

The Role of Social Entrepreneurs in Addressing Urban Poverty: A Global Perspective

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Abstract

This paper examines the pivotal role of social entrepreneurs in combating urban poverty across diverse global contexts. Urban poverty presents a multifaceted challenge, exacerbated by rapid urbanization, economic inequality, and inadequate access to essential services. Social entrepreneurs emerge as key players, leveraging innovative solutions to address these systemic issues. By integrating social objectives with entrepreneurial strategies, they create sustainable business models that empower marginalized communities and foster economic resilience.

The study explores various case studies that highlight successful social enterprises worldwide, illustrating how these initiatives tackle specific urban poverty challenges such as unemployment, lack of education, and inadequate healthcare. Furthermore, the paper discusses the critical factors that contribute to the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship, including community engagement, collaboration with local governments, and the ability to scale solutions. Additionally, the paper highlights the importance of supportive ecosystems that facilitate social entrepreneurship, including access to funding, mentorship, and policy frameworks. It also addresses the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs, such as navigating regulatory environments and sustaining their impact in the long term.

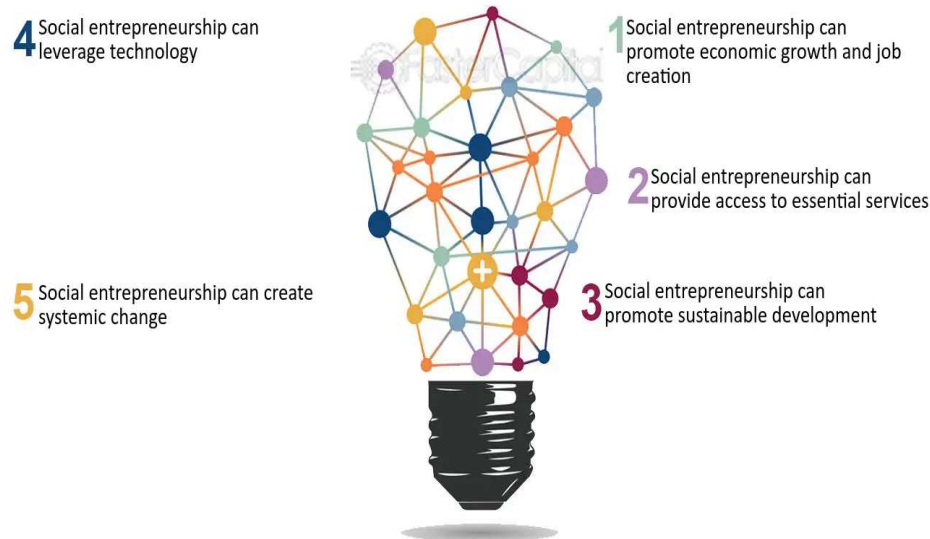
This paper emphasizes the transformative potential of social entrepreneurs in fostering inclusive urban development. By aligning economic growth with social progress, they contribute significantly to alleviating urban poverty and promoting sustainable communities. This review underscores the need for greater recognition and support for social entrepreneurship as a viable approach to addressing the pressing issue of urban poverty on a global scale.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Urban Poverty, Economic Inequality, Sustainable Development, Community Empowerment, Innovative Solutions, Economic Resilience, Social Impact, Supportive Ecosystems, Funding and Mentorship, Inclusive Growth, Urbanization, Regulatory Challenges, Global Perspectives.

Introduction

Urban poverty remains one of the most pressing challenges facing societies worldwide, particularly in rapidly growing cities where economic disparities are starkly evident. As urban populations swell, the complexities of poverty—manifested in inadequate housing, limited access to education, healthcare disparities, and unemployment—are exacerbated, necessitating innovative solutions that transcend traditional governmental approaches. In this context, social entrepreneurs have emerged as pivotal actors, harnessing entrepreneurial principles to create social value and drive sustainable change in impoverished urban communities.

