


Review

# Social Entrepreneurship as a Path for Social Change and Driver of Sustainable Development: A Systematic Review and Research Agenda

Sanchita Bansal, Isha Garg and Gagan Deep Sharma \* 

University School of Management Studies, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University,  
New Delhi 110078, India; bansalsanchita@gmail.com (S.B.); ishagarg2206@gmail.com (I.G.)

\* Correspondence: angrishgagan@gmail.com; Tel.: +91-852-740-0113

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**Abstract:** Social entrepreneurship has been recognized as a tool to attain sustainable development. This paper highlights the role of social entrepreneurship in triggering social change and attaining sustainable development. The paper contributes significantly to the existing literature by conducting a systematic review of extant works. To this end, we analyzed and reviewed 173 research papers from the Web of Science database. The results are presented in the form of descriptive findings and thematic discussion. The paper concludes by setting up the agenda for future researchers in the field.

**Keywords:** social entrepreneurship; sustainable development; systematic review

## 1. Introduction

Academic interest in sustainable development is growing significantly. Researchers are approaching the subject of sustainable development from various contexts. In that course, the concepts of social entrepreneurship and sustainable development are also crossing paths [1]. Social entrepreneurs have been understood as change agents who employ entrepreneurial means for providing systemic solutions to social and environmental problems [2] while also ensuring their own survival and sustainability [3]. Recent literature on social entrepreneurship focuses on the relevance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship for economic development [4]. In developing countries where resources are scarce and banks and financial institutions are reluctant to lend financial support to SMEs, the governments have an even larger role to play by providing sources of financing for SME development [5]. While lack of resources is considered to be the major barrier or hindrance to responsible business practices in SMEs, resource-poor entrepreneurs are looking for innovative business models in order to sustain themselves [6].

Considerable attention has been devoted to sustainable development supporting social, economic and environmental aspects [7]. To recognize opportunities for sustainable development, entrepreneurial knowledge and innovative abilities play a key role [8]. The innovative power of entrepreneurs has an important part in ensuring a more sustainable future. Entrepreneurs are, therefore, recognized as the engines of sustainable development [9]. While entrepreneurs are considered as vehicles for meeting (currently) unmet social needs, the academic discourse on how this process will actually unfold has been sparse [8].

The present paper consolidates the developments in extant literature on the contribution of social entrepreneurship towards sustainable development through systematic review methodology and suggests the agenda for future researchers in the field. The paper contributes to the literature of social entrepreneurship as well as sustainable development in a novel way by providing ready reference of the extant literature to the potential researchers in both fields. In a specific way, we combine the research outcomes and parameters of the extant literature in six categories. These include the studies

focusing on (a) innovation and technology adopted by the social entrepreneurs; (b) contribution of social entrepreneurs towards rural and community development and urbanization; (c) social, economic and environmental considerations of the social entrepreneurs; (d) financing and crowdfunding patterns in social entrepreneurs; (e) women entrepreneurs; and (f) corporate social responsibility performed by the social entrepreneurs. We also identify parameters within each category being addressed by the extant literature; and the objectives studied, methodologies employed, and findings of the important studies within the six categories. Finally, we highlight research directions in the field by indicating the following research questions for future researchers.

**RQ1:** What are the major themes and sub-themes identified and discussed by extant literature studying social entrepreneurship in the context of sustainable development?

**RQ2:** Which methodological approaches have been employed by the extant literature to study social entrepreneurs in the context of sustainable development?

**RQ3:** What are the gaps in existing literature studying social entrepreneurship in the context of sustainable development; and what are the potential focus areas for future research in the field?

The paper is organized as follows. The present section introduces the ideation of the paper and the research questions; the second section outlines the methodology applied for this review; the third section presents the descriptive findings and thematic analysis of the papers under reference; the fourth section concludes and suggests the research agenda for future research in the field.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology of this paper is inspired by Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart [10], Jabbour [11]; Junior and Filho [12]; Sharma, Aryan, Singh, and Kaur [13]; Talan and Sharma [14].

We use the Web of Science database to conduct our search using the BOOLEAN criteria. Web of Science provides access to multidisciplinary research which allows for in-depth examination of particular sub-fields within an academic or scientific discipline [15]. To answer the research questions specified in the Introduction, we have conducted a comprehensive systematic review of the literature. Following their initial application in medical research, systematic reviews have been widely used in the fields of economics and management, due to their ability to improve the quality of review process and establish a systematic, clear and duplicable literature review [10]. Systematic reviews involve detailed examination of each paper considering their abstract, introduction, methods, findings and conclusions [16], thereby highlighting the major trends and results from the existing literature and providing directions for future research [17]. In systematic reviews, where a typical number of papers are inspected, the researcher specifies the Boolean query to find relevant papers [18,19]. The usage of BOOLEAN criteria has become much prevalent across disciplines in recent times [14,17,20]. Boolean is used to structure a query, that is easily replicable and editable, and for more control in retrieving plurals and different spellings that result in stronger and more precise searches [21]. The papers that match the query are retrieved and inspected but those which do not match the query are never viewed regardless of their relevance [19].

A systematic search was conducted (on 1 March 2018) in the Web of Science (WoS) database to identify all peer-review papers using the following BOOLEAN:

TS= ((social\*) AND ((entrepreneur\*) OR (entrepreneurial\*) OR (entrepreneurship\*)) AND ("sustainable development")).

The query led to 176 papers, which were further evaluated as per the procedure exhibited in Figure 1. To begin with, non-English papers were rejected. We came down to a list of 175 papers, out of which two papers were doubtful, so the papers were reassessed and finally rejected as they were not directly related to the study. Afterwards, a final list of 173 papers was obtained (Supplementary Materials). After collecting and screening the research papers, we categorized and coded them to have an overall view of the studies on social entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

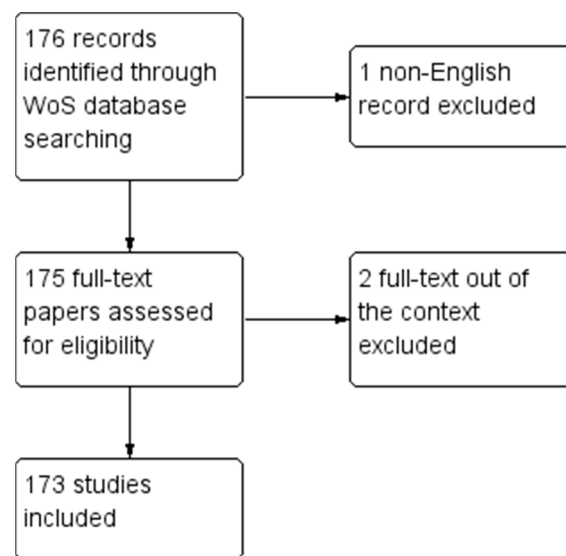


Figure 1. Search and selection process.

The classification includes seven major subjects, numbered from one to seven, and coded using alphabetical letters that go from A to I. Table 1 depicts the categorization framework and codes.

