

A Realistic Study of Women Social Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT:

India has the world's second largest labour force of 516.3 million people and although hourly wage rates in India have more than doubled over the past decade, the latest World Bank report states that approximately 350 million people in India currently live below the poverty line. As a growing economy, India today needs many social entrepreneurs. It comes to social entrepreneurship, India is often referred to as the epicenter of impact investing, and the world's laboratory for testing new ideas. The focus of the paper is to study the growing trends in India of Social Entrepreneurship and the new paths taken by various Social Entrepreneurs. It also briefs about different Theories regarding Social Entrepreneurship. Sincere Efforts are made to provide information and an exploratory study, related to the support activities of Indian Social Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurial ventures in India till 2020. This may be beneficial in future empirical studies of the subject. Social Entrepreneurship in India has taken a new concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). India is gradually recognizing that women are not just equal citizens in the society but are vital agents of direct social transformation

Globally, societies are riddled with multiple problems and long-standing issues that remain unresolved by the institutions and the government sector. This is where social entrepreneurs step in to challenge, question and rethink concepts and assumptions. They work on the existing infrastructure, plugging the gaps, providing time and innovative solutions to alleviate problems that exist at the grassroots level. In the current scenario, women are equal participants in bringing about a direct impact in the society.

The world over, a growing number of women are starting or running businesses. They have, for long, been proactively contributing towards diverse sectors ranging from education to healthcare, renewable energy, waste management, e-learning and e-business, housing and slum development, water and sanitation, violence against women, other issues related to women, children and the elderly, etc. The trend clearly reflects that women have been involved in not only creating jobs for themselves and their co-founders, but are also employing less trained and fostering the underprivileged women.

women social entrepreneurs are now working to provide innovative, practical and sustainable solutions. India is gradually recognizing that women are not just equal citizens in the society but are vital agents of direct social transformation. This is evident from various government initiatives and new policies taken up by the corporate sector identifying women as agents of sustained socio-economic growth and change.

Social Entrepreneurship 2020, Women Entrepreneur, Corporate Social Responsibility

Introduction

Women as Social Entrepreneurs

The 'gender gap' in social entrepreneurship is much smaller than the gender gap in 'mainstream' entrepreneurship, suggesting that social entrepreneurship can be a powerful tool to increase female entrepreneurship and participation in the labour market. Furthermore, it is found social enterprises led by women and men to be very similar in size, profitability and growth. A major difference that is seen between male and female-led social enterprises seemed to indicate that women were actually more innovative: "Women-led ventures seem to be more likely to open up new markets –

that is, when starting up, providing a product/service which no one else at that time provided. This further suggests that perhaps due their specific sensitivity towards social needs, women social entrepreneurs are notable 'lead innovators' when it comes to social innovation". On the other hand, female-led social enterprises are generally more participatory in terms of management, suggesting "the power of women social entrepreneurs to empower others (and in doing so, enabling colleagues to learn and develop important talents and skills)".

Motivations to start a social enterprise

It is further observed that a larger percentage (26%) of female-led social enterprises are located in the Human Health and Social Work Activities and the social issues more relevant to their mission were "Inclusion of socially marginalized people and groups" followed by "Diversity inclusion". Mainly, they concern with the integration of socially excluded people into the labor market. The main motivation to start a social enterprise is to respond to needs in the community and make a difference. women

describe personally experiencing and witnessing unmet needs in their community and looking for innovative solutions that will bring about a specific social impact. They also describe feeling a personal calling towards social issues and a desire to make the world a better place with their work. This indicates women are usually more concerned with social goals than men, perhaps due to traditional gender roles that place women much closer to social issues both in their private and professional life. Furthermore, many women have a personal connection with the mission and goal chosen for their enterprise. Supporting women-led social enterprises

The problems faced by female leaders and founders of social enterprises are very similar to those faced by mainstream female entrepreneurs. There is a lack of funding opportunities that hinders women's entrepreneurship and many female leaders have reported that it can be harder to attract investors. Furthermore, strict policies and regulations can often be an obstacle to create social businesses and keep them afloat.