Social entrepreneurship and its role in poverty alleviation



Source: *Fastercapital.com*

Social entrepreneurship uniquely blends business acumen with a commitment to addressing societal issues, positioning these entrepreneurs as catalysts for transformative solutions. By leveraging resources, networks, and innovative strategies, social entrepreneurs not only address immediate needs but also work toward systemic change that alleviates the root causes of urban poverty. This review explores the multifaceted roles that social entrepreneurs play in combating urban poverty, highlighting successful models and strategies that have been implemented globally.

Through an examination of various case studies, this paper aims to illuminate the impact of social entrepreneurship on urban poverty alleviation. By analyzing diverse initiatives, from microfinance and community development to education and healthcare interventions, we will assess the effectiveness of these approaches and identify best practices that can be adapted to different urban contexts. Furthermore, this review will consider the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in navigating complex socio-economic landscapes and the collaborative efforts needed to enhance their impact.

Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the vital role social entrepreneurs play in addressing urban poverty and to inspire further innovation in the pursuit of equitable urban development. By engaging with this subject, we can better appreciate the potential of social entrepreneurship to foster resilience and create lasting improvements in the lives of those affected by urban poverty.

Background of the study

Urban poverty remains a pervasive challenge in cities worldwide, affecting millions and manifesting in various forms, including inadequate access to essential services, unemployment, and social exclusion. As urbanization accelerates, the phenomenon of urban poverty has gained increasing visibility, prompting a need for innovative solutions that extend beyond traditional welfare approaches. In this context, social entrepreneurs have emerged as pivotal agents of change, leveraging entrepreneurial principles to address social issues, particularly in impoverished urban communities.

Social Entrepreneurship Innovative Solutions for Poverty Alleviation



Source: *Fastercapital.com*

Social entrepreneurs uniquely combine a mission-driven approach with market-based strategies to create sustainable solutions that directly impact the lives of marginalized populations. They often operate at the intersection of social and economic objectives, striving to generate both social value and financial returns. This dual focus empowers them to implement initiatives that enhance access to resources, improve livelihoods, and foster community resilience. By engaging with local communities and understanding their specific needs, social entrepreneurs develop tailored solutions that address the root causes of urban poverty.

Globally, social entrepreneurship has gained momentum, with diverse models emerging that reflect the unique socio-economic landscapes of different regions. From microfinance institutions in South Asia to fair-trade cooperatives in Latin America, these initiatives highlight the versatility and adaptability of social entrepreneurship as a response to urban poverty. Moreover, the rise of technology has further amplified the potential for social enterprises to scale their impact, offering innovative tools to reach underserved populations.

Despite the growing recognition of social entrepreneurs, there is still a need for comprehensive research to understand their role in alleviating urban poverty. This study aims to explore the contributions of social entrepreneurs across various global contexts, examining their strategies, challenges, and successes. By highlighting the significance of social entrepreneurship in addressing urban poverty, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars interested in fostering sustainable development and social innovation in urban settings.

Justification

Urban poverty remains a pressing global issue, affecting millions of individuals and communities. It is characterized by inadequate access to essential resources such as housing, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. The complexities of urban poverty require innovative and sustainable solutions, which is where social entrepreneurship plays a critical role. This review research paper aims to explore and articulate the multifaceted contributions of social entrepreneurs in alleviating urban poverty from a global perspective.

1. **Significance of the Topic:** Urban poverty is a multifaceted challenge influenced by various factors, including economic instability, social inequities, and inadequate infrastructure. As cities continue to grow, the number of individuals living in poverty is expected to rise, highlighting the urgent need for effective interventions. Social entrepreneurs are uniquely positioned to address these challenges by leveraging innovative business models and social impact strategies. This paper seeks to underscore the importance of their role in developing sustainable solutions tailored to the specific needs of urban communities.
2. **Emergence of Social Entrepreneurship:** The field of social entrepreneurship has gained significant attention in recent years, evolving into a vital approach for tackling societal issues. Social entrepreneurs combine the principles of traditional entrepreneurship with a commitment to social change, creating ventures that prioritize community welfare alongside profit. By examining the diverse methodologies

employed by social entrepreneurs worldwide, this paper aims to provide insights into effective practices and scalable models that can be replicated in various urban contexts.

