

# THE MOTIVATING FACTORS TO START SOCIAL ENTERPRISES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO KALUTARA DISTRICT

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A social enterprise is a company that has its primary goal to achieve particular social goals while operating under a commercial structure. The purpose of this study was to discover what drives social entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka to start new social businesses. The study enhances the generation of new knowledge linked to the Sri Lankan social entrepreneurship environment by examining motivational factors for starting social enterprises, which is a previously unexplored subject in the Sri Lankan context. The study employed an inductive research approach with data gathered through focus group discussions and outdoor observations. Five focus group interviews were conducted with 25 social entrepreneurs chosen from different divisions in the Kalutara district. The study findings discovered that social problems entrepreneurs meet through networks, educational backgrounds, religious commitments, lived experiences, and personal attributes as motivating factors for starting social enterprises. As recommendations, the government should play a critical role in fostering a conducive climate for social entrepreneurs by providing infrastructure facilities encouraging public-private partnerships to attract donors, offering volunteer information, and improving social entrepreneurship education at universities, institutions, and other educational establishments to create social entrepreneurs. Knowledge generated through the current study will be contributed to conducting empirical studies for future research and implications for policymakers.

**Keywords:** Motivational factors, social enterprises, social entrepreneurs