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Factors Determining the Involvement of Youths in Social Entrepreneurial Activities (SEAs) in Pokhara Metropolitan City, Nepal

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ABSTRACT

There are numerous sociocultural and socio-economic factors limiting the involvement of youth in Social Entrepreneurial Activities (SEAs) in Nepalese societies. Despite various deliberative efforts by the government and different development agencies to empower youth to participate fully in social entrepreneurship activities (SEAs), it is still not clear what factors influence Nepalese youth to be involved in such activities. In this context, this study aimed at examining the factors that determine the involvement of youth in SEAs in the Pokhara. Metropolis. For this purpose, data were gathered employing a standardized survey form. A total of 150 respondents were interrogated entailing 75 youth engaged in SEAs (selected purposively) and 75 youth, who are not involved in SEAs (selected randomly) for making the study more comprehensive. Binomial logistic (Probit and Logit) regression models were employed to find out the factors determining the involvement of youth in SEAs. Findings disclosed that age (X_1) , skill/training (X_6) , and education level (X_5) significantly affect the involvement of youth in IGAs at 0.1 %, 1%, and 5% level of probability respectively while gender (X_2) , marital status (X_3) , and family size (X_A) , do not have any effect on it. The study suggests that it is imperative to make youth aware of the importance of involvement in SEAs as this will help them to be self-dependent. This study appealed to Nepalese universities and institutions to include entrepreneurial courses in their curricula to ensure the necessary knowledge and entrepreneurial skills needed for youths' effective participation in social entrepreneurial activities.

INTRODUCTION

All the entrepreneurial activities, industrial or business unit operating by the community effort and mainly contributing to the community's social welfare are considered social entrepreneurial activities and organizations themselves are known as social enterprises. Social enterprises are those whose major shares of benefits or profit go for the welfare of society either through the sale of goods or services or through the form of cash, food, or the yields from agriculture. A firm that operated with a social mission is referred to as social entrepreneurship (Cukier et al., 2011; Sharma and Bhandari, 2023). The idea utilizes the strategies employed by a commercial business to tackle social issues and perhaps generate revenue during the process (Tran, 2017 quoted in Tawanda et al., 2021). Hence, social entrepreneurship can be considered as the profit-driven idea of business aiming to produce societal worth by initiating social

businesses and resolving social problems (Tawanda et al., 2021). Youths, who are between the age of finishing their obligatory education and landing their first employment are also referred to as a youth. Youth according to UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA are defined as "those between the age of 15 to 24". In the context of Nepal also, youth are people with age between 15 -24 years (CBS, 2011).

In this emerging world, indeed social entrepreneurship is acknowledged as one of the preconditions for reducing poverty at the household level, the economic prosperity of the nation, and enhancing the capabilities of youth. Asia has a wide range of social entrepreneurship options, including cooperative businesses, foundations managed by corporations, organizations linked with religion along with organizations founded by well-known social entrepreneurs (Santos et al., 2009). India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka are the three South Asian nations with the most social entrepreneurial research being conducted, however, the search for Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, and Maldives turned up nothing (Sengupta, 2017 quoted in Pathak et al., 2018). However, social entrepreneurship with an aim of developing a community has been observed in recent years in different parts of Nepal, such enterprises are utilizing relevant marketing and non-marketing methods to lift economic as well as social conditions of local people by aiding in social value (Anderson, et al., 2006; Antinori and Bray 2005; Bhandari et al., 2022; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006).

Despite being a relatively new concept in Nepal, social entrepreneurship has recently gained popularity among youth (Pathak et. al., 2018). Recently, lots of social entrepreneurial activities in the forms of cooperative enterprises such as; small farmer's cooperatives, agroproduct (milk, vegetables, fish, meat, etc.) production cooperatives, saving and credit cooperatives, etc. observed to be operated across Nepal, which is mainly contributing for the social welfare of the community. These organizations have been founded and working not for profit along with financial transactions, creating incomes, and offering jobs to the local people (Silwal, 2020). However, due to the lack of market, information, and technological knowledge or even modern social marketing tools, youth entrepreneurship and business remained unheard (Kunwar et al., 2022). So, multi-level (local as well as national) efforts are needed to bring those unseen activities into the spotlight (Pathak et. al., 2018).