Table 1. The framework for categorizing and coding the studies analyzed.

Category	Meaning	Codes for Alternatives
1.	Year-wise publications and citations	1992–2018
2.	Coverage	A- Developed countries B- Developing countries or emerging economies C- No specific coverage
3.	Geographical coverage	A- Europe B- North America C- Asia D- Africa E- Other countries F- No specific countries
4.	Dimensions	A- Economy-related B- Environment-related C- Related to social issues D- Others
5.	Methodology	A- Conceptual B- Case study C- Empirical testing

Table 1. Cont.

Category	Meaning	Codes for Alternatives
6.	Themes	A- Conceptual foundation of social entrepreneurship B- Innovation and technology C- Rural and community development and urbanization D- Socio-economic considerations E- Environmental and ecological considerations F- Education and skills G- Financing and crowd funding H- Leadership and governance I- Others
7.	Contribution	A- New perspectives B- Consistent with previous literature C- Previous model with different database/time period D- Comparative study

The classification and categorization scheme is in line with Jabbour [11]; Ferreira et al. [16] Sharma et al. [13]; Jain and Sharma [17]; Talan and Sharma [14]. The first category identifies the distribution of publications per year and year-wise citations for the period 1992–2018 to arrive at the period witnessing an increase in academic interest to the subject. The second category involves identifying the coverage of the selected papers, which have been coded as: “A- Developed countries”, “B- Developing countries” and “C- No specific coverage”. Code “C” is applied to the papers, not specific to a specific country. To further specify the geographical area covered by the papers, the third category has been created, which are coded on a scale from A–F. The fourth category classifies the papers based on the dimensions studied by them, and is coded by the letters A, B, C and D. Social entrepreneurship has been used as one of the most powerful tools for promoting sustainable development [22], which entails social, economic and environmental dimensions [23]. The fifth category identifies the research method applied in the extant literature and is coded on a scale from A–C. This category identifies the prominent methods used by the extant literature. The sixth category associates with the main themes of the reviewed research papers, coded from A–I. The seventh category classifies the studies according to their contribution to the body of knowledge, and codes the papers on a scale of A–D. The aim of this category is to assess the findings of the papers and to verify whether the authors have introduced a new stream of research or are conforming to the previous literature.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Descriptive Findings

The descriptive findings provide an overview and help clarify the main characteristics and methodology used by selected studies [24].

### 3.1.1. Year-Wise Publications and Citations

Figure 2 presents the number of papers published per year and the citations of all the reviewed papers per year for the period 1992–2018. Figure 2 reveals an increasing trend signaling an increased interest of researchers in this area [1]. The highest number of publications and the sum of times cited are in the year 2017.

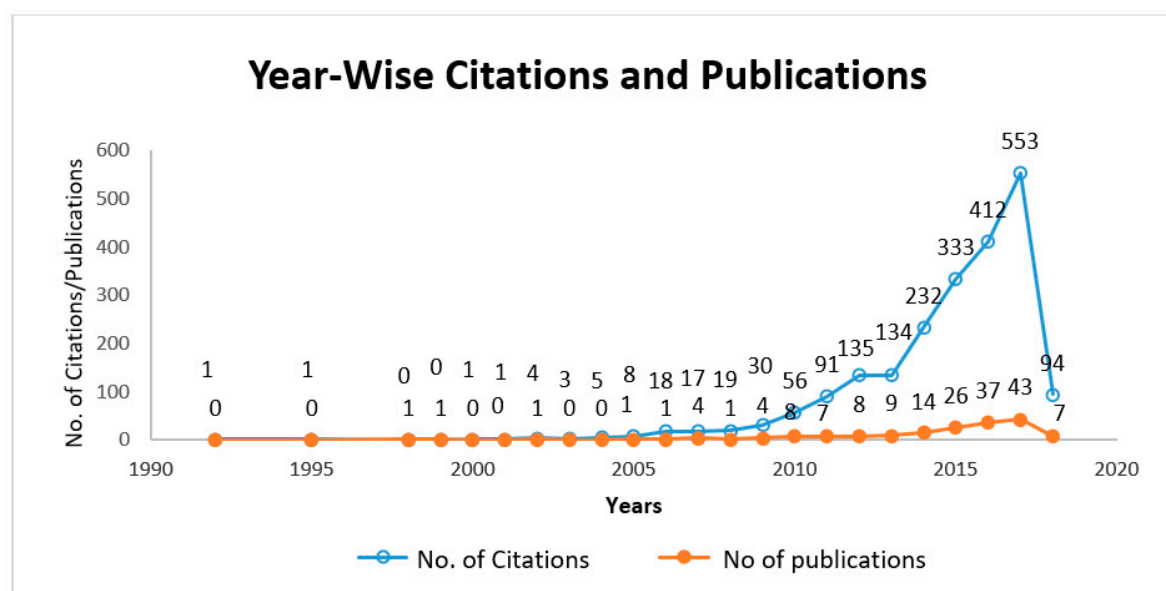


Figure 2. Year-wise citations and publications.

Table 2 shows the results obtained after the analysis of 173 research papers. The number of papers belonging to different categories are shown in the table, while the percentage of the papers belonging to specific categories is shown in the parenthesis. N/A represents the categories in which these codes are not applicable.

Table 2. Descriptive findings of papers reviewed.

Code(s)	Coverage	Geographical Coverage	Dimensions	Methodology	Themes	Contribution
A	71 (41%)	65 (38%)	82 (47%)	43 (25%)	6 (3%)	15 (9%)
B	58 (34%)	14 (8%)	36 (21%)	47 (27%)	16 (9%)	140 (81%)
C	37 (21%)	28 (16%)	20 (12%)	67 (39%)	20 (12%)	4 (2%)
D	N/A	11 (6%)	13 (8%)	N/A	5 (3%)	11 (6%)
E	N/A	9 (5%)	N/A	N/A	22 (13%)	N/A
F	N/A	42 (24%)	N/A	N/A	5 (3%)	N/A
G	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11 (6%)	N/A
H	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10 (6%)	N/A
I	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	27 (16%)	N/A
Multiple	7 (4%)	4 (2%)	22 (13%)	16 (9%)	51 (29%)	3 (2%)
Total	173 (100%)	173 (100%)	173 (100%)	173 (100%)	173 (100%)	173 (100%)

### 3.1.2. Coverage

Category two involves identifying the coverage analyzed by the research papers. The analysis shows that most of the previous research is dedicated to the developed countries followed by developing countries or emerging economies. There are some studies that compares data between countries. The results reveal that there exists fewer papers that cope with the relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development in developing countries. Murthy, Sagayam, Rengalakshmi, and Nair [25] highlight the necessity of exploring the concept in developing nations since the details concerning social issues in these countries and the strategies adopted by them to strive are limited.

### 3.1.3. Geographical Coverage

The third category relates to specific geographical coverage of the researched countries. A large proportion of studies come from Europe, while the contributions from Asia and North America are still modest. Although the research in these regions are comparatively low, the concept has been emerging since 1990s. Public authorities along with social enterprises are paying attention towards mobilizing economic and social resources towards the growing welfare needs [26].

