Journal of Society and Management Studies (JSMS)
Volume 1| Issue 1 | June 2026
ISSN(online): 3102-0828
DOI: https://doi.org/10.68473/jsms.11.62

EDITORIAL

Management as a Socially Embedded Practice: Advancing Responsible Scholarship at the Society–Management Nexus

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It is with great pride that we present the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Society and Management Studies (JSMS)*, published by MSSRN-Press. JSMS is established on the conviction that management is not merely a technical or economic discipline, but a socially embedded practice shaped by institutional structures, cultural norms, and ethical expectations (Granovetter, 1985; Scott, 2014). The society–management nexus therefore calls for critical and interdisciplinary scholarship that examines how managerial knowledge is constructed and how it influences broader social transformation.

The nexus between society and management has long been recognised in scholarly discourse. Organisations both shape and are shaped by the social systems in which they operate (Granovetter, 1985). Management decisions influence employment, inequality, sustainability, and social cohesion, while societal norms, regulations, and ethical expectations simultaneously structure managerial behaviour (Scott, 2014). Thus, management studies cannot be divorced from the broader social sciences; rather, they must engage critically with them to remain relevant and responsible.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) lies at the heart of this nexus. Foundational scholarship recognises that businesses bear economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities to society (Carroll, 1991), and that integrating social concerns into strategy can enhance long-term competitiveness and shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Yet, CSR is neither uniform nor context-neutral. As McWilliams and Siegel (2001) argue, CSR reflects strategic responses to societal expectations, shaped by institutional environments. Although CSR is theoretically positioned as an integrated and strategic responsibility encompassing economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic dimensions, its practical application remains shaped by institutional contexts and often oscillates between genuine normative commitment and instrumental value-seeking behaviour.

Recent studies further illuminate the contextual and strategic dimensions of CSR and its practices to strengthen business conduct and enhance organisational responsibility toward society. In emerging economies such as Nepal, CSR practices reveal the tensions between global standards and local realities. Sthapit (2021) observes that CSR in Nepal has often been dominated only by philanthropic orientations, raising critical questions about accountability and strategic integration in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This "Who'll Bell the Cat?" syndrome underscores the need for stronger institutional mechanisms and managerial commitment to move CSR beyond symbolic gestures towards transformative societal impact.

Complementing this perspective, Sthapit (2023) highlights the complex interplay between globalisation and local socio-economic contexts in shaping CSR strategies, while Sthapit et al. (2025) demonstrate how multinational corporations adapt CSR strategies to Nepal's cultural and institutional environment, highlighting the importance of local embeddedness in global operations. Similarly, Sthapit (2024) highlights the integration of sustainable human resource practices with CSR, arguing that enduring organisations align internal people-management systems to build enduring organisations capable of generating long-term societal value. These insights extend earlier theoretical foundations that conceptualise CSR as both a strategic and normative imperative (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

Building on these debates, JSMS seeks to provide a platform for such rigorous, reflexive, and context-sensitive scholarship. By bridging management studies with the social sciences, and by encouraging multi-level analyses spanning individuals, organisations, industries, and societal systems, the journal positions management as inherently ethical, developmental, and socially responsible. We, at JSMS, invite scholars worldwide to contribute research that deepens our understanding of management's role in advancing sustainable and inclusive societies.

How to Cite (APA Style)
Sthapit, A. (2026). Management as a Socially Embedded Practice: Advancing Responsible Scholarship at the Society–Management Nexus. *Journal of Society and Management Studies, 1*(1), I–II. https://doi.org/10.68473/jsms.11.62

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