3. **Global Perspective:** Urban poverty manifests differently across regions and cultures, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of local contexts. This research will analyze case studies from various countries, highlighting successful social entrepreneurial initiatives that have made a measurable impact on urban poverty. By adopting a global perspective, the paper will illuminate the challenges and opportunities faced by social entrepreneurs in different settings, fostering cross-cultural learning and collaboration.
4. **Contribution to Policy and Practice:** Understanding the role of social entrepreneurs in addressing urban poverty can inform policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders about the effectiveness of integrating social entrepreneurship into poverty alleviation strategies. The findings of this review can serve as a foundation for developing supportive frameworks and policies that enable social entrepreneurs to thrive, ultimately leading to more resilient urban communities.
5. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** This review paper will draw on various disciplines, including economics, sociology, and management studies, to provide a holistic view of the role of social entrepreneurs in urban poverty alleviation. By integrating theories and concepts from different fields, the research will enhance the understanding of the complexities surrounding urban poverty and the innovative solutions offered by social entrepreneurs.

The proposed review research paper will contribute to the growing body of literature on social entrepreneurship and urban poverty. By examining the global landscape of social entrepreneurial efforts, the paper aims to provide valuable insights that can empower communities, influence policy, and inspire future research in this critical area. Through a rigorous analysis of existing literature and case studies, this research will highlight the transformative potential of social entrepreneurship in creating sustainable pathways out of urban poverty.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine how social entrepreneurs contribute to alleviating urban poverty through innovative business models and community-driven initiatives.
2. To investigate the various approaches and strategies that social entrepreneurs utilize to address specific challenges related to urban poverty in different global contexts.
3. To assess the involvement of various stakeholders, including government, private sector, and non-profit organizations, in supporting social entrepreneurs in their efforts to combat urban poverty.
4. To highlight and analyze case studies of successful social enterprises that have effectively addressed urban poverty, drawing lessons from their experiences and outcomes.
5. To identify the key challenges and barriers social entrepreneurs encounter in their efforts to address urban poverty, including regulatory, financial, and social obstacles.

Literature Review

Urban poverty remains a pressing global issue, affecting millions of individuals and families in cities around the world. Traditional approaches to alleviating poverty often fall short, necessitating innovative solutions. Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a viable alternative, combining social mission with entrepreneurial principles to create sustainable solutions to complex social problems. This literature review explores the role of social entrepreneurs in addressing urban poverty, highlighting their contributions, strategies, and challenges faced in various global contexts.

Understanding Social Entrepreneurship:

Social entrepreneurship is defined as the pursuit of innovative solutions to social problems through entrepreneurial practices. According to Dees (1998), social entrepreneurs seek to create social value rather than merely pursuing profit. This dual focus on social impact and financial sustainability distinguishes social enterprises from traditional non-profits and for-profit businesses. By leveraging market mechanisms, social entrepreneurs can create scalable solutions that address the root causes of poverty.

The Impact of Social Entrepreneurs on Urban Poverty:

Research indicates that social entrepreneurs play a crucial role in addressing urban poverty by targeting marginalized communities and creating employment opportunities. For instance, a study by Mair and Marti (2006) highlights how social enterprises in urban areas provide jobs, skills training, and access to resources for low-income individuals, effectively empowering them to break the cycle of poverty. In addition, social entrepreneurs

often focus on improving access to essential services, such as healthcare, education, and housing, which are critical for enhancing the quality of life for urban poor populations (Leadbeater, 1997).