### 3.1.4. Dimensions

The fourth category analyses the dimensions addressed by extant literature covered in the study. According to the concern of the present research, most of the studies focuses on economy-related issues, followed by environment-related issues and social issues respectively.

### 3.1.5. Methodology

The fifth category identifies the research methodology applied in the selected literature. The analysis clearly reveals that most of the research papers use empirical methodology (67 percent), while 27 percent of the papers employ case studies methodology. Although there exists empirical research in the field, more empirical studies are required in order to understand the important antecedents and outcome of social entrepreneurship [27,28]. More in-depth interviews with informants shall better manage the cultural and social issues concerning access to informants, social desirability bias [29].

### 3.1.6. Themes

The results reveal that extant literature has mostly focused on environmental and ecological considerations, rural and community development and urbanization. The concept of social entrepreneurship takes multiple forms, depending on socioeconomic and cultural circumstances, placing obstacles on research in the area. This calls for further research to establish concrete definitions for overcoming ambiguity of the concept [3,27].

### 3.1.7. Contribution of the Research Papers

The seventh classification explores the contribution made by the existing literature. Findings of the maximum papers (81 percent) are 'consistent with previous literature'. To further inform social entrepreneurs for contributing towards sustainable development, more comparative and longitudinal research can be conducted [28,30].

### 3.2. Thematic Discussion

The term “entrepreneur” was originated by Schumpeter in the 20th century who calls the entrepreneur a “man of action” who drives the creative-destruction process considered as the core of capitalism. He describes entrepreneurs as the innovators and catalysts behind social and economic progress facing the risks and reforms or revolutionize the process of production for producing new goods or producing existing ones in a new way [22].

Entrepreneurship is progressively accepted as a duct to create sustainable products/services and processes integrating social and environmental concerns. The extant literature does not extensively discuss the contribution of entrepreneurs towards a sustainable future [8]. Belz and Binder [31] conclude that it is crucial for entrepreneurs to blend social, ecological concerns and customer benefits as a solution to the triple bottom line further leading to the sustainability of their ventures as also that of the universe.

Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a sub-discipline within the field of entrepreneurship [27]. Social entrepreneurs create social value by providing social benefit for all, and economic value by creating jobs and income for their venture while accomplishing their vision and missions [32]. Partzsch and Ziegler [2] propose that the innovative capacity of social entrepreneurs is their primary source of authority to deal with the commonly perceived problems.

Although the objective of a profit-maximizing firm is different from a social business, the managerial mindset should be the same as in a business while creating social benefit. Social businesses can certainly generate income while achieving their social missions and can be self-sustainable. The surplus generated by such businesses may be reinvested in the business to provide cost-effective quality goods and services to the target group of beneficiaries [33].

Traditional financial institutions are cautious in lending to social entrepreneurs whereas commercial entrepreneurs can attract traditional capital providers and equity investors [34]. Belz and Binder [31] argue that resources for social enterprises are confined not only to personal savings and banks loans but their social value creation and environmental concerns open up the door to novel, unconventional and increasingly important source of public funding such as crowdfunding.

Buil-Fabregà et al. [35] establish that the relationship between the individual dynamic capabilities (IDC) of managers with their social and environmental commitment to promote sustainability is greater in cases of businesses being led by women. Vinokurova and Natalia [36] argue that despite having many accomplishments, women hold lower position in comparison with men as they are lacking in terms of academic capital and scientific power.

Social responsibility of businesses is considered to be beneficial both the society and the firm [37]. Doukas, Tsiousi, Marinakis, and Psarras [38] conclude that the corporations with goals limited to the mandatory legislations achieve lower performance as compared to the ones integrating fundamental environmental practices and corporate social responsibility (CSR) concepts. To incorporate these practices into the corporate policies and structures, United Nations general assembly proposes to integrate entrepreneurship in the education curriculum and universities around the world shall be encouraged to inform students about the demands of diverse communities and the world [39]. Abou-Warda [40] opines that fostering entrepreneurial education requires support from government authorities in the form of reviewing regulations on the assistance of educators and entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship teaching activities; favoring practical activities related to technology/entrepreneurship education, and sustainable market; establishing awards for teachers and students of entrepreneurial universities; and promoting positive examples of academic spin-offs.

The main purpose of thematic discussion is to identify new research directions and synthesize the main outcomes extracted from the extant literature [24]. The thematic discussion of this paper is based on the research outcomes and parameters of the extant literature as exhibited in Table 3, followed by the parameters for each outcome as identified by us for the purpose of this thematic discussion.



**Table 3.** Research outcomes and parameters.

Outcome	Authors	Research Design	Parameters
Innovation and Technology	Boons, Montalvo, Quist, and Wagner [41]; Bridgstock, Lettice, Özbilgin, and Tatli [42]; Halme and Korpela [6]; Khefacha and Belkacem [43]; Kraus, Burtcher, Niemand, Roig-Tierno, and Syrjä [44]; Provasnek, Schmid, Geissler, and Steiner [45]; Rinkinen, Oikarinen, and Melkas [46]; Sanzo-Perez, Álvarez-González, and Rey-García [47]; Simón, González-Cruz, and Contreras-Pacheco [4]; Szabo, Soltes, and Herman [48]	Conceptual and Empirical	Sustainable economic performance and growth, Social innovation
Rural and Community Development and Urbanization	Angrisano et al. [49]; Delgado [50]; Erzurumlu and Erzurumlu [51]; López-i-Gelats, Tàbara, and Bartolomé [52]; Monshidi and Choolandimi [53]; Polak and Snowball [54]; Mykolaivna [55]; Ruiu et al. [56]; Yildirim and Turan [57]	Conceptual and Empirical	Role of public policies, Agriculture and Agro-processed industries, Cultural heritage, Diversity of perceptions
Social, economic and environmental considerations	Buil-Fabregà, Alonso-Almeida, and Bagur-Femenías [35]; Dixon and Clifford [58]; Hollnagel, Araujo, and Bueno [59]; Mieszajkina [60]; Raszkowski [61]; Rizzi, Pellegrini, and Battaglia [62]; Serenari, Peterson, Wallace, and Stowhas [63]; Stubbs [64]; Woźniak and Pactwa [65]	Conceptual and Empirical	Dynamic capabilities of an entrepreneur, Triple bottom line, Business sustainability
Financing and Crowdfunding	Abdullah and Ismail [66]; Brown, Boon, and Pitt [67]; Calic and Mosakowski [34]; Estapé-Dubreuil, Ashta, and Hédou [68]; Hahn and Figge [69]; Hurt [70]; Meyskens and Bird [32]; Parhankangas and Renko [71]; Vealey and Gerding [72]; Wonglimpiyarat [5]	Conceptual and Empirical	Marketing tool, Sustainability orientation, Role of Government
Women Entrepreneurs	Buil-Fabregà et al. [35]; Favre [73]; Hallak, Assaker, and Lee [74]; Morshed [75]; Pirakatheeswari [76]; Shah and Saurabh [77]; Sigalla and Carney [78]; Vinokurova [36]; Warnecke [79]	Conceptual and Empirical	Individual dynamic capabilities, Problems and prospects, Microfinance
Corporate Social Responsibility	García-Rodríguez, García-Rodríguez, Castilla-Gutiérrez, and Major [80]; Ketschau [81]; Pless, Maak, and Stahl [82]; Rahdari, Sepasi, and Moradi [22]; Raimi, Akhuemonkhan, and Ogunjirin [83]; Ras and Vermeulen [84]; Szczanowicz and Saniuk [85]; Wu [86]; Zinenko, Rovira, and Montiel [87]	Conceptual and Empirical	Human Resource Development, Business Strategy, Sustainability-oriented innovations