It is also important to support initiatives that allow female social entrepreneurs to learn from each other and become more knowledgeable and skilful in running their social businesses. Female social entrepreneurs often suffer from a lack of visibility and it is important to foster networking events and initiatives that highlight the role of female entrepreneurs in communities across the globe.

Female social entrepreneurs are innovators that bring about social change. A friendly policy environment can encourage more women to create social businesses and foster female leadership and participation in the social economy. Likewise, educating consumers on the benefits of female-led social enterprises can encourage them to seek out their services and

products, benefiting the local economy and community.

Literature Review

India is a developing country, growing at an average annual growth rate of 6 percent from 1951 until 2015 (Trading Economics, 2015). In the past decade, India has witnessed development in many spheres of the economy. However, the problem of poverty still shackles the development process of the country. Although India has reduced its poverty with 21.9 percent of its 1.2 billion people living below poverty line as against the target of 23.9 percent to be achieved by 2015, still one-fourth of the world's poor live in India (Agarwal, 2015). One of the most important factors behind poverty and degradation of livelihood as disclosed in various researches is unemployment (Jha, 2013). The overall unemployment rate in India was 4.9 percent in 2013-14 with 4.1 percent among men and 7.7 percent among women (Press Trust of India, 2015). The high level of poverty and unemployment adversely affects the socio-economic development of the nations. This is quite evident as India ranked 94th on GDP and 102nd on Social Progress Index out of 132 countries in 2014 which is lowest among the BRICS nations (Press Trust of India, 2014). This clearly indicates the poor standard of living and social progress of India at the global level. One common solution for eradicating poverty, creating employment opportunities, generating income and bringing social development can be 'Entrepreneurship'. Entrepreneurship is a process through which a person, called entrepreneur takes calculated risk, innovate a business idea and organize a business of his own to run it profitably. In other words, entrepreneurship means the function of creating something new, organizing and coordinating, and undertaking risk and handling economic uncertainty (Arora & Sood, 2005). Thus, entrepreneurs

shape economic destiny of nations by creating wealth and employment, offering products and services and generating taxes for government because of which entrepreneurship has closely been linked to economic growth of a country (Kumari, 2014). Entrepreneurship solves problems of economic and social development of the country as social development is a consequence of economic development. However, another dimension of entrepreneurship, called 'Social Entrepreneurship' has a greater potential to accelerate the pace of social growth of the country. Social Entrepreneurship is the recognition of a social problem and the use of entrepreneurial principles to organize, create and manage a social venture to achieve a desired social change. While a business entrepreneur typically measures performance in profit and return, a social entrepreneur also measures positive returns to society (Singh, 2012). Entrepreneurs are innovative, highly-motivated and critical thinkers, and when these attributes are combined with a drive to solve social problems, a social entrepreneur is born (Seth & Kumar, 2011). Hence, social entrepreneurship is a concept where business is started and run by an entrepreneur for a social cause. It is very much different from corporate social responsibility (CSR). In CSR, companies along with the main business are engaged in social activities like charity or projects whereas in social entrepreneurship, the venture, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, is entirely based on a social issue. One of the initial social entrepreneurial ventures is the 'Grameen Bank' originated in 1976 by Prof. Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh to provide micro credit to poor women in groups. This Nobel Peace Prize winning initiative was based on the social issue of poverty and women empowerment which emphasized that poor has under-utilized skills and the potential to take loans,

repay them and come out of the poverty clutches. He believed that women are a medium of development for any household and economic liberty given to women brings both economic and social benefits to her family. The concept of Grameen Bank has been replicated in many countries including India as it has been successful for generating many women entrepreneurs and alleviating poverty of poor households. Women Entrepreneurship and Women Empowerment According to Government of India, "women entrepreneurship involves an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital." (Sinha, 2015). Hence, women entrepreneur can be defined as a woman or group of women who initiates an innovative business activity, takes calculated risk and manages that business enterprise. Mrs. Rajni Bector of Cremica Group, Mrs. Shahnaz Hussain of Shahnaz Herbals and Mrs. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw of Biocon are some of the renowned women entrepreneurs of Indian origin. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacity." (Agarwal, 2012). This means a woman is equally strong as a man as far as the mental ability and intelligence is concerned. However, still the woman is treated unequal with man. According to the Human Development Report 2014 by United Nations Development Programme, India ranked 127th in a list of 152 countries on Gender Inequality Index (United GJRA - GLOBAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH ANALYSIS X 40 Volume-4, Issue-11, Nov-2015 ISSN No 2277 - 8160 Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2014). Currently only, 39 percent of Indian women is formally employed, compared to 81 percent of Indian men and 71 percent of Chinese women. Moreover, India scored second to last in a Gender Female