Strategies Employed by Social Entrepreneurs:

Social entrepreneurs utilize a variety of strategies to tackle urban poverty. One prevalent approach is the development of inclusive business models that integrate low-income individuals into supply chains, thus fostering economic growth at the grassroots level. For example, the work of Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank demonstrates how microfinance can empower the poor by providing them with access to credit, enabling them to start their own businesses (Yunus, 2007).

Another significant strategy is community engagement, where social entrepreneurs collaborate with local stakeholders to identify needs and develop tailored solutions. According to Bornstein (2004), such participatory approaches not only enhance the effectiveness of interventions but also ensure that the voices of those affected by poverty are heard in the decision-making process.

Challenges Faced by Social Entrepreneurs:

Despite their potential, social entrepreneurs face numerous challenges in their efforts to combat urban poverty. Limited access to funding is a significant barrier, as many social enterprises struggle to secure investment due to their dual focus on social impact and financial return (Defourny & Nyssens, 2010). Additionally, social entrepreneurs often encounter regulatory hurdles and bureaucratic obstacles that hinder their operations and scalability.

Moreover, the complexity of urban poverty itself poses a challenge. As cities are characterized by diverse populations and varying socio-economic conditions, social entrepreneurs must adapt their solutions to different contexts, which can be resource-intensive and demanding (Santos, 2012).

Global Perspectives on Social Entrepreneurship:

The role of social entrepreneurs in addressing urban poverty is evident in various global contexts. In Latin America, for instance, social enterprises have emerged as key players in promoting social inclusion and economic development in marginalized neighborhoods (Fischer, 2016). Similarly, in Africa, social entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a powerful tool for addressing the continent's unique poverty challenges, with initiatives focused on health, education, and sustainable livelihoods (Edelman & Pizarro, 2019).

In contrast, social entrepreneurship in developed countries often focuses on issues such as social isolation, homelessness, and youth unemployment. For example, social enterprises in the United States have been instrumental in providing job training and employment opportunities for homeless individuals, thereby contributing to urban revitalization efforts (Morris & Thornhill, 2009).

Social entrepreneurs play a vital role in addressing urban poverty through innovative solutions that empower marginalized communities and create sustainable impact. While they face significant challenges, their ability to adapt and collaborate with local stakeholders allows them to navigate complex urban environments effectively. As the global landscape continues to evolve, understanding the contributions of social entrepreneurs will be essential for developing comprehensive strategies to combat urban poverty and foster inclusive growth.

Material and Methodology

Research Design:

This research paper employs a systematic literature review design to explore the role of social entrepreneurs in addressing urban poverty globally. The methodology includes a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, focusing on empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and case studies that highlight the initiatives undertaken by social entrepreneurs. The review aims to identify patterns, challenges, and best practices in the efforts to alleviate urban poverty through social entrepreneurship.

Data Collection Methods:

Data for this review will be gathered from a variety of sources, including peer-reviewed journals, books, conference proceedings, and reputable online databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Scopus. The search strategy will involve the use of specific keywords and phrases such as "social entrepreneurship," "urban poverty," "impact," "case studies," and "global perspective." The collected literature will be screened for relevance, and studies published within the last two decades will be prioritized to ensure the inclusion of recent developments in the field.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

The inclusion criteria for the selected studies are as follows:

- Research articles and case studies focusing on social entrepreneurship initiatives aimed at addressing urban poverty.
- Studies published in English from 2000 to the present.

- Empirical and theoretical contributions that provide insights into the effectiveness and impact of social entrepreneurship in urban contexts.

The exclusion criteria will include:

- Studies that do not specifically address urban poverty or social entrepreneurship.
- Articles not published in peer-reviewed journals or credible sources.
- Research focusing on rural poverty or unrelated entrepreneurial activities.

Ethical Consideration:

This review will adhere to ethical standards by ensuring that all literature cited is appropriately referenced, giving credit to the original authors. The research does not involve primary data collection from human subjects, thus minimizing ethical concerns related to consent and confidentiality. However, the paper will maintain a critical lens on the ethical implications of social entrepreneurship practices discussed in the literature, particularly concerning their impact on marginalized communities.

