

SOCIAL INNOVATION

“Social innovation is the process of developing and deploying effective solutions to challenging and often systemic social and environmental issues in support of social progress. Social innovation is not the prerogative or privilege of any organizational form or legal structure. Solutions often require the active collaboration of constituents across government, business, and the non-profit world.”

— Sarah A. Soule, Neil Malhotra, Bernadette Clavier

Source : <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/experience/about/centers-institutes/csi/defining-social-innovation>

INSPIRING EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL INNOVATIONS IN INDIA

India is the world's second most populated country with over 1.1 billion people and is the world's 7th largest country in terms of area. It has a unique geographical and human diversity with a multilingual and multi-ethnic society and is also the world's largest democracy. These are just a few of the reasons why India is significant when it comes to the practice of social innovation.

The biggest challenges facing India today relate to poverty alleviation, and issues such as low levels of education, poor health outcomes and limited access to inputs to improve livelihoods continue to hinder the country's development. India is also known for its chronic levels of air pollution; indeed, 22 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India.

Project Listen Up

Statistics reveal that of the 800,000 hearing impaired babies born globally each year, a striking 100,000 are Indian. In a nation grappling with a lack of resources, cases of hearing impairment in newborns go undiagnosed due to the expensive screening equipment and procedures. Sohum Innovation Labs India Pvt Ltd is aiming to tackle this problem of no diagnosis with its development of a low-cost hardware-cum-software solution which screens and diagnoses infants with hearing impairments at an early stage, using brainstem auditory evoked response.

Their comprehensive solution to implement early screening in India are as below :

- Developing an affordable technology for resource poor settings – a safe device which performs in noisy settings, reduces the risk of sedation of baby, reduces test time, does not need disposables and is easy to sterilize & reuse.
- Building an aftercare cycle – a professional network of audiologist / ENT professionals to provide aftercare

- Creating awareness – A hearing milestone calendar in both mobile and print media to increase awareness to lead up to screening

Aditya

ADITYA, India's first solar ferry, was built by NavAlt Solar & Electric Boats, for the Kerala State Water Transport Department. The ferry is the first commercially viable mode of transport powered by solar energy in India. Aditya is also the first ferry in the world to have more than 80% of its energy requirements met through solar. It has a seating capacity of 75 passengers and on a bright, sunny day can cruise for more than 6 hours without the need for an external charge. It is built under the IRS (Indian Register of Shipping) class to the highest standards of safety and reliability.

Agnisumukh

Inspired by the traditional Indian method of cooking on charcoal, Agnisumukh manufactures commercial kitchen equipment driven by innovative, energy-efficient radiant heat gas burners. These ultra-efficient cooking stoves save 30% on gas, improve cooking and help beat indoor air pollution in commercial kitchens. They have already won five awards for this innovation. Their vision is to transform lives by providing clean, green, energy-efficient heating solutions across gas fuels.

Water.org

The World Bank estimates that 21 per cent of communicable diseases in India are linked to unsafe water and a lack of hygiene practices. Further, every day, more than 500 children under the age of five die from diarrhoea in India alone.

Since 2005, Water.org has played a significant role in India's progress towards improved water, sanitation and hygiene. Through Water Credit, they have provided more than 10 million people across twelve states with access to safe water and sanitation. By partnering with different types of organisations, including microfinance institutions, self-help group federations, housing finance corporations, commercial banks, payment banks, social enterprises and the Government of India, Water.org is mobilising resources and sharing knowledge aimed at increasing access to improved sanitation and safe water.

Under The Mango Tree

A total of 84% of Indian farmers are small and marginal, owning less than 2 hectares of land. These farmers practise rain-fed, subsistence agriculture that provides only a low income due to reduced market access and a lack of employment opportunities.

Under The Mango Tree is a hybrid social enterprise that promotes beekeeping to increase agricultural productivity and provides market access to enhance income and improve the livelihoods of marginal farmers in India.

Under The Mango Tree works at both ends of the honey supply chain. Through its for-profit, UTMT Pvt. Ltd., it sources high-quality organic honey from farmer cooperatives, before packaging it for sale direct to customers.

AYZH

Every year a million mothers die due to unsanitary childbirth conditions. AYZH's core product of JANMA, a Rs 100 clean birth kit (containing simple tools recommended by the WHO), helps prevent infection at the time of birth and is helping to reduce both maternal and infant mortality.

The company was founded by Zubaida Bai with the simple idea of developing affordable, appropriate health technologies produced by women for women in rural India. Zubaida's motivation to start the company was personal.

Besides reducing maternal and infant mortality, AYZH increases the income of women in rural India by enabling them to both produce and sell tools such as sterile birth kits. With a total of 32,000+ kits sold, more than 64,000 mothers and babies worldwide now have access to a clean and safe birth.

Jayaashree Industries

According to a report by market research group AC Nielsen, 'Sanitary Protection: Every Woman's Health Right', 88% of women in India are driven to use ashes, newspaper, sand husks and dried leaves during their periods. As a result of these unhygienic practices, more than 70% of women suffer from reproductive tract infections, increasing their risk of contracting associated cancers.

Indian social entrepreneur Arunachalam Murugananthamis has given women from low-income groups in India dignity by enabling them to afford to buy sanitary towels at the same time as providing them with an income. He created the world's first low-cost machine for producing sanitary towels.

Currently, more than 1300 machines made by his start-up company, Jayaashree Industries, have been installed across 27 states in India and in seven other countries. This social entrepreneur sells his low-cost machines directly to rural women through the support of bank loans and not-for-profit organisations. A machine operator can learn the entire towel-making process in three hours and then employ three others to help with processing and distribution.

Sakha Consulting Wings

India is known as a land that is not safe for women. Various women-only cab services have been launched to provide secure transport solutions for women, by women in urban India. One of these is Sakha Consulting Wings, a social enterprise run by women that provides safe transport solutions for women in four Indian cities and is creating well-paid employment opportunities for women as professional taxi drivers and chauffeurs.

Sakha Consulting Wings is part of a far bigger civil society movement that's pushing for women's empowerment and promoting gender equality.

Source : <https://www.socialinnovationacademy.eu/8-inspiring-examples-of-social-innovation-in-india/>