Entrepreneurship Index among women entrepreneurs in 17 countries (Guardian News and Media Limited, 2015). This clearly indicates the need for women empowerment through women entrepreneurship considering the role of women in socio-economic development of the country. The lack of female participation in the workforce results in a cultural vicious circle (British Council, 2015) and has adverse impact on the society. Increasing the participation of women in working population of the country by encouraging women entrepreneurship will reduce gender inequality and improve the socio-economic status of the poor Indian women. Women Social Entrepreneurship India's Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) has recognized for the first time that women are not just as equal citizens but as agents of economic and social growth (Lavanya, 2010). A social and cultural change can be prompted in a woman's status by providing her economic opportunities. On the similar note, a 'Young Women Social Entrepreneurship Development Programme' has been started by the British Council and partner Diageo in India. This programme aims to disseminate social enterprise expertise to women in communities across India with the belief that supporting the emergence of a new generation of young women social entrepreneurs is an important investment in the future (British Council, 2015). Women Social Entrepreneurs in India India has seen a handful of women social entrepreneurs growing and leaving a mark in the society with their innovative social ideas like Ela Ramesh Bhatt of SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association of India), G. Padmaja Reddy of Spandana (microfinance organization), Chetna Gala Sinha of Mann Deshi Mahila Sahkari Bank (microfinance bank) etc. However, the spirit of social entrepreneurship has grown

in recent years and a number of young women entrepreneurs have come up and started their ventures targeting different social concerns like basic needs, health, education, information, employment, entrepreneurship development, microfinance, rural development

Boundaries and Challenges for Social Entrepreneurship

- Greater demands on time through home and family commitments
- Less access to finance
- Less confidence in skills and ability
- Greater fear of failure
- Fewer female role models
- Varying social, cultural and familial pressures on women
- Prejudice and discrimination

A) Women's empowerment organisations

1. Increase the use of social enterprise among women's empowerment organisations by providing specific packages of training, support, investment and mentoring. This should particularly focus on creating a more resilient and financially independent women's sector.

B) Social enterprises and intermediaries

1. Increase the number of social enterprises that focus on women's empowerment through campaigns, accelerator programmes, competitions and funding that specifically encourage gender-focussed ventures.

2. Facilitate networking between gender-focussed social enterprises and women's organisations nationally and internationally with a view to sharing best practice and replicating successful models. Ideally, this should be coupled with kick-starter funding.

3. Increase the rate of start-up and scale amongst women-led social enterprises through targeted support packages, accelerators, greater exposure to female role models, and targeted financial assistance. These programmes

should be flexible and include childcare. If women were starting social enterprises at the same rate as men, there would be over 50 per cent more social enterprises in these countries. And if women-led social enterprises were to scale at the same rate as ones led by men this would create disproportionately more jobs for women.

4. Social enterprises should provide more opportunities for under-employed women, creating flexible, part-time jobs. Globally, women are under-employed compared to men, and women put 90 per cent of their income back into their family, while men put in less than 40 per cent. Employing women therefore has a greater social impact on the health and opportunities of whole families compared to employing men. Flexible working is essential to supporting more women into paid work.

5. Provide specific social enterprise accelerator programmes in poor communities where there are high rates of informal 'micro-social-entrepreneurship' with a view to supporting women to set up formal NGOs or social enterprises.

7. Increase the number of female social enterprise leaders through mentoring, targeted leadership programmes, and facilitated peer-support. This should include both founders / leaders and board members.

8. Integrate gender equality into social enterprise business models, with a particular focus on gender balance on boards. Encourage recruitment to skills rather than experience of scale to prevent perpetuating the imbalance of men leading larger organisations. Research by Acumen suggests that integrating gender equality has the potential to make social enterprises more resilient, successful and impactful. These findings should be publicised more widely within the social enterprise sector.