Results and Discussion

1. **Innovative Solutions to Urban Poverty:** Social entrepreneurs are driving innovative approaches to address urban poverty by creating scalable business models that combine social impact with financial sustainability. Their initiatives often leverage local resources and capabilities, leading to effective community engagement and empowerment.
2. **Job Creation and Economic Empowerment:** Many social enterprises focus on providing employment opportunities to marginalized populations, thereby enhancing their economic status. These enterprises often offer training and skill development, equipping individuals with the necessary tools to secure stable jobs and improve their livelihoods.
3. **Access to Basic Services:** Social entrepreneurs play a crucial role in delivering essential services, such as healthcare, education, and housing, to underserved urban populations. By developing affordable and accessible solutions, they address systemic gaps in service provision and enhance the quality of life for individuals living in poverty.
4. **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Successful social entrepreneurship initiatives prioritize community involvement, ensuring that local voices are heard in the decision-making process. This participatory approach fosters trust, builds local capacity, and enhances the overall impact of poverty alleviation efforts.
5. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Social entrepreneurs often collaborate with various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profits, and private sector organizations, to amplify their impact. These partnerships enable resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and increased outreach, making poverty alleviation efforts more effective.
6. **Sustainability and Scalability:** The sustainability of social enterprises is vital for long-term impact. Many social entrepreneurs adopt innovative financing mechanisms, such as impact investing and social impact bonds, to ensure their initiatives can be scaled and sustained over time, further contributing to poverty reduction efforts.
7. **Challenges and Barriers:** Despite their potential, social entrepreneurs face several challenges, including limited access to funding, regulatory constraints, and difficulties in measuring social impact. Addressing these barriers is essential for maximizing the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship in combating urban poverty.
8. **Global Perspectives and Local Adaptations:** The study highlights the importance of adapting social entrepreneurship models to local contexts. Successful initiatives often incorporate cultural, economic, and social dynamics specific to the urban areas they serve, demonstrating that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing urban poverty.

The findings underscore the vital role of social entrepreneurs in addressing urban poverty through innovative, sustainable, and community-driven solutions. Their efforts not only provide immediate assistance to those in need

but also contribute to long-term systemic changes that empower individuals and uplift communities. Further research and investment in social entrepreneurship are necessary to enhance its impact on global poverty alleviation.

Limitations of the study

1. **Scope of Literature:** The review primarily focuses on existing literature regarding social entrepreneurship and urban poverty. The availability and accessibility of relevant studies may be limited, potentially leading to a narrow understanding of the subject. This limitation may affect the comprehensiveness of the review, as certain geographical regions or aspects of social entrepreneurship might be underrepresented.
2. **Geographical Focus:** While the study aims for a global perspective, the majority of available research may center on specific regions, particularly developed countries. This skew could limit the generalizability of findings to developing or less-researched areas where urban poverty dynamics may differ significantly.
3. **Variability in Definitions:** Different studies may define social entrepreneurship and urban poverty in varying ways, leading to inconsistencies in interpretation and comparison. This variability can complicate efforts to synthesize findings and draw clear conclusions across diverse contexts.
4. **Measurement Challenges:** The impact of social entrepreneurship on urban poverty can be challenging to quantify. Many studies may rely on qualitative assessments or case studies, which can introduce bias and limit the ability to make broad generalizations about effectiveness and outcomes.
5. **Temporal Constraints:** The review may be constrained by the availability of up-to-date data, especially in rapidly changing urban environments. Social entrepreneurship initiatives can evolve quickly, and findings from older studies may not accurately reflect current realities or emerging trends.
6. **Potential Biases in Sources:** The reliance on published literature may introduce publication bias, where studies with positive findings are more likely to be published than those with negative or inconclusive results. This bias can skew the overall understanding of social entrepreneurship's effectiveness in addressing urban poverty.
7. **Lack of Comparative Analysis:** The review may not fully account for differences in cultural, economic, and political contexts across regions. The impact of social entrepreneurship on urban poverty can vary significantly based on these factors, and a lack of comparative analysis may limit the depth of insights drawn from the review.
8. **Dynamic Nature of Urban Poverty:** Urban poverty is influenced by a multitude of factors, including economic shifts, policy changes, and social movements. The fast-paced nature of these changes can make it difficult to accurately assess the long-term impact of social entrepreneurship initiatives on urban poverty alleviation.

