Identifying who your customer is, ability to say no, clear and shared vision, innovative thinking, technology enabled processes and analytics were some of the aspects discussed.

He stated that business models should incorporate 4 As - Availability, Access, Affordability and Affectionate Care. He identified leadership, strategic thinking and government Support as key factors for successful CSR project implementation and scaling up.

Mr. Shridhar Venkat shared Akshayapatra Foundation's experience to illustrate how good practices of business and development sector can be brought together to achieve operational excellence, scale and impact. Some of the good measures detailed include leadership team consisting of a combination of people from development and business sectors; leveraging technology for innovation in machinery as well as in processes; stakeholder participation; involving poor as producers as 95% of the 6000 employees are from the bottom of the pyramid; eliciting government support in funding capital and operational expenditure; six sigma processes; good governance and compliance measures.

Mr. Selvaraj Aravazhi elaborated the IMOD (Inclusive Market Oriented Development) Strategy by ICRISAT which is to include the poor, reinvest the gains that are accrued, help the farmers mobilize resource. It focuses on shifting farmers from food deficit to food surplus situation by promoting high value crops, scaling up the initiatives through NARS, Universities, farmer organizations etc. He spoke about the importance of PPP projects for commercializing innovative agro technologies. With a view to enable entrepreneurs, small scale enterprises, farmer sand to bring youth back to agriculture, he described the Incubation Program of ICRISAT. The program promotes agri enterprises, lends support in business planning, marketing tie ups, access to infrastructure facilities, technology etc. in 7 countries. Food processing and developing value chains in banana and coffee are some areas of focus.

He also spoke about the Innovation and Partnership Program which has its focus on collaborative research with Pioneer, ITC etc. and Nutriplus Knowledge Program which focuses on developing commercial value added products from dry land crops;

Developing on ideas to promote farmer oriented entrepreneurship; building strategic partnerships; linking with farmers for long term sustainability; Seed entrepreneurs (promoting the farmers in the villages); Bhu chetna (profiling of various soils in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh); Community Watersheds (under AP Rural Livelihood project); ICT based initiatives; Community initiatives; working with the corporate to help them implement CSR projects were the other aspects highlighted.

Prof Srinivas Chary spoke about the importance of Water and Sanitation area, the innovative inclusive practices and the challenges in these markets. In the light of movement from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals post 2015, he stated that 6 of

the 17 goals are related to water and sanitation area. Citing facts, figures and anecdotes he explained the urgent need to take up water and sanitation related projects on mission mode using transformational approaches.

He shared real life examples of ineffective sanitation infrastructure and processes to highlight the importance of case specific indigenous innovations for handling water and sanitation related issues. Discussing the learning from ASCI's experience in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in schools in Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, he also highlighted good examples in sanitation space such as that by Sulabh, Pune Corporation and Eram. Use of innovative technologies, development of sustainable pay per use models, partnerships for achieving scale were some of the aspects discussed.

While identifying that 135 billion toilets need to be built in India, he also stated that 1.4 million schools have dysfunctional toilets. He spoke about the need to address challenges related to operational maintenance to ensure cleanliness and functionality of toilets already built and being built. Highlighting the importance of CSR funding and PPP, he emphasized that subsidies are extremely important and equally important is the manner in which they are targeted and used. He concluded by stating that the market in water and sanitation space is large, untapped and realizable. There are good practices to demonstrate success. The need of the hour is to achieve scale by creating an ecosystem by bringing government and private participation to leverage on the demand opportunities.

Session 3 – Experience Sharing By Participants – Practices & Challenges

Participating Organizations:

C&K Management Limited, Secunderabad ; Basis Systems, Delhi; Indian Institute of Crafts, Jaipur; SKS Microfinance, Hyderabad; ICFAI Business School, Hyderabad; SAFA Society, Hyderabad; ET Cases Times Centre for Learning, Hyderabad; GDH Workforce Private Limited, Hyderabad; Healthpoint Services India Private Limited, New Delhi; National Skills & Crafts, ILFS Hyderabad; TATA Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad; Srikara Parenterals Pvt. Ltd, Krishna Dist; Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Limited, ILFS, Mumbai; Earthen Glow, Hyderabad; ECIL, Hyderabad; MEPMA

The objective of this session was to learn about the compelling examples and good practices of the participating organizations. The session enabled the participants and panelists to share the existing practices and challenges in the inclusive markets space and CSR. The informal session was structured around a few discussion themes organized in a manner that a question or a query raised by one speaker was fed in as a key discussion point for another based on his/her area of expertise, to achieve a close looped discussion.