Currently, in Nepal, youth are facing major economic challenges. Youth are still facing difficulties in acquiring the specific knowledge and expertise required by the market in today's competitive world, and there is a dire need for research to solve such a problem, especially in countries like Nepal where unemployment is a serious problem. Central Bureau of Statistics (2018) highlighted that,

There were approximately 20.7 million people of working age and approximately 7.1 million were employed and approximately 908 thousand Nepalese were actively looking for work (unemployed). This translated into an unemployment rate of 11.4 percent. 38.1 percent of job seekers were youth (aged from 15–24 years). This was the biggest group of unemployed and was followed by that those aged between 25 and 34 years, at 31.1 percent. This implies that 69.1 percent of job seekers in Nepal were young people aged between 15 and 34 years. Almost one-third (30.4 percent) of those who were looking for work, were in long-term unemployment, i.e., they had been unemployed for a period of 12 months or longer. (p. XI, XII-XIII)

The third episodic report published by MoLESS (GoN, 2018) demonstrated that the "number of migrant workers departing from Nepal is growing each year. In between two years, the overseas employment department allotted 786,564 new labor licenses, for over 100 targeted nations worldwide. The data was about 520,000 during the fiscal year 2014." The preceding figures show that Nepal has been suffering from an acute unemployment problem, prompting young Nepalese to hunt for work abroad. Empirical studies in a number of countries show that the expansion of social enterprises can significantly relate to employment generation, utilization of locally available resources, and major substitute, thereby boosting the gross domestic product and protecting vulnerable households from slipping into poverty or averting a rise in poverty. A recent development is observed that entrepreneurs are focusing towards social, environmental aspect over just profit (Bhandari and Sharma, 2022). Despite many purposeful attempts by the government and various development agencies to empower the young and encourage them to fully participate in social entrepreneurial activities, it is still unclear what factors influence Nepalese youth's participation in various social entrepreneurial activities.

There are numerous demographics, socio-cultural and socio-economic variables that affect youths' involvement in entrepreneurial activities of social nature in society. Age, gender,

marital status, ethnicity, family type and size, education, availability of loans, employment status, and skill or training recognition/motivation are some noticeable variables affecting the engagement of youth in social entrepreneurship activities. So, it is very imperative to identify the factors affecting the participation of youth in social entrepreneurial activities. Based on this context, this study intends to examine the multi-dimensional variables influencing the participation of youth in SEAs in the area of study, as no previous research on the subject has been undertaken in this area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For the conceptual clarity of social entrepreneurship, diverse definitions have been made by scholars at different times (Shin, 2018). Social entrepreneurship is an emerging trend (Zietlow, 2002); an agent for social transformation and sustaining values (Dees, 2001); a multifaceted approach for achieving a social objective (Mort et al., 2003, p. 76); a procedure for exploring possibilities to spark social change and addressing social issues that involve the creative use of multiple resources (Mair and Noboa, 2006). Social entrepreneurship is also observed as identification, evaluation and utilization of opportunities that will ultimately form a social value (Sharma and Bhandari, 2023). Though, there is a lot of ambiguity in literature and practice around what social entrepreneurship means to different individuals (Zahra et. al., 2008). However, all these viewpoints agreed that it is a recent global movement that has had an impact on society by using creative solutions to social problems (Robinson, 2006).

The act of applying one's entrepreneurial skills for the advancement of society by starting a social enterprise can be termed social entrepreneurship (Silwal, 2020). According to Mair and Marti (2004), it is the practice of blending commercial growth with social advancement in order to thrive in the economy and build a community. "Social entrepreneurship is the practice of collective actions for innovating social value and benefits through the social venture creation" (Silwal, 2020).