Future Scope

The exploration of social entrepreneurship in addressing urban poverty presents numerous avenues for future research and practical applications. As urban areas continue to grapple with rising poverty rates exacerbated by economic disparities, climate change, and socio-political challenges, there is a critical need for innovative solutions that can be scaled and replicated. Future research can delve deeper into the following areas:

1. **Impact Assessment:** Systematic evaluation of social enterprises' effectiveness in alleviating urban poverty is essential. Future studies can focus on developing robust frameworks for measuring social impact, considering both quantitative and qualitative indicators that encompass economic, social, and environmental dimensions.
2. **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Investigating partnerships between social entrepreneurs, governmental bodies, and private sectors can uncover strategies that enhance resource mobilization and capacity-building. Future research can analyze successful models of collaboration and the factors that contribute to their success or failure.

3. **Technology Integration:** The role of technology in amplifying the efforts of social entrepreneurs can be further explored. Future studies may focus on how digital tools, such as mobile applications and social media platforms, can facilitate outreach, awareness, and service delivery to underserved urban populations.
4. **Policy Frameworks:** Research can investigate the effectiveness of existing policies and regulations that support social entrepreneurship. Future studies may propose new policy initiatives that create an enabling environment for social enterprises to thrive, particularly in urban settings.
5. **Geographical Diversity:** While much of the existing literature focuses on specific regions, future research should encompass diverse geographical contexts. Comparative studies between urban areas in developed and developing countries can reveal unique challenges and solutions tailored to local needs.
6. **Sustainability Practices:** Understanding how social entrepreneurs can maintain financial viability while pursuing social missions is crucial. Future research can explore sustainable business models that balance profit and purpose, ensuring long-term impact on urban poverty.
7. **Empowerment and Community Involvement:** Investigating the role of community engagement in social enterprises can shed light on best practices for fostering local ownership and participation. Future studies can examine how social entrepreneurs can effectively empower communities to take charge of their development.
8. **Interdisciplinary Approaches:** Encouraging interdisciplinary research that integrates insights from economics, sociology, environmental science, and public policy can enrich the understanding of urban poverty and the role of social entrepreneurship. Future collaborations between scholars and practitioners can foster innovative solutions that address the multifaceted nature of urban poverty.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute significantly to the body of knowledge on social entrepreneurship and its capacity to transform urban landscapes, thereby providing a roadmap for effective poverty alleviation strategies globally.

Conclusion

In conclusion, social entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in addressing urban poverty through innovative solutions that prioritize social impact alongside financial sustainability. By leveraging local resources, fostering community engagement, and implementing scalable business models, they create pathways for economic empowerment and resilience in impoverished urban areas. The evidence presented in this review underscores the diversity of approaches employed by social entrepreneurs, ranging from education and healthcare to sustainable livelihoods and housing.

Moreover, the global perspective highlights the importance of context-specific strategies that consider the unique challenges faced by urban populations across different regions. Collaborative efforts between social entrepreneurs, governments, and private sectors are essential for fostering an ecosystem that supports sustainable development and alleviates poverty.

As urbanization continues to accelerate worldwide, the role of social entrepreneurs will be increasingly critical in devising solutions that not only address immediate needs but also create long-term systemic change. Future research should focus on measuring the impact of these initiatives and exploring how best to scale successful models to maximize their reach and effectiveness. Ultimately, empowering social entrepreneurs will be key to building inclusive urban environments that provide opportunities for all.

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