

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AS POVERTY REDUCING STRATEGY FOR WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - The purpose of this study is to investigate the potential of social enterprise as a strategy for poverty reduction for women.

Design/methodology/approach - A literature synthesis on the topic was conducted and patterns, linkages and gaps were examined among key themes to identify how social enterprise can potentially serve as a poverty reduction strategy for women.

Findings - The paper presents the findings in terms of specific factors contributing to women's poverty and hypothesizes mechanisms through which social enterprises can mitigate or address these factors in practice. The paper organizes these findings in an integrative framework that highlights the need to ensure a solid policy foundation is in place before a number of key support mechanisms are enabled, which then facilitate specific types of work that can then grow in a sustainable manner.

Research limitations/implications - While the mechanisms and proposed framework are based on the extant literature, additional empirical investigation is required.

Practical implications - Women are disproportionately burdened by poverty and the framework presented provides a very practical tool to guide the design of new or diagnosing existing social enterprises targeting poverty reduction for women.

Social implications - Without a strategic approach, the risk is either perpetuating the status quo, or worse, placing those women engaged in social enterprises in a worse financial and social position.

Originality/value - There is limited research on the poverty reducing role of social enterprise for women and the proposed mechanisms and integrative framework presented provide a means of synthesizing our current knowledge while providing the basis for future investigations.

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