The discussion started with Dr Malini Reddy introducing the session and the structure to the participants. The first volunteer speaker for the session was Mr. Ravi Shankar from MEPMA (Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas) which was established under the Department of Municipal Administration & Urban Development, Government of Andhra Pradesh in 2007. Introducing MEMPA to the participants, Mr. Ravi shared his experience of working with various initiatives to eliminate poverty. He further facilitated discussions with participants from various districts who are members of MEMPA led Self Help Groups. The ladies for self help groups articulated their success in terms of socio economic well being by running micro enterprises; MEPMA's role in facilitating credit linkages with the banks and financial institutions; and also discussed their issues and challenges with respect to marketing of their products. Co-participants provided suggestions as to what can be done to improve their productivity and marketability of the products.

Taking the lead from the discussions, Ms. Meera Shenoy was requested to talk about the success stories in skill development in inclusive business space. She spoke about the importance of skill development and mentioned about the Orissa model of skill development and “Kudumbashree” model in Kerala as

● ● ●
“MEPMA have functionaries in the rural areas and identify poor women who are already doing some self employment activity or educate them to start something on their own. MEPMA so far has no market linkage program, they are trying to work on it.”, Ms. Krishnaveni, MEPMA

● ● ●
● ● ●
“Examples of Government interventions in skilling are limited. Two reasons why it does not work in the Government funded projects – Government officers' position and post is for limited time and hence officers want quick impact programs. The 2nd reason is the kind of energy and funds required are much larger than some other programs, and so skilling tends to take a back seat.”, Ms. Meera Shenoy, Youth4Jobs

● ● ●
● ● ●
“Quality of products needs to be worked on to make them marketable”, Dr. Ratnaja, IBS

good examples. Kudumbashree is a successful women empowerment model which has deeply spread its roots in Kerala and proven to be one of the most successful models in community development. The model aims at supporting every poor woman in the state and has its presence in almost all village panchayats of the state. This could be one of the best examples for “scalability” in the inclusive business space.

Mr. Rajeev Ahal from IL&FS was asked to put across his thoughts on the challenges in the inclusive businesses. He discussed examples from Handicrafts sector where several layers of intermediaries exist and how we have to really work backwards for effectively connecting the dots to arrive at sustainable models. Mr. H.K Chari from IL&FS joined him in mentioning about the marketing and trade opportunities for the handlooms from India while stating that there is immense need for the artisans to focus on quality to grow exports. They mentioned that unless the quality expectations of the buying countries are satisfied, micro and small players in the sectors have less scope to look at international markets.

Need for funding emerged as a constraint for quality enhancement and hence Mr. Ramana Gogula from Unitus Seed Fund was requested to speak on the venture capital funds for social enterprises. Mr Ramana with his diverse experience working with the energy and handicrafts sectors said that “getting the visibility” through effective marketing is important for inclusive businesses to grow. From the funding perspective, he says PE funds or Venture Capitalists have to look at social enterprises from a cause point of view rather than rigidly looking at financial projections and spreadsheets. He emphasized upon the need to bring a change in the way we assess social enterprises for funding.

As the discussion moved towards support for entrepreneurs, Mr. Sathyanarayana, Founder, Aarusha Homes was requested to elaborate upon the motivation and support required for social entrepreneurs. Mr Sathya spoke about the importance of patience capital for an entrepreneur in



“Scale is possible to achieve in farming, but difficult in handicrafts. There are 7 layers of intermediaries to reach the high value exporter and it is difficult for small groups that are not organized together to meet the requirements. Government has tried providing these linkages but more needs to be done. One needs to look at flipkart and make similar models to try and find solutions.”, Mr. Rajeev Ahal, IL&FS.




“It is important to identify brilliant products and pockets of excellence (eg: wasp honey) and handhold them for quality, productivity and funding. Gokuab.com is a website for marketing products that Unitus Seed Fund has invested in.” Mr. Ramana Gogula, Earth Glow




“Understanding the customer and products in the social space is very important. Commercial investors wear a different lens and look at social enterprises. It is important for not only all stakeholders have to work together but also for social entrepreneurs to collaborate to achieve scale. Interesting thing would be to see social entrepreneurs become social investors.”, Mr. Sathyan, Drishtee.