In the following sub-sections, we discuss the important studies related to each outcome in detail. Tables 4–9 are spread over five columns, namely: authors, objectives, methodology and basis for inclusion for these studies of the outcomes.

### 3.2.1. Innovation and Technology

Table 4 discusses social entrepreneurship from the perspective of social innovation and technology. The research on “social entrepreneurship” and “social innovation” has increased during the last decade [47]. Innovation brings creative ideas into existence [42]. Innovation in the context of social entrepreneurship is not only the replication of existing practices but also involves creating something new [88,89]. Innovation forms part of different stages in the social entrepreneurial process [90].



**Table 4.** Innovation and technology.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Boons, Montalvo, Quist, and Wagner [41]	To overview sustainable innovation, business models and economic performance	Conceptual	The paper provides insight into the business model concept for understanding and advancing sustainable innovation	The paper deals with sustainable innovation which includes social objectives of the entrepreneurs towards sustainable development
Bridgstock, Lettice, Özbilgin, and Tatli [42]	To examine the linkages between diversity management (DM), innovation and high performance in social enterprises.	Quantitative and Qualitative 285 Questionnaires from diversity officers Case study of social enterprises in UK	The paper argues for social enterprises to consider options for DM in the interests of maximization of innovation and business performance	The paper talks about how social enterprises enhance innovation and business performance and contribute towards social entrepreneurship
Halme and Korpela [6]	To investigate environmentally and socially responsible innovations of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from a resource perspective	Qualitative Case studies of 13 Nordic SMEs	The paper concludes that SMEs can create responsible innovations with very different resource combinations	Entrepreneurs are actors who create innovation, therefore social innovation becomes crucial for social entrepreneurship
Khefacha and Belkacem [43]	To provide new empirical evidence on the causality between proxy variables of technology entrepreneurship and proxy variable of sustainable economic performance in a vector error correction model.	Qualitative 13 countries participated in Global Entrepreneurship Monitor	The paper shows that total entrepreneurship activity related to the technology sector leads to improve the sustainability of a nation in the long run	New technologies by entrepreneurs enhances the social conditions for the living beings which are the focus of social entrepreneurship
Kraus, Burtscher, Niemand, Roig-Tierno, and Syrjä [44]	To find causal patterns that explain the success of sustainable entrepreneurs, using their social performance as a measure.	Qualitative Comparative analysis of 598 Austrian (SMEs)	The paper shows four different combinations of the interconnected variables of innovation orientation, environmental sustainability, and resource leveraging and achievement motivation, which all lead to social performance	The paper explains that sustainable entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship are linked as they share a common goal of positive environmental impact

Table 4. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Provasnek, Schmid, Geissler, and Steiner [45]	To advance strategies for the implementation of a sustainable corporate entrepreneurship process.	Qualitative Bluefin Solutions Elastic Innovation Index 2014	The paper shows that the strategies of the companies correspond well to the typology and allow suggestions where efforts for sustainable corporate entrepreneurship could be reinforced	The paper argues that it is the social welfare that entrepreneurs create which lead to sustainability of their performance
Rinkinen, Oikarinen, and Melkas [46]	To identify whether and in what way social enterprises (SEs) are communicated as an innovative solution and as a source of innovations for economic and development activities through regional strategies.	Conceptual	The paper suggests to develop SEs and perceive them as potential innovators and active entrepreneurial actors in innovation systems contributing to economically, environmentally and socially sustainable development	Social enterprises explain social entrepreneurship an alternative type of sustainable innovation policy
Sanzo-Perez, Álvarez-González, and Rey-García [47]	To analyse social innovation under the umbrella of the transformative service research framework.	Survey Qualitative Survey 525 foundations of Spain	The paper shows the expected positive effects of the two factors on social innovation and performance, and provide several guidelines for implementing social innovations in service industries	The main purpose of social entrepreneurship is to achieve social objectives which is achieved through social innovation
Simón, González-Cruz, and Contreras-Pacheco [4]	To provide a transaction-based approach to social innovation based on the three modes of transaction coordination and governance as identified by Powell.	Conceptual	The paper provides an integrative framework of social innovation that is firmly rooted in organization theory	The paper introduces the concept of social entrepreneurship
Szabo, Soltes, and Herman [48]	To present a review of the literature on the relevance and the role of innovation in growth.	Conceptual	The paper identifies weak points and local strengths of innovation in the (post) crises period and it identifies the targets for the next period	Technology and innovation play a significant role in social and economic development. Innovation-led growth is increasingly place-based where entrepreneurial spirit and social innovation come together

Social entrepreneurs create institutions to actualize their mission of social transformation and to carry the innovative solutions forward. The major challenge faced by social entrepreneurs includes the challenge of creating a new product or a service, creating demand for the product or even assessing the inputs or assessing the markets [91]. Social entrepreneurs need to be innovative while framing

their objectives in order to maintain a balance between their social and economic objectives with limited resources [92]. To improve the social and environmental impact by social entrepreneurs, a Government must support and stimulate innovation in the form of funding and subsidies. Government can encourage entrepreneurial solutions by directing public policies towards innovative causes [6].

Individual entrepreneurs find new/innovative ways to create a product/ service in order to cater to some social needs to achieve sustainable development without compromising profits while conducting their activities. However, their ability to create social value must be the primary objective [93].

Local entrepreneurs lack the ability to develop necessary capabilities for innovation, product differentiation and technology improvement, and are confined to competing on low price and large volume [94].

### 3.2.2. Rural and Community Development and Urbanization

Table 5 summarizes the important literature focusing on social entrepreneurship from the perspective of rural and community development. Social entrepreneurs in rural areas face many challenges including powerful resistance from time to time while adopting new approaches to work for common and inclusive prosperity [94]. Social entrepreneurs lead villagers' cooperatives and rural communities towards a clear social mission so as to improve the living conditions of underprivileged people [95]. The outcome of this process of rural community development is largely dependent on the personal experiences of the social entrepreneur dealing with the challenges and obstacles [96]. Success of a social entrepreneur depends on his ability to attract resources (labor and capital) and innovative ways to create social value in a competitive environment [97]. Social entrepreneurial policies of the government play an important role in rural economic growth, which is dependent on allocation of research and development (R&D) resources and labor mobility by the government [98].

