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The Righteous Strategy: Occupy The Moral High Ground through Social Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

In a corporate world, the cause you are fighting for must seem more just than the competitor's. Think of this as moral terrain that you and the other are fighting over; by questioning your enemies' motives and making them appear evil, you can narrow their base of support and room to maneuver. Aim at the soft spots in their public image, exposing any hypocrisy on their part. Never assume that the justice of your cause is self-evident; publicize and promote it. When yourself come under moral attack from a clever enemy, do not whine or get angry; fight fire with fire. If possible, position yourself as the underdog, the victim, the martyr. The central feature of the exterior maneuver "is to assure for oneself the maximum freedom of action while at the same time paralyzing the enemy by a multitude of deterrent checks, somewhat as the Lilliputians tied up Gulliver. As with all operations designed to deter, action will of course be primarily psychological; political, economic, diplomatic and military measures will all be combined towards the same end. The procedures employed to achieve this deterrent effect range from the most subtle to the most brutal: appeal will be made to the legal formulae of national and international law, play will be made with moral and humanitarian susceptibilities and there will be attempts to prick the enemy's conscience by making him doubtful of the justice of his cause. By these methods, opposition from some section of the enemy's internal public opinion will be roused and the same time some sector of international public opinion will be whipped up; the result will be made to co-opt the more unsophisticated sympathizers by arguments based upon their own preconceived ideas.

KEYWORDS :

Introduction

In corporate world big companies face the big moral issue of profiteering which companies claim as the outcome of creation of value for the society. Social activists bluntly argue by saying, whatever value, corporate is talking about is actually made for their customers and not for the whole society and the matter of fact all the resources to create so called value is fetched from the society. There is an opinion which is getting generated among the proletariats that the big divide between the rich and poor is being created by big companies and their promoters. Companies have money power which they are using to usurp the resources of the society. From a regional aspiration, companies are going national and some have become even multinational but the state of infrastructure and employment has gone bad to worst. The low investment rate doesn't just lead to awful inefficiencies. It also means the economy overheat at a very low rate of growth. If a nation's supply chain is built on aging factories and potholed roads, supply cannot keep up with demand, and prices will rise. If the nation invests too little in its schools and is producing too few highly skilled workers, then wages will rise. Brazil's economy seems to be hitting its limits on every front, as the aging airports of Rio and Sao Paulo-unimproved for decade's now- struggle to keep up with increasing traffic, schools fail to graduate enough skilled workers, and businesses operate near capacity. In Sao Paulo traffic is so bad that the CEOs of major Brazilian businesses developed an alternative transport system: a network of landing pads on the rooftops of office skyscrapers, so that top executives can hopscotch from one corporate headquarters to another by helicopter. I have been forced to use this system myself on a number of visits, and while it works great for the business elite, it's a bad sign for Brazil, and a very inflationary way to get across town. The list of top Mexican billionaires reflects this stagnation. It has been virtually no turnover in recent years. The same few families have gotten wealthier, and to maintain their extraordinary pricing power, they fight attempts to open the economy to outside competition, which leads in turn to stickier inflation. Think about India and poverty looks pervasive. Per capital income of India is $1400 which is lesser than the per capital income of Philippines. And to say Indian billionaires are comfortable with displays of their wealth is an understatement, given the billion-dollar home of the country's richest man, Mukesh Ambani. At four hundred thousand square feet and twenty seven stories, it looms over the swankiest neighborhood of Mumbai. If this seems really excessive, there are many examples which are even starker than this one.

