Social Transformation of Indian Tribal Community: Unlocking the Potential by providing Access to Healthcare

Case Analysis

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The case accounts for the activities and objectives of a social enterprise named Tejas Eye Hospital (TEH) in Gujarat, India. The case also documents the achievements and challenges before Dr Uday Gajiwala, the co-founder of the Divyajyoti Trust, which runs the TEH. The case provides a short overview of ophthalmology care in India, details on objectives, operations and related activities of Divyajyoti Trust.

This is an interesting case covering various facets of social transformation efforts in a region by an entrepreneur. The case is also unique in its presentation, where there are several caselets within the case to give the reader deeper insights into the unmeasurable but critical positive impact this transformation is bringing to the lives of the target communities. The case also provides many exhibits, including key data to analyse the case. The case is particularly impressive in asking very good questions and that too categorically (pages 6 and 7 of the manuscript). These questions along with the preceding textual description and following exhibits, cover several management topics of high relevance.

ORGANIZATIONAL VISION AND LEADERSHIP

The vision of an organization, coded or otherwise, drives the activities and the aspirations of the organization. While vision serves as a broad direction in setting a task for any organization, it is more critical for a social organization where entrepreneur’s/founder’s personal belief, drive for change and values are usually imprinted on organizations (Bornstein, 2004; Pless, 2012). The case has its core theme centred around the vision of its leader Dr Uday Gajiwala who has been inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekanand. The quote by Swami Vivekanand mentioned at
the beginning of the case seems to be his vision. His personal vision is guiding the vision of Divyajyoti Trust, which the case terms as ‘objective’ and ‘purpose’. More importantly, this vision will need interpretation in resolving some of the ‘contradictions’ for the future path of the trust. The case weaves intertwined topics of organizational vision and transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006) expertly by having a continued discussion between the objectives of the organization (Divyajyoti Trust) and the personal vision of social entrepreneurs (Dr Gajiwala), also emphasized by the inclusion of Dr Gajiwala’s profile in the exhibits.

The present case closely resembles case studies on Aravind Eye Care (e.g., Rangan, 1993) and its founder Dr G. Venkataswamy, popularly known as Dr V, who also happened to have a similar vision of eradicating blindness. While Aravind Eye Care is a mature, 45-year-old organization and has widespread reach, Divyajyoti trust, while growing exponentially in 5–6 years, is still in early phases of growth. This case demonstrates growth-related challenges of such organizations.

GROWTH: FOCUS VS. DIVERSIFICATION

What is the core purpose of Divyajyoti Trust—ophthalmology care of tribal communities or overall development of the tribal communities to enable employment opportunities? The case presents the dilemma before Dr Gajiwala—to keep the organization engaged in a wide range of activities, as in recent years or focus on core competence (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). The vision, as mentioned above, now needs clarification to answer the question. It also puts forward classic challenge organizations face—how much diversification is good? Resource-based view (Barney, 1991) might be a helpful tool for readers in disentangling this by understanding the main resources and capabilities of the organization and diversifying along those. The case also provides an opportunity to be analysed along with recent literature on resource allocation for growth where entrepreneur’s vision is the key (Dunkelberg et al., 2013).

OTHER TOPICS

Apart from the topics mentioned above, the case offers rich insights to encompass several other important topics—social entrepreneurship, sustainability, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and philanthropy. The case context of ophthalmology care is helpful for understanding healthcare delivery and management. The implementation-related challenges, and the questions on financial sustainability of business models are other important aspects of the case worth exploring more deeply. Finally, the case also represents the growing interest of researchers and practitioners in hybrid organizations and their sustainability (Battilana & Dorado, 2010).

LIMITATIONS

There are few areas where the case could have provided more emphasis. First, one of the focus areas of the case is the transformation of the Indian ‘Tribal Community’, as apparent from the discussion, two of the exhibits and even the title. However, the case does not build on it, and there is little detail about that in the main text. What are tribal communities, and why they are important for a social entrepreneur’s attention? There could have been some information on why Dr Gajiwala and Divyajyoti trust chose to work for the transformation of tribal communities specifically rather than any other category of underprivileged such as poor, socially backward, remotely located, women, which are broader categorization traditionally preferred for similar organizations (e.g., Aravind Eye Care). Given the significance of the welfare of tribal communities internationally and in particular in India, along with the lack of management cases on them, this might have been worthwhile for the readers.

Second, in a related vein, while the case mentions the transformation of tribal communities by healthcare initiatives, the question before Dr Gajiwala about the other alternatives available for upliftment—employment generation, education and even within healthcare, treatment other than ophthalmology—needs careful analysis. It would have been helpful if the case provides data on some of these dimensions too. Finally, the caselets in the exhibit ‘Compassion in Action’ could be reduced in number as they are repetitive to some extent.

NOTES

1. A Sanskrit word which has several meanings, one of them is radiance.
2. A Sanskrit word which means divine light or the aura.
3. India has a separate ministry for this purpose named ‘Ministry of Tribal Affairs’ https://tribal.nic.in/

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