The amount of social value created is considered to be the main sign or characteristic of sustainable development of a region [50] therefore, the promotion of social entrepreneurship and SMEs is crucial for creating social value and, therefore, contributes towards sustainable regional development [4,54].

**Table 5.** Rural and community development and urbanization.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Angrisano et al. [49]	To analyse the process to implement the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (2011)	Conceptual	The paper shows that it is possible to make UNESCO recommendations operational, transforming conflicts into opportunities, producing economic attractiveness and strengthen social awareness and cohesion	Social enterprises support heritage-led regeneration and focus on cultural heritage as the main driver for the urban transformation
Delgado [50]	To explore the emerging initiatives that are relevant for sustainable development in European cities.	Qualitative 4 Case studies of innovative food chains in Portugal	The paper shows that social economy enterprises are a driving force behind integrated sustainable development approaches in European cities	The paper suggests that social enterprises are the drivers of sustainable development

Table 5. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Erzurumlu and Erzurumlu [51]	To develop a community-centred approach by integrating rapid and participatory nature of design thinking with multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) in order to support sustainable development.	Qualitative Case study of gold mining in Central America	This paper shows that early community involvement and rigorous impact assessment on a regular basis motivate community involvement and give value to the social outcome of mining development	The paper focuses on the social outcome by the entrepreneurs
López-i-Gelats, Tabara, and Bartolomé [52]	To explore the diversity of perceptions and perspectives of the inhabitants of the county of El Pallars Sobirà, in the Catalan Pyrenees	Qualitative 2 rounds of interviews of the inhabitants	The paper identifies the four discourses of rurality, namely: the agriculturalist, entrepreneurial, conservationist and endogenous development	The paper argues that there exists social structure behind every organization involved in the process of rural change
Monshidi and Choolandimi [53]	To investigate the effects of agriculture on sustainable rural development indices in villages of Karkheh rural district, Hamidieh.	Qualitative Interview of 200 people	The paper shows that agriculture has great effects on economic, social, and physical development of villages	Rural development is a process of social change by the entrepreneurs which is the objective of social entrepreneurship
Polak and Snowball [54]	To examine the relationship between sustainability and local economic development (LED) within the context of the emerging honey bush tea industry in the Eastern Cape	Qualitative Local Government policy documents and reports, interviews with key informants	The paper concludes that the industry offers many opportunities for development	The industry offers entrepreneurs with opportunities to develop social capital, create jobs and develop sustainable wild harvesting
Mykolaivna [55]	To study the role of social entrepreneurship and social innovation in the solving of socio-economic problem and sustainable development of regions in Ukraine.	Conceptual	The paper shows that social entrepreneurship is a good way to make a standard living and improved situation on the labor market	The paper discusses the role of social entrepreneurship in solving socio-economic problem and sustainable development

Table 5. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Ruiu et al. [56]	To introduce an innovative method aimed at enhancing social learning by adopting theatrical techniques and to report the outcomes	12 interviews of local entrepreneurs and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)	The combination of the four CADWAGO (Climate Change Adaptation and Water Governance) pillars and La Rasgioni created an innovative dialogical space that enabled stakeholders and researchers to collectively identify barriers and opportunities for effective governance practices	This paper aims at enhancing social learning by adopting theatrical techniques among local entrepreneurs
Yildirim and Turan [57]	To demonstrate that design criteria can emphasise the significance of cultural heritage through adaptive-reuse.	Qualitative 6 Case studies of traditional Sanliurfa houses in Turkey	The results reveal that re-use is generally initiated by entrepreneurship and is typically a new activity intended to generate income to sufficiently cover restoration and maintenance costs	The paper deals with re-using historic areas that provides social benefits to the community

### 3.2.3. Social, Economic and Environmental Considerations

Table 6 discusses social entrepreneurship from the perspective of triple bottom-line. The concept of triple bottom line refers to the social, economic, and environmental aspects and dimensions of sustainable development [23,99]. The concept is pertinent to economic development and related fields such as finance, business, planning and real estate [100].

Table 6. Social, economic and environmental considerations.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Findings(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Buil-Fabregà, Alonso-Almeida, and Bagur-Femenías [35]	To shed light on the relationship between a manager's individual dynamic capabilities (IDC) and business sustainability from a gender perspective	Quantitative Survey of 339 managers who completed Masters in Business Administration (MBA) in Catalan universities in Spain	The paper shows that managers' individual dynamic capabilities help them detect changes in the market earlier and promote a greater social and environmental commitment from those managers	The paper talks about capabilities of managers and their social commitment which is embedded in social entrepreneurship

Table 6. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Findings(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Dixon and Clifford [58]	To examine how ecopreneurs can create an economically viable business whilst retaining their core environmental and social values.	Qualitative Single case study of Green-Works—semi structured interviews, micro-ethnography and document analysis.	The paper finds a strong link between entrepreneurialism and environmentalism. The entrepreneurial flair of the chief executive officer (CEO) enables the pursuit of environmental, social and economic goals	The paper extends research into social entrepreneurship
Hollnagel, Araujo, and Bueno [59]	To analyse the contribution of residential elderly care centre (RECC) to promote SD along with social support in urban centres of megacities.	Conceptual	The paper indicates that the development of model RECC seems to be a viable economic, social and environmental alternative for the future of cities in Brazil	The paper promotes social entrepreneurship
Mieszajkina [60]	To harmonise three capitals-economic, social and environmental	Conceptual	The paper shows that the implementation of the idea requires entrepreneurial activities aimed at rationalising and modernising the economic, social, and ecological subsystems, as well as their integration to achieve synergy	The paper discusses the main objective of entrepreneur is the creation of social development while creating a sustainable world
Raszkowski [61]	To discuss and assess the selected functional areas of Dzierżoniów Town based on its residents' opinions	Survey of 422 residents of the city	The paper shows that residents are highly interested in development of their city	The paper focuses on solving social and economic problems using entrepreneurship and creativity
Rizzi, Pellegrini, and Battaglia [62]	To increase understanding of how key institutional actors are shaping social finance (SF) as a potential new paradigm in the financing	Survey of 17 SF institutions in European countries	The paper shows two forms of SF, i.e., social impact investment and ethical banking, guide the institutionalization and paradigm-building process	The paper talks about the social-embeddedness of institutions creating social impact on society
Serenari, Peterson, Wallace, and Stowhas [63]	To understand how local people living in and near three private protected areas (PPAs) view impacts of tourism development on human well-being and local governance	Qualitative Case study of local people in Los Rios, Chile	The paper shows that the social impacts and consequences of PPAs facilitating ecotourism development should be subjected to the same level of scrutiny that has been given to public protected areas	It discusses the social impact created by ecotourism entrepreneurs which is the main objective of social entrepreneurship