“Innovations should not displace age old practices and create new problems. Providing low cost sanitary pads and the problems associated with their disposal are a case in point”, Dr. Ratnaja, IBS




“Only hybrid model will work in this space. Take SAFA for example, it is model that is social and commercial. It takes up design interventions, quality control and uses digital media effectively to scale up.” Mr. Rubina Nafees Fatima, SAFA Society.



his early stages of business. He said the two other things that are important for a budding entrepreneur are risk capital and technology support. He attributes more relevance to technical support rather than any incubation facility as the entrepreneurs know better about their own business than anyone else. Mr. Sathyan Mishra of Drishtee Foundation added to the discussion saying that the products and the customers in the social business space are completely different from the commercial business. Understanding these differences and power of aggregation is what matters according to him. Mr Sathyan said that the transformation of successful social enterprises into social investors or funds in the long run is important to keep things going in the inclusive markets domain.

Ms. Megana Singh from Indian Institute of Crafts & Design (IICD) spoke about the role played by IICD in building handicraft clusters and handholding artisans on market linkages, design interventions and quality enhancement. She illustrated an example of IICD's contribution in designs. She mentioned owing to IICD's design interventions, there are cases where a simple chanderi saree of worth Rs 2000 was sold at Rs 30000.

While there were discussions on the inclusive business models and challenges, there was a discussion thread initiated on the mandatory CSR in India in lieu of the new Companies Act, 2013. Mr. Venkat Changavall, stated that companies need to have a lot of ownership in what they do. He also mentioned that there must be clear strategies and focused approach for utilizing the CSR funds in a productive way. Mr. Sameer Chaturvedi, CEO, Jaipur Rugs Foundation mentioned that businesses are yet to comply with the mandatory CSR norms including forming CSR committees and policies. He was of the opinion that multi stakeholder approach is needed for institutionalizing CSR funds and delivering productivity. Ms. Renu Uday from Healthpoint Services India Private Limited added that Corporates are still exploring opportunities for utilizing the CSR allocations to which Mr. Rajeev from IL&FS mentioned that 1 year timeframe for accomplishing CSR objectives might not be sufficient and the organizations' performance in CSR activities might be reviewed two years once. The discussions in this session generated a lot of food for thought and set the tone for the concluding session.



“Corporates can use the CSR funds to develop affordable and innovative products for the poor. It would be particularly useful if organizations can make sachets of affordable applications”,
Mr. Ramana Gogula, Earth Glow




“CSR money can be well spent if assessments are done properly”, Mr. Premraj, Srikara Parenterals.




“For CSR programs to be sustainable we need a program carrier and the program duration cannot be one year. We need to have a long term and realistic time frame to measure effectiveness”, Mr. Rajeev Ahal, IL&FS




“The need of the hour is to create a niche to link the CSR money and implementing agencies to work on sustainable initiatives” Ms. Alpana Tandon, C&K Management Ltd.




“Corporates have not done enough homework. They need to form committees and CSR policies. As of now, not even 1% have actually put efforts. The CSR funds and the National innovation council funds and other funds are not linked and there is a requirement to do a lot of pooling. Agencies at the state levels should be established at the state level to support the corporates, conducting due diligence etc and academia can play a big role in establishing incubation centres”, Mr. Sameer Chaturvedi, Jaipur Rugs



Session 4 – Ideating the Way Forward

Round Table Discussion Facilitator: Ms. Suchitra Shenoy, Researcher and consultant

Discussants

1. Mr. Alok Bhargava, CEO - Strategic Support Group at Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Ltd
2. Mr. Sameer Chaturvedi, CEO of Jaipur Rugs
3. Ms. Meera Shenoy, founder Youth4Jobs
4. Mr. Satyan Mishra, Founder, at Drishtee
5. Dr. K.Venkateswara Rao , Consultant to Arvind Eye Care
6. Mr. Satyanarayana, Founder Aarushi Homes
7. Mr. Srinivas Chary, Director - Urban Governance, Infrastructure, Environment and Energy, ASCI

Q&A, Interactive Session, Concluding remarks by facilitator

Vote of Thanks : Ms. Y. Malini Reddy, ASCI

Ms. Suchitra Shenoy introduced the discussants and asked them to address three questions:

1. What is the gap in the market that the organizations are trying to fill?
2. How can they reach scale and what is the time to scale in a social business versus a commercial business?
3. Who are the stakeholders who helped the organizations flourish?