The only problem for such companies and their promoters is lacking a perfect righteous strategy. This strategy is the perfect plank to fight the allegation of exploitation which the activists hurl on big companies. All entrepreneurs want their organizations to be profitable. But very few commit to do more than just profit but to serve the society in a positive way. Though companies claim to do the philanthropic activities for the society but some do the business which is based on philanthropy. In fact the time has come to ask the social impact factor from the businesses. The leaf out of it comes from Firm founded by Rajiv Vasudevan by the name of AyurSeva. Vasudevan started Ayurseva with Rs 55 lakh, pooled from his own savings, along with friends and family. The first hospital opened in Kochi, in 2006, followed by two more in Bengaluru, one in Mumbai's Dharavi, Asia's largest slum, and one in Chennai. Dharavi was an attempt to develop an independent ultra low-cost yet viable model that would serve the healthcare needs of the bottom-of-the pyramid patients. The treatment cost of Ayurseva patients is 60% of what an Ayurvaid patient will pay. Ayurseva patients are identified as those with BPL card, or those who can prove that they can't afford treatment. While lifestyle diseases are commonly associated with those living in urban pockets, Vasudevan believes the poor are equally susceptible to such chronic diseases. The moment poor get some money in their hands that go into food. They end up having rich oily food from the street, which leads to 'life style disease'. When they fall ill , they are not unable to work, leading to poorer food choices. This is a vicious cycle and it is important to extend ayurveda treatment to the poor. Though government-run hospitals have made their presence felt, Vasudevan points to generally poor conditions in such hospitals as a reason why healthcare needs better models like his. "What is really free is a question in government hospitals. For the money you pay unofficially to people, you don't get quality treatment. There is no reliability and accountability. Though challenges abound, for now there seem to be takers for Vasudevan's business model. Acumen fund, a non-profit venture philanthropy fund that invests in social enterprises in South Asia and Africa, has invested Rs 6 crore in Ayurvaid in phases since 2008. According to sachindra Rudra, director, acumen fund India, the investment was to help the firm expand its cross-subsidy model for treatment of chronic medical conditions using an appropriate integration of ayurveda and allopathy in a patient-centric, quality conscious and process-oriented approach.

Ayurseva

S.No	Year of Inception	Location	Initial Investment	Social Impact
1	2006	Bengaluru and Kochin	Rs 55 Lakh	Provides Quality Ayurvedic Healthcare to the Poor at subsidized rates.

On a field trip to south India While pursuing her MBA, Zubaida contracted an infection due to unsanitary conditions during the delivery of her first child, and spent a year recovering from it. This led Habib and Zubaida to consider maternal health as an area of focus. They spoke extensively with maternal health professionals, and researched the market for products that catered to this segment. The crude methods being used in rural India for childbirth were hardly up to the required safety and hygiene standards."There was this one place in Rajasthan, where Zubaida was aghast at seeing Topaz blades being used (to cut the umbilical cord)," recalls Habib. The only safe alternatives were branded and expensive products. Janma was born from these deliberations, with a simple business plan to make it work. Returning to India in 2010, their first step was to register Ayzh in India as well, and launch it with a working capital of around Rs14.5 Lakh. "It was a combination of the prize money we won for Janma at various business plan competitions in the US, and our meager savings. We even had to pawn some of Zubaida's jewellery," says Habib. To start with, Ayzh partnered with the panchayat of Kuthambakkam, a small village in the outskirts of Chennai, training three of its women to assemble the birthing kits, Janma was thus born. The first order of 100 kits came from Mediscon Hospital, a private hospital catering to the slum population in Bengaluru. "They are still one of our big customers," points out Habib. Ayzh pitched janma at every meet of material health champions, and targeted NGOs and private sector hospitals catering to the rural and urban poor, and patients from also reached out to government-run institutions, initially. But with limited resources---a small budget and just the two of them doing everything—the couple could sell only 8,000 kits in 2011. Ayzh is staffed by handful of people and continues to run a tight ship. The number of women assembling Janma has gone up, though only to 12. "There is no money to hire anyone," laughs Habib, who handles finance and accounts, while Zubaida is in charge of marketing. She's aided by a marketing manager in India, and one in the US, targeting American charities and UN- related procurement agencies. Ayzh relies on word-of –mouth publicity for Janma. Both Habib and Zubaida say that they make it a point to be present at all major forums where maternal health and mortality are the key issues. To keep the overheads low, Ayzh makes and supplies Janma kits to order. Raw materials are sourced from local pharmaceutical companies. Habib explains that at current volumes, a dedicated assembling unit does not make sense. Surprisingly, Ayzh has not moved to patent Janma. " We feel it's pointless; any determined person can make a copy of the birthing kit," Says Zubaida.

