




# Conceptualizing social entrepreneurship in the context of emerging economies: an integrative review of past research from BRIICS

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Published online: 21 November 2017

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**Abstract** Social entrepreneurship is well practiced and talked about in emerging economies. However, till date, no dedicated review and conceptual framework exists, synthesizing and integrating past social entrepreneurship research in the fast growing emerging economies, commonly known as BRIICS (Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China, and South Africa). The purpose of this article is to bridge that gap by conducting an integrative review of 123 most relevant peer-reviewed scholarly articles, filtered out of 1779 search results in six different research databases. Country-specific conceptual perspectives have been extracted and integrated to formulate a novel social entrepreneurship framework that is inclusive of five key social entrepreneurship dimensions emerging from these economies: (a) Social Welfare, (b) Social Capital, (c) Social Entrepreneur, (d) Economic Value Creation, and (e) Collective Endurance. This exercise was an initiative to facilitate the global community of social entrepreneurship researchers and practitioners in understanding the diversity, meaning, and evolution of the social entrepreneurship phenomenon in the context of emerging economies. They can advance research in this domain with the aid of the proposed framework and the research questions proposed for future research.

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**Keywords** Social entrepreneurship · Social enterprise · Social entrepreneur · BRIICS · Emerging economies

## Introduction

Today, a rich database of social entrepreneurship research exists in the world after two decades of research and practice. The phenomenon has gone through a lot of discourse and debate over the definition of social entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, majority of social entrepreneurship literature and discourse has been driven by the definitional debate, rather than conceptualization of the concept to explore the sub-concepts and dimensions (Hossain et al. 2016). Social entrepreneurship being a multi-dimensional construct comprising of approach or impact related sub-concepts, such as market orientation, social value creation, social entrepreneur, and social enterprise (Choi and Majumdar 2014), and entrepreneur-related sub-concepts such as entrepreneurial innovation, entrepreneurial intent, entrepreneurial compassion, and entrepreneurial abilities; social enterprises are affected by diverse contextual complexities to sustainably pursue the social and economic missions (Mort et al. 2003; Alvord et al. 2004; Tan et al. 2005; Miller et al. 2012). No two contexts and no two enterprises are the same, and social enterprises are strongly community embedded. Defining the concept in the traditional sense of what a definition means, is quite difficult due to the national, regional, and local variations in the concept. However, not much of literature is found in other parts of the world as compared to the developed countries on both sides of the Atlantic (Doherty et al. 2014; Sengupta and Sahay 2017). In fact, entrepreneurship research is far less pursued in emerging economies, as compared to developed countries (Bruton et al. 2008; Bruton et al. 2010; Kiss et al. 2012; Ratten et al. 2016). Emerging economies have a diverse range from dynamic contexts across culturally and demographically diverse such as India and China, slowly emerging economies in Africa with historical background quite different from that of India and China. These country contexts are quite different from each other, and way more different from developed Western economies of the world, which had led to limited understanding of entrepreneurship in these contexts (Anderson and Obeng 2017; Anderson and Ronteau 2017). While the significance of the emerging economies had been imperative in the last few decades, Bruton et al. observed in 2008 that there were only 43 research articles on social entrepreneurship focused on emerging economies, published between 1991 and 2008. Similarly, in this review process, a preliminary search for review or conceptual scholarly articles did not lead to any article which had integrated the current status of social entrepreneurship research in the context of emerging economies, particularly BRIICS countries, which represent the rising emerging economies driving towards surpassing the G6. The gap was prominent, and needed immediate attention.

This triggered inquisitiveness in the authors to explore and review the current status of social entrepreneurship research in the BRIICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa). This is the first article to critically appraise existing peer reviewed scholarly literature on social entrepreneurship in these countries. The diversity of these emerging economies excites curiosity in exploring the history, meaning, and processes of social entrepreneurship in their context. In entrepreneurship research, it is important to broaden horizons for looking deeply in empirical work

spread across time in order to generate testable hypothesis for expanding the paradigm of entrepreneurship theory (Cuervo et al. 2007). Thus, in this study, rich conceptual patterns emerging from the literature led to constructing frameworks and research questions that would aid researchers and practitioners in identifying future opportunities and scope to develop social entrepreneurship theory and practice.