According to Develi et al. (2011), entrepreneurial activities are influenced by various socio-demographic, socio-economic, and socio-cultural factors like age, gender, marital status, financial access, level of education, skill/training, family occupational background, family environment as well as private factors such as individual's attitude, behaviors, motivation and so on. Age is the most significant demographic element that determines the engagement of

young in entrepreneurial activities. The most appropriate age for starting a venture with high performance is between the age of 25 to 45 (Sefiani, 2013). Generally, people at a young age showed substantially greater enthusiasm for becoming entrepreneurs (Subramaniam, 2010). Numerous empirics have examined that there is a significant association between gender and the start-up of the entrepreneurial venture (Sajilan et al., 2015). Under the same circumstances, both sexes have equal chances to become entrepreneurs (Cohoon et al., 2010). An individual's attitude, way of thinking, and priorities can all be significantly influenced by their marital status. Jaiswal and Patel (2012) have disclosed that entrepreneurial behavior and marital status are correlated with each other. They further argued that unmarried people are more likely to have entrepreneurial attitudes than married ones. In the word of Delmar and Davidson (2000), "unmarried individuals were more passionate about starting their own venture than married people." So, age, gender, and marital status are crucial factors for determining association with entrepreneurial activities. Another factor to be considered by youth while deciding to start a social venture is access to funding. Management of start-up funds for social enterprises is frequently noted as the major challenge for youth to accomplish because of their relatively poor banking history (Bank, 2008).

Bushell (2008) asserted that the absence of education limits young people from taking advantage of opportunities, hinders their capacity to navigate the bureaucracies in the financial and governmental sectors, and frequently avoids them from efficiently expressing their views. An individual acquires training and education within the milieu s/he grows up, hence, significantly helping in shaping her/his mindset regarding the start of entrepreneurial endeavors (Pillania et al., 2009). Both formal, as well as informal edification, are responsible for spreading entrepreneurial skills (Rahmawati et al., 2012). According to legendary entrepreneur, Henry Ford "it's a classroom where nation's competitiveness initiates but not factory or engineering lab". Therefore, it is realized that education and training are crucial to help youth for developing entrepreneurial abilities, traits, and attitudes as well as make them aware of the business.

The importance of the family is also encouraging the youth to be involved in social entrepreneurial activities. An individual who lives in an atmosphere that promotes entrepreneurship is more inclined to engage in such activities throughout their careers. Role models within the family are crucial since they serve as conduits for values, feelings as well as experiences to be self-employed. It is observed that the likelihood of children continuing in an

entrepreneurial profession is higher for those whose parents work for themselves than for those whose parents do not. The entrepreneurial mindsets of youth living together in the same milieu may therefore be influenced by their parents' entrepreneurial activities (Nieman and Nieuwenhuizen, 2009).

Research Hypothesis

The following illustrates the research hypotheses of the proposed study:

H01: Age of youth affects the involvement in SEAs.

H02: Family size affects the youth's involvement in SEAs.

H03: Gender of youth effects on involvement in SEAs.

H04: Married youth have a higher level of intention to start SEAs than unmarried.

H05: Youth with a higher level of education have a higher level of intention to involve in SEAs than youth with a lower level of education.

H06: Skills/trained youth have a higher level of intention to start SEAs than unskilled/untrained.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

Pokhara Metropolis, the most promising city among six metropolises has been selected as the study area for this research. It consists of 33 wards with great diversity in terms of culture, customs, traditions, rituals, ethnicity, religions, language, climate, geography, natural resources, livelihoods, economic activities, and so on. As per statistical data from CBS (2011), "Pokhara is dominated by the youth (age 15 -24) population with 22.42 percent and a literacy rate of 84.29 percent." Similarly, more than a quarter (25.23%) of people are found to be selfemployed (Economic Census, 2018) in various entrepreneurial activities.

Ward No. 29, 30, and 31, Pokhara Metropolis were selected as the study area (fig 1). The study area consists of heterogeneous ethnic communities dominated by Brahmin and Chhetri, various entrepreneurial environments, and local resources. Farming and medium-scale business are the main occupations of the people. In recent years, various social entrepreneurial activities have been initiated by different cooperatives for the welfare of community people such as; small farmers' cooperatives, agricultural cooperatives, milk production cooperatives, fish production

cooperatives, etc. are seen to flourish and most of the youth (i.e., 15-24 years) are found to be involved in such activities across this area.





