

Role of Technology in Solid Waste Management: Social Enterprise in a Pandemic, 2024

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Abstract

COVID-19 has changed the world. The pandemic was a public health crisis with profound implications for society. Accordingly, the quantum of waste generated also went up especially fast. The global nature of the pandemic demanding global communication and coordination, also required locally adopted responses for specific reasons like lack of opportunity to network and create bonding and bridging ties as lockdown conditions prohibited human interactions. This situation that needs the substitution of human interactions and communication with technology however did not encourage strong ties and only allowed for the sustenance of weak ties along with pressures of financial sustainability on the social enterprise in solid waste management (SWM). This research paper attempts to explore whether the SWM social enterprises could remain true to their mission in these uncertain times or would need to replace their true beneficiaries with technology. This would then test their aspects of ‘mission agility’ versus ‘mission drift’ as discussed in the article. The findings also lead us to conclude that a fine balance between objectives of value capture and value creation in determining the switch over to technology by SWM enterprises underscored the importance of social mission to them. The data for this research was collected through qualitative and semi-structured interviews of Project Managers / Program Coordinators of various organisations working in the field of SWM.

Keywords

COVID-19, technology, value creation, social enterprises, mission drift, mission agility, solid waste management

Journal Name: Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Emerging Economies,
Pages 26-40

Year: January 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/23939575231214136>