The result of this was the formulation of a novel social entrepreneurship framework that is inclusive of five key social entrepreneurship dimensions emerging from these economies: (a) Social Welfare, (b) Social Capital, (c) Social Entrepreneur, (d) Economic Value Creation, and (e) Collective Endurance. Issues that have been identified as future research opportunities for cross-country comparative empirical research on social enterprises in the context of the BRIICS countries are: (1) how they create and sustain community welfare, (2) how they empower women and youth, (3) how they use ‘Impact Sourcing’ for developing their social capital, (4) how is social entrepreneurship connected to rural entrepreneurship in these countries, (5) how do they differ from each other in their institutional frameworks, (6) how social entrepreneurship and social activism co-exist in the context of these, and (7) how is the social entrepreneurship environment in these countries affected by the social and political historical context. The upcoming sections would first discuss the relevance of this study, then the review methodology adopted, followed by country-level discussions. The contribution is not just in terms of comprehensive country-level insights, but also in terms of the usefulness of the subsequent suggested conceptual framework arising from past research, and the resultant opportunities for future research.

## Entrepreneurship research in emerging economies

The emerging economies, which were called the new industrializing countries in the 80’s (Hoskisson et al. 2000), have been defined as countries that satisfy two criteria: a rapid pace of economic development and government policies favoring economic liberalization, and the adoption of a free-market system (Arnold and Quelch 1998). In other words, emerging economies are different from the developed economies of G7 on account of their societal and economical evolution (O’Neill 2001). It has been prophesied that these economies would lead the global economy in the upcoming decades (Bruton et al. 2008).

Despite these specificities emerging from a consensus concerning the meaning and evolution of emerging economies, Manimala and Wasdani (2015) believed that the identification of emerging economies remain too much large and that in reality, emerging economies are very different from each other due to many contextual factors, such as institutional, economic, demographic and also socio-cultural factors.

A more precise conceptual framework for understanding emerging economies was provided by the emergence of a new acronym: BRIC (Manimala and Wasdani 2015). BRIC was an acronym indicating four countries representing emerging economies, which are Brazil, Russia, China and India. This acronym has been used for the first time in a report of Goldman Sachs in 2003, a banking institution. This study identified the four most important emerging economies on the basis of their economic liberalization policies and demographic potential with the purpose to identify the most important emerging economies competitive with the developed economies (Amijo 2007).

Subsequently, BRIC acronym was expanded to other emerging economies, as South Africa first, thereby getting known as BRICS economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), and then BRIICS countries, including Indonesia in this framework (Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa).

Entrepreneurial research in emerging economies has become an independent research theme in the larger entrepreneurial mainstream (Bruton et al. 2008). This particular focus is not only based in the evidence provided that entrepreneurship in emerging economies is crucial for social and economic development (REF) but also because, according to the entrepreneurial research evolution, it has been proved that economic and social context assumes all its importance when it comes to entrepreneurial decisions and activities (Welter et al. 2014; Smallbone et al. 2014). Therefore, the justification for entrepreneurship research in emerging economies is based on the specificities of emerging economies contexts (Bruton et al. 2008), or BRIICS contexts, which are different from developed countries contexts in terms of institutional support and financial capital access for entrepreneurs (Ahlstrom and Bruton 2008). Literature on entrepreneurship in emerging economies shows that entrepreneurship in developing contexts has specific challenges because of the lack of institutional support and capital support, most crucially in terms of finance and social relations (Gerard and Ganesh 2003; Lim et al. 2016).