Data Collection

Organized survey forms were employed to collect information in the three wards from 150 respondents. The total youth (15-24 years) in three wards consists of 6092 people (CBS, 2011). Yamane formula gives a sample size of 150 at an 8.05% precision level. Some inclusion criteria have been defined in order to include almost socio-economic characteristics of youth in each ward, which consist of both sexes (i.e., male and female), both married and single, skilled and unskilled, undergraduate and graduate level of education, involved and not involved in different types of SEAs. Figure 2 illustrates the sampling procedure adopted in this study.



Figure 2. Sampling procedure for the study

75 youth (i.e., 25 from each ward) from sampled wards who are engaged in some sort of SEAs (i.e., members of Cooperatives) were selected purposively and 75 (25 from each sampled ward) youth who are not engaged in any SEAs (not a member of any cooperative) were selected randomly as respondents and asked them to take part voluntarily in the enumeration process.

The survey forms contained the information about following three parts:

- 1. Personal details of respondents (age, sex, caste/ethnicity, marital status, education, family type and size, occupation, and involvement in cooperatives;
- 2. Perceptions of youth about SEAs, with ratings from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

3. Perceptions of reasons for not joining SEAs, with ratings from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Data from the questionnaire survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The mean value and standard deviation (SD) were determined primarily to assess respondents' impressions of SEAs and the reasons for not joining SEAs among youth. A binomial logistic regression (Probit and Logit) model (1) has been used to find the determinants of youth's involvement in SEAs, where the factors described in the descriptive statistical examination have been introduced as independent variables in the regression model.

$$y_i = b_o + b_1 x_{1i} + b_2 x_{2i} + b_3 x_{3i} + b_4 x_{4i} + b_5 x_{5i} + b_6 x_{6i} + e_i$$
(1)

Where; y_i is a dependent variable and stands for the involvement in SEAs. Since y_i is a binary variable that has two possible values: 0 and 1. Hence,

Y = 1 for the involvement in SEAs.

Y = 0 for not involvement.

The variables $x_{1i} - x_{6i}$ are the factors determining the involvement of youth in SEAs and they are the independent variables.

 $X_{1} = \text{Age (in years)}$ $X_{2} = \text{Gender (1 = Man, 0 = Woman)}$ $X_{3} = \text{Marital Status (1 = Married, 0 = Unmarried)}$ $X_{4} = \text{Family Size (in number)}$ $X_{5} = \text{Education Level (1 = Graduate, 0 = Undergraduate)}$ $X_{6} = \text{Skill/Training (1 = Skilled, 0 = Unskilled)}$

 $b_1 - b_n = \text{Coefficients}$

$$b_o = \text{constant}$$

Youths' Perceptions of Social Entrepreneurship in Pokhara based on Different Socioeconomic Groups

Figure 3 highlights general perceptions linked to social entrepreneurship opined by different socioeconomic groups of youth based on the mean value. Overall, youths mostly perceived social entrepreneurship as an important input for the social welfare and economic

development of the community with the highest mean value of 4.23. They also opined social entrepreneurship as a solution for reducing youths' unemployment (4.18); economic values to the community by creating a new market, product, and employment opportunities (4.15); entrepreneurial activities for social welfare (4.15); alternative strategies to check labor force migration in foreign countries (4.11); opportunities for unique blending resources within and outside agriculture (4.03); subsequent growth of indigenous enterprises (4.01); utilization of local resources in entrepreneurial ventures by community people (3.96) and major opportunities for youth empowerment (3.87) (Figure 3a). Based on gender and marital status, males as well as married youth mostly thought of social entrepreneurship as an important input for the socioeconomic welfare of the community.

Conversely, females and unmarried youth mainly came up with it as a solution for reducing youth unemployment (Figure 3a, 3b). No differences were found between the occupational status (i.e., Skilled and Unskilled, Figure 3c). However, youth with an undergraduate level of education mostly viewed social entrepreneurship as a solution for minimizing the youth unemployment problem, contrary to this graduate youth mainly think of it as a vital input for the socio-economic development of the community (Figure 3d).