All the discussants made short presentations about their organizations and addressed the above questions. The key points related to the way forward are captured below.

Understanding Rural Market: Ground level reality is much far from common understanding. Just as reaching out to villages and training youth is important, it is equally important to create the opportunities for them in their villages itself to minimize movement away from village.

For inclusion of poor, contextualize the innovation and create a livelihood activity: Understanding the context by conducting baseline studies, exploring various relevant and viable options of livelihood, providing training, establishing production processes and developing market linkages are essential activities.

Stakeholder participation: Connecting with members of the value chain as well as competitors in social as well as commercial business is important. Engaging with communities to understand their needs, challenges, interests and aspirations is essential. It is also important to take them (example, artisans) for exposure visits to help them appreciate their products vis-à-vis competitors and the market requirements. User feedback from the end consumers is ultimately what matters.

Cluster approach: In the context of Handicrafts and Handlooms, IL&FS took the approach of clusters and tried to move away by aggregating the business. IL&FS has attempted to give this approach a form and is trying to make a distinction (in Pochampally handloom park) by way of design interventions, looms redesigning, product quality standardizing, involving local banks and

NABARD for fund requirements for procurement of machinery and cotton stock, and implementing processes for transparent pricing.

Scale: In order to achieve scale, it is important to explore multiple options. Jaipur rugs for example, trained rural women in rug weaving instead of engaging only conventional weavers to achieve the current scale of 25,000 to 40,000 artisans working with them. Skilling is a sector where scale is possible- standardize the content and methodology, work with partners. IL&FS has a foundation and the CSR money is used in skilling and looking at differently-abled individuals. It is one of the largest players in skilling for employment. A million people have been trained - 50% of them are placement oriented and 60% of the trainees are BoPs. It has already established 35 centres and has a PAN India presence with NSDC as partner.

Challenges of looking at vulnerable population: Mobilization is a problem as voluntary skills are not valued as compared to degrees; youth not being able to distinguish between fly by night players and genuine players; learning to use the franchise model in training; customizing training for different geographies; huge scarcity of trainers; very few employers think about career progression of the skilled people employed.

Financing: Bigger projects can be financed by the Government, but it cannot be the operator. Developmental finance is not very active in the country.

Viability: To ensure steady revenue flow, it is important to identify ideas that can give revenues and not only impact. Keeping costs low and defining go to market strategy is essential. It is important to understand for example how intraocular lens that cost 200 USD can be made available for less than a dollar; how 50% of surgeries are performed wither free or steeply subsidized, how does one manage to train Middle Level Ophthalmic Personnel (MLOP) to perform surgeries under the supervision of the doctors. These are lessons learnt from Aravind in the space of viability and innovation.

Technology: Extensive use of technology for bring innovations in product and process, for achieving scale and for measuring outcomes.

Garnering support: Resource mobilisation, developing intra and inter sectoral linkages, and building awareness amongst the people for demand generation and for public opinion are effectively demonstrated by Aravind eye care.

Decentralization and Professionalism: Access to information and empowerment are key to success. In health sector for example, there is no disease surveillance and health information system is required. Also required are professional managers to draw insights and take meaningful measures. Health is a state subject, but not even a single state in the country has a health policy. Has NHRM empowered the people or the health sector? Why should there be a single uniform model for the entire country? In a situation where health plans largely tended to be stereotyped and straight jacketed, Aravind Eye Care made a brilliant exception.

Measurement: Dealing with socio economic differences is a challenge. All the interventions that are taken up for social and human development are soft interventions. Measuring effectiveness and impact is an area that requires much attention.

Points to Ponder: Is there a clear definition of what is a social enterprise in India? What are the process and performance management systems and incentives that can lead to creation of healthy social enterprise ecosystems? How does one find a balance between working with government and relevant organizations to enable social enterprise and social innovation ecosystems? What are some established systems for evaluation of effectiveness of programs? What are the best social franchising models to learn from? How can initiatives like Business Call to Action by UNDP be made available to small social businesses as well?



If I must start somewhere,
right here and now is the best
place imaginable