Bruton et al. (2008) affirm that entrepreneurial research in emerging economies need more efforts to understand political and cultural variables influencing entrepreneurship behavior in emerging economies and for more policy-oriented literature. In their literature search, they found very little proportion of studies comparing to those of entrepreneurship in developed countries (43 articles compared to 7482) published over a span of 17 years (Bruton et al. 2008). The need for understanding entrepreneurship in emerging economies is relevant for the conceptual development, considering the large portrait of characteristics and specificities belonging to BRIICS economies. The importance of contextualize entrepreneurship (Zahra et al. 2009) in emerging economies has originated this integrative review.

## **Need of integrating past social entrepreneurship research on BRIICS**

The evolution of entrepreneurship from the mid-20th to the twenty-first century has been a transition from being technology driven to being an innovation-barreled change (Drucker 1985). Social entrepreneurs are altruistic entrepreneurs generating economic value for communities, thereby generating social value (Tan et al. 2005). However, social entrepreneurship has often been described in accordance to its contextual forces, which renders lack of unity in conceptual definition. (Peredo and McLean 2006). It has been of high interest to academia and industry due to the freshness of perspective in the contested nature of the dual logic of economic as well as social mission (Austin et al. 2006; Kittilaksanawong et al. 2012). The contested nature and nascent stage of evolution of the social entrepreneurship phenomenon has triggered an explosion of descriptive and conceptual literature over empirical studies, thereby creating absence of a unified non-contestable. The definition of social entrepreneurship depends on the nature of the mission, which is a tension to balance market orientation and social

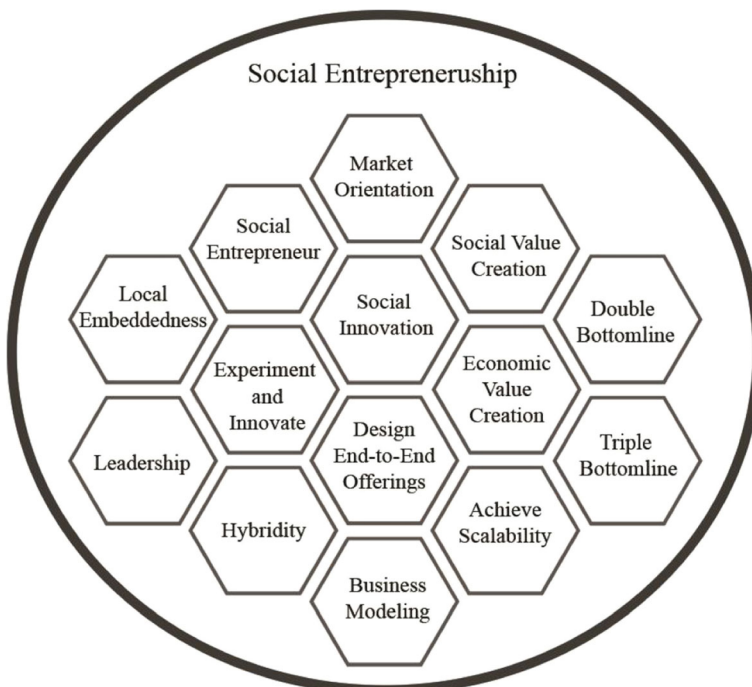
orientation to challenge existing structures and create social and economic value (Austin et al. 2006; Massetti 2008; Hill et al. 2010; Sengupta and Sahay 2017).

Increasing contestation in the definitional forms of social entrepreneurship led to the formation of four schools of thought; the Social Innovation School, Social Enterprise School, ESES, and CICs (Bacq and Janssen 2011; Choi and Majumdar 2014). According to the social enterprise school, a social enterprise takes heed of earned-income strategies for sustainably fulfilling their social mission. On the other hand, the social innovation school, focuses more on social innovation irrespective of whether that is integrated with commercial activity or not. The European approach, known as EMES (Emergence of Social Enterprise in Europe), considers those enterprises as social enterprises which are initiated by citizens for producing specific goods and services for communities. In the United Kingdom, social enterprises get registered as CICs (Community Interest Companies), which identifies social enterprises as those who use their assets for public good and the surpluses are reinvested in the business or community rather than profit maximization of owners and shareholders. However, it is not explicitly known whether the western definitional approaches developed by mostly developed countries on both sides of the Atlantic are also applicable and adequate in the context of developing countries in Asia and Africa (Sengupta and Sahay 2017).