(a) Overall and Gender

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4,33



(d) Level of Education

Figure 3: Youths' perceptions of Social Entrepreneurship based on different Socioeconomic Groups (n=150)

Reasons for not Involvement in Social Entrepreneurial Activities based on Different Socioeconomic Groups

Figure 4 depicts the mean values of different reasons (for not involving in social entrepreneurship) perceived by diverse socioeconomic groups of youth. Overall, youths opined unstable political condition of the country was the prominent reason for hindering their involvement in SEAs with the highest mean value of 4.48, whereas, lack of sufficient training (4.42), lack of entrepreneurial education (4.33), and inadequate technological knowledge (4.08) were the significant reasons limiting youths to start social enterprises. Similarly, other associated causes preventing youth joining from SEAs were infrastructural problems (3.87), information gaps related to new opportunities for social business (3.83), insufficient size of the market (3.82), risk of failure (3.67), poor financial condition (3.33) and non-supportive family members (2.93) (Figure 4a). Based on gender, males rated highest for lack of sufficient training (4.67) whereas females ranked political instability (4.66) as the main reason for not involving in SEAs.

Both males and females agreed on lack of entrepreneurial education, inadequate technological knowledge, infrastructural problem, information gap related to new opportunities

for social business, market size not enough, risk of failure, and poor financial conditions were other associated reasons for preventing them from joining SEAs (Figure 4a). Similarly, both married as well as unmarried youth rated the unstable political condition of the nation to be the main cause for limiting them to start up social ventures (Figure 4b). Skilled, as well as unskilled, and graduate, as well as undergraduate youth, also agreed that political instability is the foremost reason for halting them to involve in social enterprises (Figure 4c and 4d). The youth in the age group 15-18 years and 22-24 years agreed on the same. However, youth in the age group 19-21 years, equally perceived political instability, lack of entrepreneurial education, and lack of sufficient training as the main root causes for hindering their participation in SEAs (Figure 4e).

For the youth with a family size of more than 10, political instability, as well as inadequate technological knowledge, were the prime factors obstructing them to initiate social entrepreneurship whereas for youth with a family size of less than 5 and 6-10 members, opined political instability as the foremost reason for impeding them from starting a social business (Figure 4f). Interestingly, all socioeconomic groups rated lowest for not supportive family members for onsetting social entrepreneurship.



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(b) Marital Status



(c) Occupational Status









(f) Family Size

Figure 4: Reasons for not Involvement in Social Entrepreneurial Activities based on Different Socioeconomic Groups (n=75)

Table 1. Result of the Probit and Logit Models and	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
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variables	Probit			Logit			
	Coefficient	ME on Pr (y = 1)	P - value	Coefficient	ME on Pr $(y = 1)$	P - value	VIF
Age (years)	0.0556***	0.0149***	0.000	0.0934 ***	0.0143***	0.000	2.001392
Gender (1 if Men)	-0.1832	-0.0492	0.503	-0.3567	-0.0547	0.453	1.058062
Mat_ Status (1 if married)	-0.7220	-0.1939	0.062	-1.3692	-0.2100	0.053	1.964964
Family_ Size (count)	-0.0458	-0.0123	0.408	-0.08438	-0.0129	0.386	1.014170
Edu_ Level (1 if Graduate)	-0.7333*	-0.1969*	0.017	-1.3854*	-0.2125*	0.011	1.006656
Skill_ Training (1 if Skilled)	1.5811**	0.4246**	0.002	3.1868 **	0.4887**	0.001	1.024587
Constant Wald χ^2	-1.3953 * 43.3	NA	0.045	-2.26478 36.1	NA	0.058	
statistic							
AIC	155.45 ~ 155			152.83 ~ 153			
p-value	0.0000			0.0000			
G D: 11G	2021						

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Dependent variable: Involvement in Social Entrepreneurial Activities (SEAs) (1 if involved, 0 otherwise) n = 150, Sig. Codes: *** < 0.001, ** < 0.01, * < 0.05, VIF Criteria; VIF > 10 Unacceptable, 3< VIF < 10 Acceptable, VIF < 3 Ideal

Factors Determining Youth Involvement in Social Entrepreneurial Activities

The predicted variable i.e., involvement in SEAs has two options i.e., Yes and No. "No" is used as a reference category for identifying the determinants of involvement. Both, the Probit and the Logit models showed almost similar results (see table 1).