9. Research, understand and publicise the gender wage-gap in social enterprise.

C) Funders and investors

10. Learn the lessons of the Young Foundation's report, *The Sky's the Limit*;² use a 'gender lens' when making investment decisions; understand the additional barriers faced by women social entrepreneurs, and the strengths of women-led social enterprises.

11. Ensure a gender balance in panels making lending and investment decisions.

12. Set specific targets for a portfolio that is balanced for gender and race to reflect the country's population.

13. Record and publish data on the level of investment into male and female-led

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2. Set criteria for social enterprises to meet before receiving a grant or investment including:

a. have gender-balanced boards
b. record and measure their social and environmental impact, and include gender equality as a metric

3. Increase the supply of funding and social investment into social enterprises focussing on gender, especially where these are also in sectors considered 'non-traditional' for women.

D) Governments

4. Governments should look to facilitate the above recommendations to women's organisations, social enterprise intermediaries, and

funders and investors, by supporting through policies, convening, finance, and (where appropriate) legislation.

5. Governments should bear in mind that any policies to support women into work will actively support the social enterprise sector, which has a disproportionately high female workforce.

6. Governments should prioritise eliminating the gender imbalance between caring responsibilities through legislation and financial support for shared parental leave and affordable childcare. The social enterprise sector should also look to address these two issues, equalising parental leave policies and encouraging the provision of affordable childcare.

7. Governments and social enterprises should work in partnership to increase the use of social entrepreneurship education in schools, including a specific focus on addressing gender inequality. List of Top Social Entrepreneurs in India

While they may not be able to bridge the divide between the haves and have-nots immediately, innovations by corporates go a long way in supporting the underprivileged. Notably, many women in India are heeding the need for innovation in areas of agriculture, environment, and women empowerment, among others, thereby contributing to the larger social good.

Sujata Chatterjee

Sujata Chatterjee felt overwhelmed at the waste generated by fast fashion trends and the toll it takes on climate change. Hence, she left her corporate job as salesperson at Hewlett-Packard India, and started her social venture Twirl. Store in 2017. The platform, nearly three years old, encourages people to send in clothes they no longer need and gather points that can be redeemed on its

ecommerce platform. It segregates clothes based on whether they can be upcycled into bags, jackets, accessories. Clothes that cannot be upcycled are distributed in slum areas in Santiniketan and Sunderbans in West Bengal. The Kolkata-based entrepreneur works with an all-women team – eight core members and 40 on the outskirts of the city.

Abhilasha Purwar

Social entrepreneur Abhilasha Purwar founded Blue Sky Analytics in July 2018 to tackle the impact of climate change. The artificial intelligence (AI)-based startup provides real-time environmental data and offers actionable environmental insights into air and water qualities. Abhilasha environmental management from Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. She was determined to do something when she saw the impact of climate change up close, when a river turned orange in Chandrapur, Maharashtra.

Anannya Parekh's start up Inner Goddess empowers women by making them understand the importance of financial literacy. It aims to address financial anxiety, mental health issues, and personal investing, and has organised more than 70 workshops so far. The start-up caters to young women between the ages of 16 and 25 years, who hail from underprivileged backgrounds. The workshops earlier charged between Rs 300 and Rs 20,000, but Inner Goodness now functions as a non-profit organisation. Exemplifying the popular adage, 'Today a reader, tomorrow a leader', her social venture has impacted over 10,000 women across Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru, since starting up in September 2016.

Ruchi Jain

Ruchi Jain quit a government job to connect with farmers on ground who play an important role in the economy. After acting on four

different ideas and exhausting all her savings, Ruchi invested Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000

Shailza Dasgupta

Shailza Dasgupta co-founded Homestays of India in April 2017, starting with five homestays in Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh. Apart from making the homestays service more organised with her Co-founder Vinod Verma (also a travel photographer), she promotes low impact eco-tourism and aims to educate and help people travel responsibly. The start-up has now expanded to a network of more than 100 homestays across 21 states. Shailza helps in getting families offering homestay services onboard, and trains them in different aspects of hospitality, guest handling, basic conversational English, health and hygiene, homestay management, and ways to adopt eco-friendly practices.

