

Thinking Social Seminar – Pune 03 October 2015



Tata Social Enterprise Challenge (TSEC) – a joint initiative of the Tata Group and the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIMC) held the second seminar series, ‘Thinking Social’, at Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication (PG), Pune on 3rd October 2015. The day-long seminar sought to introduce students from top professional colleges in India to the spirit of social entrepreneurship in a rapidly evolving global economy and addressed the concerns of young, budding entrepreneurs belonging to reputed B-Schools such as Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communications (SIMC), Symbiosis Institute of Business Management (SIMB) and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). The speakers for the day comprised eminent social entrepreneurs, academicians and senior corporate executives working extensively in the Indian social entrepreneurship space.

The event kick-started with Prof. Chandan Chatterjee, Director, SIMC Pune, delivering the inaugural address and welcoming all the dignitaries. Highlighting the institute’s keenness towards inculcating a spirit of social sensitivity and proactivity amongst its students, he spoke of the student-initiated and driven Social Responsibility Cell called SIMCare, the acronym CARE standing for Compassion, Appreciation, Respect and Empathy.

Subhrangshu Sanyal, CEO - IIM Calcutta Innovation Park (IIMCIP) shared with the audience IIMC’s journey on entrepreneurship, IIMCIP’s vision & activities and how TSEC emerged as one of the biggest platform for the social entrepreneurs in India. He stressed on the importance of involving fresh minds in solving some of the social challenges faced by India. He motivated the students by saying, “Young minds like you can provide innovative solutions to our current problems”.





Sudipta Marjit, Deputy Vice President, Tata Capital linked the concept of TSEC with the Tata Group's Vision 2025 which states that '25% of the world population will experience the Tata commitment to improving the quality of life of customers and communities'.

Mr.Chandradeep Mitra, of IIM Calcutta, had an interactive Q&A session with the audience, while also sharing his insights on the theme 'Creating a Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem'. He opined that India is a fertile ground for social entrepreneurship today and urged students to start looking at problems around them and work a business model for solving them. He concluded by saying "As a society we are finding social entrepreneurship more acceptable and there are ecosystems which support it".

Speaking on the theme 'Translating the Vision', **Ashish Gawade, CEO and Co-Founder, Bottom of the Pyramid Energy and Environmental Innovations (BoPEEI)**, remarked, "Don't discard what you learn at your B school, rather apply it for a good cause." Citing the analogy of the equality of processes before and after the creation of the universe, he said that the purpose of human life must also be equality, emphasizing on the need to integrate technology for the fulfilment of this purpose.



Sudhir Deshpande, Co-founder of Ecod, presented his perspective on 'A Social Entrepreneur's start-up by reminiscing about his entrepreneurship journey. He lauded SIMC for establishing SIMCare, as it will help students think out-of-the-box and avail opportunities for social change. He also reiterated the objectives of Ecod, which are to reduce plastic and to generate livelihood. Concluding his session, he put forward his vision for India, stating "one day there will be no plastic bags in India".

Prof. Prasanna Hulikavi, Deputy Director, SIMC, Prof. Anupam Barve, Adjunct Faculty, SIMC and Ms.Maitrayee Kulkarni from Prayas discussed about 'Transitioning Positively'. Anupam Barve narrated the story of 'Prayas' and its endeavour to aid the process of self-empowerment in children affected by HIV. Maitrayee Kulkarni further highlighted the various workshops conducted by Prayas that offer to address children's concerns about their future course, provide knowledge training about several factors affecting sexual behaviour and the science behind it. As the discussion between the speakers continued, there was emphasis on the social stigmas that persist around HIV despite witnessing various success stories in the recent past. Therefore, Prof. Hulikavi added, "There is a lot of misinformation about sexual practices and contraception (which will continue) as long as sex education is not introduced in the education curriculum. The moment you have knowledge, you are empowered and the fear is likely to go."

The thought-provoking session was followed by another interesting talk on 'The Journey of a Social Entrepreneur' by **Jayanth Nataraju, Co-Founder of 'Sampurn(e)arth'**. He motivated students to confidently advance in the right direction in order to achieve their goals. He then shared with the audience, the story of his waste management organisation called 'Sampurn(e)arth'. He defined the essence of the initiative to be "an ecologically and economically positive one, with numerous social benefits to it". Concluding the address he quoted, "Social entrepreneurs just need to bring in the positive change so that it becomes common sense. One needs to be able to find the reason and the drive to bring the change."



The last speaker of the seminar, **Dr. Madhav Sathe of 'The Bombay Mothers and Children Welfare Society'** shared a practitioner's perspective on Social Entrepreneurship. He recounted the time when he left medical school to set up this organisation, which then had its fair share of struggles and challenges. Stressing the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), he said, "ICT is the solution to make education attractive and accessible." He concluded by explaining the two types of models – first, the Public Philanthropy model and now, the Public Personal Partnership, both having one common thread of principal - giving back to the society.



Concluding on a positive note, the seminar left the audience inspired by the various stories of change and impact shared enthusiastically by the speakers for the day. Surabhi Udas, a second year MBA student of SIMC, Pune shared her experience saying, "It has been a truly inspirational experience for me. The speakers and their motivational stories have left a positive impact on me. I do hope to do my bit for societal change by working for a social enterprise someday."