Ayzh

S.No	Year of Inception	Location	Initial Investment	Social Impact
1	2009	Chennai	Rs 14.5 Lakh	Savings lives of rural and underprivileged women during children childbirth

With the help of their engine friends Myshkin Ingawale and Aman Midha, the doctors set up Biosense Technologies and decided to develop a device that would help rural patients undergo instant blood tests without the use of syringes. "We wanted to do something for the masses and the healthcare sector was in dire need of affordable innovation," says Patil. While researching diagnostic methods that don't involve needles, the team chanced upon the concept of using different wavelengths of light for blood tests. IIT Bombay funded and hosted ex-student Patil's attempts to design the device with Sen, though the duo had no luck the first, wait for it, 33 times. They struck gold with the 34th attempt, however, and Midha and Ingawale helped them perfect the device. In 2012, Touch Hb was born- a handheld machine that can give you instant haemoglobin readings for less than Rs 5 per reading, without a single pinprick. Thanks to the cause Biosense is working for, funding has always been forthcoming, with the Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship at IIM Ahmedabad providing the Rs 5 lakh seed fund for the venture. Patil and his team personally invested Rs 2 lakh into biosense, and received Rs 80 lakh from Global Superangels. Rs20 lakh from New York-based venture capital firm Echoing Green, Rs 30 lakh from Villgro Innovations and Rs 1.5 crore from the Insitor fund.

Biosense

S.No	Year of Inception	Location	Initial Investment	Social Impact
1	2009	Thane	Rs 60 Lakh	Pregnant women in rural areas can get Regular check-ups for anaemia with the TouchHb device

Nayak and his friends began their venture by exploring alternatives to plastic bags. They finally zeroed in on bags made from old news papers because they served a dual purpose-paper is environment friendly and using old papers meant reducing waste as well. Surendra Shroff, a senior member of the Rotary Club in Pune, suggested reaching out to rural self-help groups to make the bags. Nayak got in touch with Kalashree Creation, women's SHG in Bhor, 40 km outside Pune, and got some samples made as a first step. Meanwhile, the trio was also researching who its target customers would be. They spoke to nearly 200 retailers of all kinds across the city and realized pharmacists seemed the most receptive to the idea of replacing plastic with paper. Though ecoad's promoters tried highlighting the environmental impact of the bags, what really sold the pharmacists on the idea was that the bags were more financially viable than their plastic counterparts as the manager at Prashant Medicals told Nayak, "As long as we can save costs, we'll go ahead with your product." What started in 2010 with one pharmacy has today spread to 34 outlets across areas such as Wanowarie, Kondhwa and Fatima Nagar, with about 45,000 paper bags already sold.

Ecoad

S.NO	Year of Inception	Location	Social Impact
1.	August 2009	Pune	Helping the environment and ensuring employment for poor women

When Shashank Kumar graduated from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, in 2008, and joined management consulting firm Beacon Advisory Services in Gurgaon, started by two of his IIT seniors, he was already breaking from tradition. He starts his own firm by the name of Farms & Farmers or providing advice on crop and soil analysis to increase the productivity of the cultivated land. FnF has encouraged farmers to cultivate a high yield variety of mentha, used for extracting oil and making crystals that find use in many consumer products. It also helps farmers integrate allied activities such as vermin composting and bee keeping, for which it has tied up with 150 bee keepers in the horticultural belts of Vaishali and Muzaffarpur. Bee pollination helps increase yields of litchi and mustard, and results in additional income from sale of honey.

European history provides a vivid example of the consequences of creative destruction with a righteous strategy. On the eve of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, the governments of most European countries were controlled by aristocracies and traditional elites, whose major source of income was from landholdings or from trading privileges they enjoyed thanks to monopolies granted and entry barriers imposed by monarchs. Consistent with the idea of creative destruction with righteous strategy, the spread of industries, factories, and town took resources away from the land, reduced land rents, and increased the wages that land-owners had to pay their workers. These elites also saw the emergence of all new businessmen and merchants eroding their trading privileges. All in all they were clear economic losers from industrialization. Urbanization and the emergence of a socially conscious middle and working class also challenged the political monopoly of landed aristocracies. So with the spread of the Industrial Revolution the aristocracies were not just the economic losers; they also risked becoming political losers, losing their hold on political power. With their economic and political power under threat, these elites often formed a formidable opposition against industrialization.

Conclusion:

I believe, the same revolution can be brought in by the social entrepreneurship as it came in England in 18th century. This revolution with the righteous strategy will have more humane characteristics and inclusiveness for every class of the society. More over when the firms become big enough to catch the glare of the commoners, the moral or righteous strategy would be so strong that on one would be able to attack it on the ethical or humane ground.

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