Table 6. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Findings(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Stubbs [64]	To understand how sustainable entrepreneurship is implemented by exploring an emerging form of business, 'B Corps', that employs market tactics to address social and environmental issues.	Qualitative 14 Interviews of founder/director of Australian B Corps	The paper shows that B Corps are focused on societal impact rather than maximizing profits and they attempt to legitimate this form of sustainable entrepreneurship by influencing the business community and government officials	Sustainable entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship are linked as they share a common goal of positive environmental impact
Woźniak and Pactwa [65]	To present two industry leaders acting in compliance with the general principles of a socially responsible business.	Qualitative Case studies of two mining companies of Poland	The paper shows that the company exploiting raw material using underground method implements better practices in the area of corporate responsibility of enterprises in the environmental dimension	Socially responsible businesses and social entrepreneurship are linked by a common goal of creating social value

Extant literature studies entrepreneurs focusing on environmental aspects as ecopreneurs. An ecopreneur is an individual or institution that seeks to popularize eco-friendly ideas/products/technology/innovations either through the market or non-market routes. The approach of ecopreneurship is helpful for policy makers and society at large, since there is little doubt that the transformation to sustainable development requires ecopreneurship on a grand scale [58,101]. Environmental policy that aims to correct market failures or externalities, thereby impacting market forces is growing strongly [102]. These ecopreneurs focus only on the environmental aspect of sustainable development but the social entrepreneurship process involves integrating economic/financial interest and social value as well. Social entrepreneurship is emerging as a sustainable solution that requires a blend of social, economic and environmental value or triple bottom line performance [103].

### 3.2.4. Women Entrepreneurs

Table 7 discusses social entrepreneurship from the perspective of women entrepreneurs. Female social entrepreneurs are characterized by a high degree of agreeableness, openness, emotional stability and conscientiousness. The attribute related to agreeableness is more significantly observed in female social entrepreneurs as compared to men [104]. Women entrepreneurs reflect vision, which is the key characteristic, and improves the wealth of a nation and therefore contributes to the growth of an economy [105]. Women in top management help companies to provide socially desirable products and services. Such entrepreneurs are able to create social value because of their greater social and environmental commitment [35]. The qualities of women entrepreneurs include creativity, a hardworking nature, determination, ability and desire to take risk and profit earning capacity [76]. Professionally qualified and technically sound women must be encouraged to manage their own business instead of being dependent on wage employment outlets [106].



Table 7. Women entrepreneurs.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Buil-Fabregà et al. [35]	To shed light on the relationship between a manager's IDC and business sustainability from a gender perspective	Quantitative Survey of 339 managers who completed (MBA) in Catalan universities in Spain	The paper shows that managers' IDC help them detect changes in the market earlier and promote a greater social and environmental commitment from those managers	The paper talks about capabilities of managers and their social commitment which is embedded in social entrepreneurship
Favre [73]	To offer a practical and business-driven solution to grow tourism that would help secure a more stable future in spite of potential instabilities	Qualitative Case studies of micro and small tourism entrepreneurs in Haiti, Brazil, Lesotho, South Africa, Timor Leste, Indonesia, Ethiopia and India	The paper observes that most post-colonial, post-conflict or post-disaster destinations do not understand that developing tourism goes hand in hand with developing entrepreneurs and their businesses	The paper explores how entrepreneurs developing tourism potential catalyse long-term social gains especially for women
Hallak, Assaker, and Lee [74]	To study the relationship of entrepreneurs' place identity, self-efficacy, and performance across male and female tourism entrepreneurs	Quantitative Survey of 150 male and 148 female tourism business owners in Australia	The results found that place identity (sense of identity with their town of residence) was positively related to entrepreneurial self-efficacy (beliefs in their capabilities as entrepreneurs)	This paper examines social psychology of entrepreneurs
Morshed [75]	To examine how the poor female borrowers of Grameen Bank microcredit in rural Bangladesh sought to fight social marginalisation	Qualitative 9 Case studies of women in Bangladesh	This paper emphasises on economic growth as the key indicator of social advancement	The paper contends that the entrepreneur's role in social well-being is the key indicator of social advancement
Pirakatheeswari [76]	To examine the problems and prospects of women entrepreneurs in India in the era of globalization	Conceptual	The paper shows that empowering women entrepreneurs is essential for achieving the goals of sustainable development and the bottlenecks must be eradicated	Women have been performing well in different spheres of social activities, therefore, they have the potential to become social entrepreneurs and contribute towards sustainable development
Shah and Saurabh [77]	To create women entrepreneurs for poverty alleviation	Conceptual	The paper shows that it is necessary to raise awareness of the challenges faced by women and support institutions in fostering women entrepreneurship	There is a growing need to encourage women entrepreneurs work towards poverty alleviation, just as social entrepreneurs do

Table 7. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Sigalla and Carney [78]	To explore women's experiences as entrepreneurs, and reflects on how the learning processes and outcomes associated with microcredit schemes 'shape the self', often in quite unpredictable ways	Quantitative Survey of women participated in NGO-based training schemes	The paper suggests that some women create the conditions for partial control or autonomy in their lives but this must be attempted within the existing social structures of Tanzanian society	This paper explores the role of microcredit and learning among women entrepreneurs in poverty reduction
Vinokurova [36]	To study gender situation in science and education	Quantitative Data from various secondary sources in Russia	The study concludes that the combination of low salaries in education and science and the consequences of gender inequality manifest themselves most in terms of the material well-being of women	Women as entrepreneurs should be encouraged in order to achieve social well-being
Warnecke [79]	To study the relationship between gender equity and the environment in the developing world	Conceptual	The results show that the new policies, programs, regulatory structures, jobs and incentives for green initiatives will neither benefit women and men equally, nor maximize results unless gender is thoughtfully and thoroughly incorporated into each nation's strategy	Entrepreneurs must focus on gender equity which is one aspect of social sustainability

Microenterprises provide new sources of income for women and can be helpful in bridging the gap between the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. They help in spreading sustainable agriculture, protecting and ensuring accessibility of clean water sources, reducing deforestation and preserving biodiversity [79]. To ensure the growth of women entrepreneurs, various programs of assistance and incentives have been introduced by the government.

### 3.2.5. Financing and Crowdfunding

Table 8 discusses social entrepreneurship from the perspective of financing and crowdfunding. Crowdfunding is a new form of entrepreneurship raising money to address some social or cultural problems [72]. Crowdfunding is becoming an important source of financing for social ventures. The process of crowdfunding takes place online and includes choosing an online platform to raise funds for a campaign that focuses on an initiative. Afterwards, the social entrepreneur remain active on the online platform to encourage funders or backers to fund their operations and programs. In return, the social ventures can choose the types of rewards for crowdfunders. Once the fundraising goal at the

end is met the creator of the project can use the capital raised and must distribute the rewards [32]. A project with many reward possibilities offers more choice as well as a greater chance of success to the funders [34].