In emerging economies, which are collectively called BRIICS, legal definitions or segmented schools of thought are found to be absent. Brazil has a concept of Solidarity Economy Enterprises (Gaiger et al. 2015), though the terminology does not replace social enterprises. Social enterprises lack legal identity in all the BRIICS countries. But there is no other BRIICS country which has anything near to a Social Enterprise Act like many EU country have. While even Ashoka Fellowships have an exhaustive list of social entrepreneurs working in emerging economies, coupled with regional and local level initiatives as well, indicating the proliferation of social enterprises in these countries, it is a dismay to see the lack of legal structures in place for creating a policy and support eco-system specifically for social enterprises. Much of this springs from the confusion surrounding the meaning and definition of social entrepreneurship, with reference to the context of the countries. A common thread of acceptance that is identified in published social entrepreneurship academic literature across the globe is that these enterprises are hybrid organizations with processes and solutions for social value creation and market orientation at varying degrees to accomplish a double bottom line; economic and social bottom lines (Sengupta and Sahay 2017). The use of for-profit business modeling for social mission is a major challenge for social enterprises in pursuing a sustainability model of double bottom line for eliminating possibilities of closure or takeovers (Pomerantz 2003; Page and Katz 2010). This combination of contrasting institutional logics is a clear objective of research and how that differs to the institutional tensions existing in other entrepreneurial ventures (Gawell 2013; Smith et al. 2013). In fact, many development NGOs have adopted the social entrepreneurship format to develop a market oriented approach so as to reduce dependency on grants alone (Helmsing 2015). These enterprises are those that aim to create sustainable business models that identify the need of the people, profit and the planet (triple bottom-line), design end to end value offerings for the people (Viswanathan et al. 2007), experiment and innovate (Yunus et al. 2010), develop local embeddedness (Miller 1996), build non-traditional partnerships (Prahalad 2004), create new leadership and organizational culture stimulating social mission (Seelos and Mair 2005; Munshi

2009; Chesbrough 2010), combine market orientation, social value creation, social innovation, organizational characteristics and social entrepreneurial attributes (Choi and Majumdar 2014), and achieve scalability (Prahalad 2004). Figure 1 demonstrates a cluster of sub-concepts coming under the umbrella of social entrepreneurship. It is not necessary that all of them would be applicable in all social entrepreneurship conditions. In different contexts, under different conditions, any of these sub-concepts may exist at varying degrees in a social enterprise.

Quite consequentially, the critical role of contextual forces as factors to the value creation by social enterprises (Swanson and Di Zhang 2010; Alcantara and Kshetri 2013) generates a need of cross-context critical analysis of research themes and factors emerging for theory enhancement in social entrepreneurship research (Sengupta and Sahay 2017). This in turn prompts context specific research for testing transferability of social entrepreneurship frameworks/models and the successive impact across borders and communities (Mair and Marti 2006; Zahra et al. 2009; Miller et al. 2012; Doherty et al. 2014). The purpose of this article is to review and identify how the social entrepreneurship phenomenon evolves from the context of emerging economies, as no prior peer-reviewed scholarly article was identified that had made such a study. The paper seeks to answer these following questions: What do we have to learn about social entrepreneurship in the BRIICS countries? What are the opportunities emerging for future research in these countries? What is the conceptual framework evolving out of past research on social entrepreneurship in emerging economies? We answer these questions by carrying out an integrative review and conceptual thinking on peer-reviewed scholarly articles published so far on social entrepreneurship in BRIICS countries.