Jeroo Billimoria

She is the Founder and Managing Director of Child and Youth Finance International (CYFI). Apart from that, Jeroo is the founder of multiple award-winning national and internationally acclaimed NGO's. She owns global fame for all her humanitarian work esp. children. Presently, CYFI has been working with 91 world governments to fulfill the objective financial extension and economic citizenship education in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Her latest ventures include Aflatoun, Childline India Foundation, and Child Helpline International.

Sushmita Ghosh

Before establishing Changemakers in 1992, Ghosh had etched her name on the panel of A-listed journalists in India. Changemakers is an online open-source, self-energizing, problem-solving platform. Ghosh served as President of Ashoka from 2000 to 2005 and associated with many renowned national and international NGO's.

Ria Sharma

Ria Sharma is a new-age Delhite who is graduated from Leeds College of Art, UK. She founded the world's first rehab holds a master's degree in in a group of farmers who were unable to sell their jaggery produce and eventually founded Taru Naturals. A farmer-focused start up, Taru Naturals focuses on natural and organic farm produce. Jaggery powder is one of its bestselling products, with clients like Taj Palace hotel in Mumbai and Blue Tokai. Other products such as black rice, khapli wheat flour, and sourdough flour are also popular. With her mother Poonam Jain, a naturopathy expert, as founding partner, the start-up's main objective is to be a platform to serve the farmers of India.

Akanksha Hazari

She is popularly known for her contributions to the segments of social entrepreneurship and peace negotiations. She had been honored by former US president Bill Clinton for her contribution m. Paani, resolving the global water crisis.

Ajaita Shah

The founder and CEO of Frontier Markets and the President of Frontier Innovation, Shah tapped the market of clean energy products and sold 20,000+ clean energy products across Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. Frontier Innovation deals in rural sales and distribution and caters to quality durables at a shoestring price to the LIG group of the society.

Shaheen Mistry

Shaheen established the Akanksha Foundation for educating the downtrodden sections of the society. Started with just one center, today Akanksha Foundation is helping 3500 poor children in 58 centers and 6 schools. The NGO works round the clock to uproot illiteracy from the bottom of the society.

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Chetna Gala Singha

One of the finest advocates in our time Chetna has been a strong voice for women empowerment. She is the President and Founder of the Mann Deshi Foundation. The aim of the organization is to create 1 million rural women entrepreneurs by 2020 by the means of skill training and grooming

Urvashi Sahni

Study Hall Educational Foundation (SHEF) is founded by the lady social entrepreneur who had been felicitated with the prestigious Social Entrepreneur of the Year India 2017 Award. Sahni is known for her contribution in the field of education for the specially enabled girl child. SHELF has trained over 5000 trainers and changed the lives of countless girls across the country.

Aarushi Batra

This young social entrepreneur of India is popular for her foundation Robin Hood Army. Batra along with her three other friends started this volunteer-based organization that does its best to send surplus food to the unfed people. By far it has catered to 5 million poor people in 60 cities across the globe. Social Entrepreneurs in India have become the backbone of society for their unique initiatives. They don't work for money rather they strive to add value to society. Not only social welfare they aim at improving the lives of the masses of the country
Solutions and Recommendations
Seven C-Strategies for Successful Social Entrepreneurship

1. Collaborations: As an entrepreneur, it sometimes gets difficult to instantly hire people and get them on board. At such time, an

easy way out is to collaborate with those who do not mind working on a project basis. But since it is necessary to ensure a certain quality of work, it is necessary to double check their credentials and past work experience. Those who co-create with should also share your vision and core values. The same level of commitment and sincerity always helps lay a stronger foundation for any enterprise. Wherever, possible it is better to avail of the many freelance illustrators, developers and printers available, and outsource whatever functions one can. This not only helps to focus on core competence and gives more time to manage customers and clients, but also ensures quality, a new perspective and a better product.

