

Exploring Open Innovation Practices in Social Enterprises

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In today's competitive era, merely innovating within firm itself is not enough to achieve the competitive edge. Rather firms need to collaborate with external sources beyond their organizations in order develop new products as well as solutions. Open innovation practices play a major role in nurturing different types of innovations within firms. Large scale firms highly adopt open innovation practices. In the context of social enterprises, their use of open innovation practices is still under researched. Main focus of this research is to identify the most important external sources used by social enterprises, most common ways of collaborating with external sources and to identify the different types of innovations which result from adopting open innovation practices. Sampling frame consisting of 10 social enterprises was drawn using maximum variation sampling technique. Primary data were collected using semi structured interviews. Based on the information given, the researcher has developed the research. The researcher has used thematic analysis method to analyze the data using NVivo 12 software. The findings reveal that social enterprises in Uva province commonly use employee involvement, inter organizational networking, outsourcing R&D, direct outreach, international exposure, participation in other firms and customer involvement in order to nurture innovations. Therefore, this research emphasizes that social enterprises can nurture innovations and several other advantages by using open innovation practices.

Keywords: Innovations; Open innovations; Open innovation practices; Social entrepreneurship; Social enterprises