The involvement of youth in SEAs was significantly affected by age, education level, and skill/training. Provided that a 10-year increase in age will increase the probability of being involved in SEAs by 0.149 (14.9% points) on average, holding other variables constant. It means older the age, the chance of involvement in SEAs will be increasing, which confirms the acceptance of stated hypothesis 1. This result is similar to the finding of Subramaniam (2010), where he concluded that generally, people at a young age showed substantially greater enthusiasm for becoming entrepreneurs. However, this result contradicts the findings of Tanveer et. al. (2013), who asserted that though age and performance of a venture are positively correlated but the likelihood of becoming an entrepreneur lowers extremely as you get older.

Interestingly, the result of the study shows that for those who have a graduate level of education, the probability of involvement in SEAs will decrease by 0.1996 (19.96 % points) on average, keeping other variables remaining the same. It implies that the higher the level of education, the chance of involvement in SEAs will be decreased, which confirms the rejection of stated hypothesis 2. This finding contradicts the finding of Wadhwa et al. (2009) who disclosed that an individual with good performance at their higher education level and who have studied entrepreneurship, achieved greater success in their business endeavors.

Similarly, changing the occupational status from unskilled to skilled will increase the probability of involvement by 0.4246 (42.46 % points), ceteris paribus. It means the chance of engagement in SEAs will increase with the being skillful, which confirms acceptance of stated hypothesis 6. This result is similar to the result obtained by Pillania et. al. (2009), where, who came to the conclusion that a person's exposure to entrepreneurial skills/training in the environment in which he or she was raised had a significant impact on her or his attitude toward involvement in social enterprise. This is also supported by Bushell's (2008) finding, in which he asserted that entrepreneurial skills/training help for fostering social ventures in the community. However, family size, gender, and marital status do not have any significant effect on involvement in SEAs as a P-value > 0.05. This means the stated hypotheses are rejected i.e., hypothesis 2, hypothesis 3, and hypothesis 4.

From the above analysis, it is clear that age, education level, and skill/training had a significant effect on the involvement of youth in SEAs. Conversely, gender, marital status, and family size do not significantly affect involvement in SEAs. It shows that age, education level, and skill/training are the determinants of youth's involvement in SEAs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Though social entrepreneurship is a fairly a new concept in Nepal, numerous social institutions based on cultural and religious belief are serving as not-for-profit organizations for hundreds of years. Recently, the concept has been gaining its pace in the form of collective efforts as cooperatives. Many cooperatives have been established and functioning for social benefits and welfare; creating job opportunities, collecting revenues, helping ultra-poor households for their survival, lending start-up funds for income-generating activities for the economically disadvantaged community, and so on across the nation. Despite government endorsement of youth self-employment programs focusing on youth social entrepreneurship, their involvement seems to be very slim. The existence of sociocultural, socioeconomic, and socio-demographic factors limits the involvement of youth in such social entrepreneurial activities in Nepalese society. The findings of this study confirm that age, education level, and skill/training were some socio-demographic factors that show a significant effect on youth involvement in SEAs whereas other factors such as gender, marital status, and family size do not show any effect on involvement in such activities. Education and skill/training play a crucial role for youth to be an entrepreneur. Youth are more enthusiastic to start up new ventures to be self-dependent. It is imperative to provide entrepreneurial education, skills, and training for youth to make them competitive and starts social venture at the appropriate time. This study appealed to a revision of existing policies related to youth and entrepreneurship in Nepal for the inclusion of youth in social entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, Nepalese universities and academic institutions should include special courses related to entrepreneurship in their curricula to ensure the necessary knowledge and entrepreneurial skills needed for their effective participation in social entrepreneurial activities.

FUTURE SCOPE

For detailed analysis, future research works should concentrate on the specific type of social entrepreneurial activity and explore more socioeconomic, sociocultural, and demographic variables comprehensively. This would clearly indicate what are the factors limiting for engagement of youth in a particular social entrepreneurial activity and the particular problems related to such activity. Such a detailed study will be helpful for revising existing entrepreneurial policy for the inclusion of youth in social entrepreneurial activities and to create a conducive environment for social enterprises.

Contribution Rate Statement Summary of Researchers

The authors declare that they have contributed equally to the article.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have declared that there are no competing interests.

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