

Need of Studying Social Awareness Among Young Individuals for Social Entrepreneurship: Evidence from West Bengal

by

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An apparently contrasting viewpoint in entrepreneurship is the term social entrepreneurship. While commercial entrepreneurship represents the identification, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities that result in profits, social entrepreneurship, in contrast, refers to the identification, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities that result in social value. A more formal definition states: Social entrepreneurship is the innovative, social value creating activity that can occur within or across the nonprofit, business, or government sectors. Such social value, therefore, may have little to do with profits but may rather involve the fulfillment of the basic and long-standing needs such as providing food, water, shelter, medical services, and other social supports to those members of society who are in need, as also to enhance their intellectual capacities. The last mentioned is particularly important since the success of social entrepreneurship definitely depends on a team of dedicated individuals particularly belonging to the class of the deprived section who would have to be strongly socially aware. So what is social awareness? It is the ability to comprehend and empathize with others' perspectives, emotions, and social cues, and to effectively apply this understanding in the interactions with them. This faculty is crucial for teenagers as it fosters both understanding and informed decision-making in diverse social contexts, and helps them to develop their ability to be part of social movements often going beyond the realms of social entrepreneurship. It equips them to navigate and contribute positively to their communities, promoting social cohesion and personal development, thus contributing immensely to the success of such projects. International studies have examined social awareness and its components—such as gender, racial, religious, and political awareness—across various age groups, focusing primarily on race, gender, region, and sometimes education level. On a national scale, such studies have primarily occurred in rural areas, examining social awareness directly or indirectly. Some studies

show disparities in awareness across gender, caste, religion, region, and family status, while others claim no significant difference. Under this backdrop, the current researchers aim to study social awareness among the young people from different social aspects. Our study utilizes data collected through a survey by the Jana Sanskriti team under the Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative, focusing on some areas of South 24 Parganas and Purulia districts of West Bengal due to prior rapport building there with the locals. Our findings suggest that there is disparity in social awareness among the youths across their gender, caste, region, age, and education, though no disparity across religion was detected. These outputs of the study will not only be useful from the perspective of social entrepreneurship, but also from the point of view of the policy-makers at any level. We recommend educating the groups with relatively low awareness, an effort that Jana Sanskriti(<https://janasanskriti.org/>) is advancing through the use of theatre and plays.

Key Words: Commercial Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Social Awareness