**Table 8.** Financing and Crowdfunding.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Abdullah and Ismail [66]	To explore the characteristics of <i>waqf</i> property and the management of <i>waqf</i>	Conceptual	The paper shows that the cash <i>waqf</i> -based Islamic microfinance needs to be sustainable	The cash <i>waqf</i> -based Islamic microfinance help micro entrepreneurs, who hold property and use the revenue generated for charitable purposes, to raise funds
Brown, Boon, and Pitt [67]	To examine the extent to which crowdfunding websites are accessible to organizations as a marketing channel and, if so, what role they can play	Conceptual	The results show that established firms' increasing interest in using crowdfunding websites may have a profound impact on the crowdfunding industry	Crowdfunding is a source of financing of social entrepreneurs who do not have access to other sources
Calic and Mosakowski [34]	To examine whether and how a sustainability orientation affects entrepreneurs' ability to acquire financial resources through crowdfunding	Qualitative 87,261 projects were collected from Kickstarter website	The paper concludes that sustainability orientation positively affects funding success of crowdfunding projects and the relationship is partially mediated by project creativity and third-party endorsements	The paper opines that crowdfunding has emerged to address the financing needs of social entrepreneurs
Etapé-Dubreuil, Ashta, and Hédou [68]	To study investment clubs in France which have been coping with the balance of people, planet and profitability for the last three decades	Qualitative A case study of investment club of France	The paper finds that four factors lie beneath the criteria used by the micro-angels in the monitoring process	Investors considers the social returns along with economic returns while investing in entrepreneurial ventures; therefore, they modify their goals in line with social enterprises
Hahn and Figge [69]	To clarify the ambiguous notion of corporate sustainability	Conceptual	The paper shows that current approaches are rooted in a bounded notion of instrumentality which establishes a systematic predominance of economic organizational outcomes over environmental and social aspects	Corporate sustainability depend on social resources that are scarce and thus have to be taken into account in corporate decision making

Table 8. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Hurt [70]	To seek evidence and understand the entrepreneurial routes by using the sociological perspectives of Bourdieus' four forms of capital	Conceptual	The paper shows that the actual resource exchange is highly moderated by cultural and symbolic capital that is being built up through the process	Equity crowdfunding is both appealing and available as a source of financing for social entrepreneurs
Meyskens and Bird [32]	To assess the role of crowdfunding in social venture funding	Conceptual	The paper concludes a theoretical framework to help social ventures and social investors to choose which type of crowdfunding might make most sense to them.	The paper explores the role of crowdfunding in social ventures
Parhankangas and Renko [71]	To study the linguistic style of crowdfunding pitches and how such a style relates to the success in raising funds	Quantitative 656 Kickstarter campaigns	The paper concludes that linguistic styles boost the success of social campaigns, but hardly matter for commercial campaigns.	The paper discusses how linguistic styles lead to crowdfunding success among social entrepreneurs
Vealey and Gerding [72]	To examine how to incorporate new and emerging forms of entrepreneurship into the professional and technical communication classroom	Qualitative Online Survey of 1700 undergraduate students	The paper focusses on two projects that clearly foreground a social and civic mission.	The paper focuses on entrepreneurship with a social mission
Wonglimpiyarat [5]	To examine the governmental financing policies and the innovation financing system of China	Qualitative and Quantitative Case study and interviews using semi-structured questionnaires in financial centres in China	The findings suggest that China needs to improve regulatory policies in support of innovative businesses which would help its transition to an innovation-driven economy.	The paper focuses on the government's attempt towards social development by supporting SMEs

An informal form of Internet-based investor relation plays a crucial role in keeping the crowdfunders happy and informed [107]. Crowdfunding websites are also used as a marketing tool by established firms with different objectives such as fundraising, creation of product ideas and direct sales. In order to succeed, a project must be appealing to potential backers while fundraising and development updates must also be provided to these backers [67]. On many crowdfunding platforms, entrepreneurs provide limited and self-reported information based on which potential funders make their decisions [34].

### 3.2.6. Corporate Social Responsibility

Table 9 discusses social entrepreneurship from the perspective of corporate social responsibility. Social entrepreneurship shares common goals with sustainable development and CSR [108]. Aiming to achieve the highest profitability, business often use practices which go beyond the legal requirements and have negative impacts on sustainable development as they usually end up taking unsustainable

solutions [103,109]. To reduce the negative impacts of decisions and activities of businesses of all sizes, CSR drives them to contribute towards social welfare [83].

**Table 9.** Corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
García-Rodríguez, García-Rodríguez, Castilla-Gutiérrez, and Major [80]	To identify the extent to which oil multinational enterprises (MNEs) contribute to sustainable development through CSR	Qualitative Case Study of 1 Oil Refinery in Angola	CSR, when integrated into business strategy, impacts the company's immediate surroundings as well as the wider legislative, administrative and entrepreneurial context	Social entrepreneurship shares common goals with CSR of creating social and environmental benefits
Ketschau [81]	To present a framework that integrate the concepts of CSR and human resource development (HRD)	Conceptual	The framework links the concepts of CSR and Human Resource Development by the idea of lifelong learning	The paper lays a framework that helps to analyse the development of entrepreneurial structures that enable social commitment through company education
Pless, Maak, and Stahl [82]	To discuss how the HRD function can support corporate sustainability strategy by designing and implementing leadership development programs	Qualitative Interviews with 70 Ulysses participants	The study discusses how organizations can incorporate a responsibility and sustainability focus in their management development programs	In their management development programs, HRD should send the participants to work with social entrepreneurs supporting them in their fight against pressing global problems
Rahdari, Sepasi, and Moradi [22]	To highlight the role of social entrepreneurship in transforming the business into an engine for sustainable development	Conceptual	The study highlights the role social enterprises and sustainable businesses can play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals	The paper the role of social entrepreneurship in achieving sustainable development
Raimi, Akhuemonkhan, and Ogunjirin [83]	To examine the prospect of utilising corporate social responsibility and entrepreneurship (CSRE) as antidotes for mitigating the incidences of poverty, insecurity and underdevelopment in Nigeria	Quantitative Secondary data published by institutional bodies	The result indicates a negative relationship between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and poverty, positive significant relationship between GDP and total crime rate, positive relationship between GDP and unemployment rate, a negative relationship between GDP and industrial growth rate and a significant positive relationship between GDP and CSR	The paper suggests that CSR embedded in entrepreneurship becomes antidotes to poverty, insecurity and underdevelopment