2. Connections: Just about everyone you have met in the past, who knows you and your work reasonably well, will comprise your network. Since they are not backed by an organization, credibility also takes a little longer to build, but if you focus on delivery then that should not be an issue for long. As they grow as an entrepreneur and get more confident about what they are doing, they will realize that talking about the venture and building connections will become second nature. It will also figure out how to join the dots and leverage our connections.

3. Competitive advantage: It is literally a sea out there and no longer a pond. There are too many players and not that many clients, but we all still have to survive.

If we have a novel idea, great. If not, find something that makes us stand apart from the crowd. What is it that you have which can be offered differently?

What are the three things we will do to ensure that your client does not call someone else? Moreover, what will we always want to be remembered for? What helps is the fact that in all cases providing end-to-end solutions, customizing them for each client, taking few selective

projects, but giving them full attention, both in terms of creativity and scope is crucial.

4. Communications: When we are clear about our edge, state it in the simplest and best way possible. Right from the time we promote our company to our everyday interactions with clients and service providers, communication will form the cornerstone of our enterprise. With business, add humor, warmth and creativity to communications. My own mantra is "Engage as you entertain, inform as you interact". Since social entrepreneurship is essentially into the business of societal aspects, words almost become the competitive advantage. Keeping the dialogue open, following up with clients and sending that occasional note on new projects all help in building brand identity and recall.

5. Creativity: No enterprise can breathe without it. In my view, creativity is the very oxygen for survival, both personally and professionally. Creativity is, in my opinion, a reflection of ourself in our work. The freedom to experiment, take license and add something that is "you" to your work. It's the ability to fly with a project, to give it a new dimension and make a statement all your own. Creativity should be a part of every enterprise and encouraged at every level. Creativity allows people to be their best versions. It allows them to take ownership of what they are doing, and when they get appreciated for a job well done, they will probably bring newer and more effective processes into your organization.

6. Courage: It takes courage to go it alone, and even more courage to stay the course. At every point of your journey, it is only the courage of your conviction that will take you further. The courage to stand by your vision, tide over the lull periods and rise again to meet new challenges, and very often, reinvent

yourself. In my experience, courage can be built with the help of support systems: by participating in various social and cultural initiatives; taking up short courses to grow your skill set; by attending networking forums to spread the word about you and your enterprise, or interacting with other entrepreneurs and start-ups.

7. Customer Satisfaction: A broad term, but one which is at the heart of every enterprise, customer or client satisfaction is really the number one rule for survival. It ensures longevity and reaps rewards. A happy customer will refer you to more people and almost always give you the first opportunity to work on new projects. Testimonials go a long way in building goodwill. A gauge of customer satisfaction is whether your enterprise has managed to create repeat value for them and made a holistic impact.

CONCLUSION

Social enterprise is not an alternative to other models of women's empowerment and it is not a new tool for empowering women. It is under-utilised, however, and where it is used could be even more effective. Women's empowerment organisations are underfunded and less than a third is currently using social enterprise to fund their activities. There is considerable opportunity for sharing best practice and replicating successful business models and approaches.

This would help increase the number and effectiveness of social enterprises with a focus on women's empowerment. Women social entrepreneurs are an under-utilised resource. A lack of female role models in social enterprise is one of the barriers facing women social entrepreneurs. There are other barriers facing women social entrepreneurs, and governments and intermediaries should look seriously at addressing them. When less than three per cent of the global population is involved in social entrepreneurship, yet the need for social impact is so high, can we

really afford for women to start social enterprises at a fifth the rate of men? Women social entrepreneurs are an under-utilised resource. The social enterprise sector should be proud of its record of producing women leaders but certainly not complacent. More work needs to be done to support women leaders in the sector, and more work needs to be done with larger social enterprises to make sure they consider their board, leadership teams and pay structures with a gender lens. A sector that exists to create a better world should not have a glass ceiling or a gender pay gap. Keeping a clear vision in place and moving toward it with steady strides helps to go to the next level with greater confidence. I have personally found in time, almost similar to days in college, when every day one studies a new chapter; it unfolds a new world of possibilities and opportunities. All that is needed is to be ready to respond to what comes one's way. Luck will surely come, and more often than not in abundance. So take a leap, risk and give it the best shot.

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