

Factors Affecting Context of Innovation: A Case Study of a Farming-as-a-Service Company

Authors : Kunal Mankodi, Sudhir Pandey

Abstract : This study aims to assess the factors that play a role in setting up and running a social enterprise driven towards sustainability at the intersection of energy, environment, and poverty alleviation. According to the theory of sustainability-oriented innovation (SOI), conventional organisations adapt their processes to focus on sustainability-oriented innovations. On the other hand, social enterprises that are purpose-driven are also influenced by the context of innovation, which need due attention. This paper presents an account of innovation at Oorja - an Indian social enterprise operating with a farming-as-a-service business model. It aims to illustrate the contexts in which the innovative solutions were developed to work at an intersection between agriculture and clean energy, thereby allowing small farmers access to efficient solutions in the agriculture cycle. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews, and secondary data was collected from company sources. The study finds that in the case of a social enterprise, the definition of innovation assumes a wider scope by going beyond the introduction of a new product/service. The context of innovation for social enterprise is affected by organisational factors such as organisation's philosophical mindset, behaviour towards innovation, organisation's capabilities, regulatory environment, and customer receptiveness. Additionally, the study also finds that the context of innovation for a social enterprise is affected by its organizational structure. A majority of these organizational factors are, in turn, affected by individual (Founder's) factors such as the founder's formative years, education, direct exposure to relevant issues, complementary skills of co-founders, and a common calling.

Keywords : context of innovation, social enterprise, sustainability oriented innovations, emerging markets, agriculture

Conference Title : ICSEI 2024 : International Conference on Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Conference Location : Haifa, Israel

Conference Dates : March 11-12, 2024