Table 9. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Methodology	Finding(s)	Basis for Inclusion
Ras and Vermeulen [84]	To identify essential capacities, drawn from literature on (sustainable) entrepreneurship	Quantitative 478 table grape producers of South Africa	The paper indicates a model explaining business performance with characteristics of entrepreneurship	Successful entrepreneurs require skills for addressing environmental and social and ethical issues which is considered to be the traits of a social entrepreneur
Szczanowicz and Saniuk [85]	To propose a CSR evaluation and CSR reporting model in small and medium-sized enterprises	Conceptual	An evaluation model, ESG risks catalogue for manufacturing companies and a tool for monitoring and reporting of ESG risks were developed	In the model, the authors have explained how the responsible entrepreneurship can be improved to achieve social welfare and competitive advantage
Wu [86]	To link buying firms' socially responsible supplier development (SRSD) with SME suppliers' sustainability-oriented innovations (SOIs) and investigate the influence of SRSD and SOIs on sustainability performance (SP)	Quantitative Survey of 83 Taiwan SMEs	The results show that SRSD practices significantly and positively affect SOIs, with SOIs helping to improve SP and fully mediating the relationship between SRSD and SP	This paper explores how socially responsible supplier development and sustainability-oriented innovation effects sustainability performance
Zinenko, Rovira, and Montiel [87]	To discuss how ISO 26,000 fits within two predominant CSR instruments	Secondary data such as literature reviews, publications and online resources and databases	The paper shows that organizations that set up CSR instruments have to strengthen their existing collaboration as a network, in order to contribute more effectively to sustainable development	Social entrepreneurship shares common goals with organizations adopting CSR instruments of creating social and environmental benefits

Although it is difficult for SMEs to compete with large-sized international corporations, they have some relative advantage in the local market because of their simple organizational structures and small size which enables them to maintain close connections with communities by responding quickly to their local needs and undertaking socially meaningful actions, thereby sustaining their competitive advantage [85].

In developing countries, companies that view CSR as an opportunity rather than a threat can contribute significantly towards sustainable development in their operating environment while also increasing their profitability, competitiveness and expansion opportunities [80]. To stimulate sustainable development, CSR must be embedded in the company's strategy by using various programs such as international service learning programs [82].

While the majority of the studies have focused on environmental and ecological considerations of social entrepreneurship, very limited literature has focused on understanding the concept of social entrepreneurship. It is interesting to observe that out of the studies focused on agriculture and rural development, a considerable number comes from the developed regions.



#### 4. Conclusions

This paper aimed at reviewing and consolidating the extant literature studying social entrepreneurship from the context of sustainable development. For this purpose, 173 papers were studied, classified and coded to present the discussion in a systematic way. Extant literature suggests that sustainable development is aimed at resolving the challenges such as poverty; inequality; safety etc., which are deep rooted and widespread in developing countries [29,110–112]. Since social entrepreneurship has largely been practiced in the developed countries so far, there is a need to increase its focus on the developing world [3]. Although there exists some empirical research on the topic of social entrepreneurship and sustainable development, more empirical studies can add to our understanding of the important outcomes of social entrepreneurship [27]. Further research is needed to establish a complete picture of social entrepreneurship [3]. There is a need for more longitudinal and comparative researches on this emerging topic through empirical research [30].

Table 10 highlights the research gaps as explored through this study and suggests research problems for the potential researchers in the field.

**Table 10.** Research gaps and suggested research problems.

Research Gaps	Suggested Research Problems	Relevant Studies
There is no clarity/agreement on the concept of social entrepreneurship and its components.	Clarify and define key concepts and elaborate on the essential components of social entrepreneurship	Littlewood and Holt [113]; Drăgoi et al. [114]; Picciotti [1]; Lange and Dodds [115]; Partzsch and Ziegler [2]; Thorgren and Omoredede [116]; Simón, González-Cruz, and Contreras-Pacheco [4]
Which are the dimensions of sustainable development, on which social entrepreneurship focuses?	Visualize and measure the contribution of social entrepreneurship to specific dimension of sustainable development	Nga and Shamuganathan [103]; Dixon and Clifford [58]; Moskwa, Higgins-Desbiolles, and Gifford [117]; Lange and Dodds [115]; Kraus et al. [44]; Dedeurwaerdere et al. [118]
What are the barriers hindering social entrepreneurs from contributing towards sustainable development?	Explore the hindrances in social entrepreneurship and suggest the role that governments can play in removing those hindrances to ensure sustainable development. In particular, government's contribution in creating social incubators and broadening the scope of entrepreneurial education may be studied and measured by the future researchers	Larsson [119]; Lettice and Parekh [120]; Rahdari, Sepasi, and Moradi [22]; Steinz, Rijnsoever, and Nauta [121]; Wonglimpiyarat [5]; Pirakatheeswari [76]
What role can the government play in removing these hindrances and fostering sustainable development through social entrepreneurship?		Clausen and Gyimóthy [122]; Barrutia and Echebarria [123]; Colvin et al., [124]; Delgado [50]; Wonglimpiyarat [5]; Burch [125]
Why has social entrepreneurship not emerged popular in developing regions?	Study the growth of social entrepreneurship and its contribution towards sustainable development in context of developing countries	Picciotti [1]; García-Rodríguez et al. [80]; Shah and Saurabh [77]; Ras and Vermeulen [84]; Wonglimpiyarat [5]; Warnecke and Houndonougbo [126]; Defourny and Kim [26]

As outlined in Section 1 of this paper, we considered three research questions—(a) to identify the major themes and sub-themes discussed by extant literature studying social entrepreneurship in the context of sustainable development; (b) to understand the methodological approaches employed by the extant literature; (c) to identify research gaps in the existing literature studying social entrepreneurship in the context of sustainable development and the potential focus areas for future researches in the field.

We contribute to the body of knowledge in the twin fields of social entrepreneurship and sustainable development by suggesting how social entrepreneurship can concretely help attain the goal of sustainable development. Future studies may contribute towards investigating issues that



have been uncovered during this review process. First, despite the existence of a definition of social entrepreneurship, there is a need to standardize the term for bringing more clarity to the concept and explore its important components and antecedents. Second, social entrepreneurship has been focusing on the environmental dimension of sustainable development while overlooking other social dimensions. Third, while on one hand social entrepreneurs—by operating in a desirable manner—may help the cause of sustainable development, the governments also have their task cut out to help remove hindrances from the path of social entrepreneurship through policy making. It is also suggested that governments to play a lead role in creating social incubators, which hold the potential for social change. Also, by supporting and facilitating focused educational institutions to further the cause of education and research in entrepreneurship, the governments can provide a major nudge to social entrepreneurship, thereby contributing towards the cause of sustainable development. Fourth, although research in the field is emerging in developing countries but there is a lack of research on the topic in developing regions, which merit the case for attention on the topic in developing countries.

The novel contribution of the paper is to identify the major outcomes of the extant literature, namely—(a) innovation and technology adopted by the social entrepreneurs; (b) contribution of social entrepreneurs towards rural and community development and urbanization; (c) social, economic and environmental considerations of the social entrepreneurs; (d) financing and crowdfunding patterns in social entrepreneurs; (e) women entrepreneurs; and (f) corporate social responsibility performed by the social entrepreneurs for the existing and potential researchers in the field. The study suggests a research agenda for the future researchers in the field, while also highlighting the significant works that can be used by future researchers. Future researchers would do well to carry forward the research agenda suggested by this paper in order to further enrich the body of knowledge in the fields of social entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

**Supplementary Materials:** The following are available online at <http://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/4/1091/s1>, Appendix 1: List of papers reviewed, Appendix 2: Classification and coding of the analyzed studies.

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