**Fig. 1** The umbrella of social entrepreneurship

## Methodology

Conceptual and literature review papers are of specific relevance and importance to researchers and practitioners in an area which is nascent in stage. These papers consolidate past research, extract conceptual patterns, and assess the trend of research methodologies being used in that domain of study, locate research gaps, and come up with suggested research opportunities (Marabelli and Newell 2014). Torraco (2005) speaks of integrative review as a tool to synthesize existing literature to generate new frameworks. This is an appropriate literature review process to address those concepts and phenomenon which are emerging. In advanced areas, this literature review process is instrumental in enhanced conceptual developments. The purpose is primarily for: (1) critical analysis of existing literature, (2) synthesis of knowledge from existing literature, and (3) create new framework or model from the review for building new propositions for future research. Effective literature reviews form a strong foundation for the progress of empirical and conceptual research on emerging phenomenon, thereby advancing knowledge (Webster and Watson 2002).

This study surveys a large pool of research papers irrespective of whether they are empirical or non-empirical, qualitative or quantitative research. Both recently published as well as older literature was searched and reviewed, which was of relevance to the purpose of this study. The search strategy involved access to multiple databases (Fig. 2) which are EBSCOhost, Emerald Insight, ProQuest, Science Direct, Scopus, and Wiley

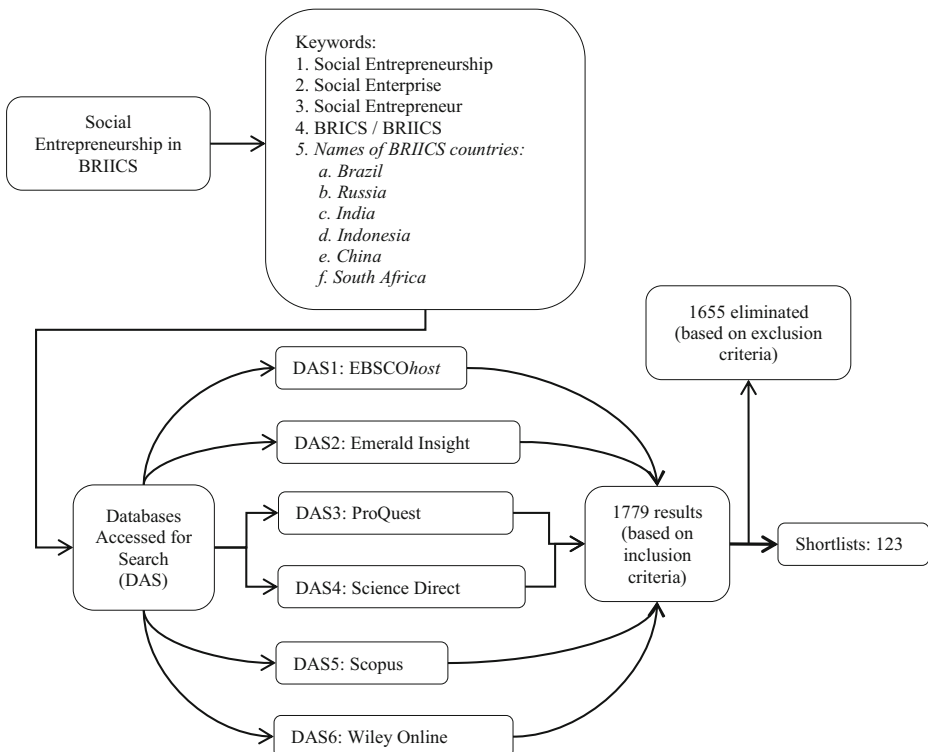


Fig. 2 Search and selection methodology

Online. Concerning the research chain, keywords ‘social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, social entrepreneur’, and ‘BRICS, Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa’ were searched. Certain inclusion and exclusion criteria were also set (Table 1). The search process had several results, from which, the papers with highest relevance were selected and reviewed. Papers with only ‘social’, ‘entrepreneur’, ‘enterprise’, and country keywords, were excluded.

The search process generated 1779 abstracts, which were evaluated one by one for final selection of papers. A total of 123 highly relevant papers were shortlisted and reviewed. Commentaries, editorials, book reviews, news articles, grey literature, viewpoint articles, were excluded. Empirical studies were selected on the basis of the geographies studied; which had to be the BRIICS countries. In case of conceptual and review articles, those were selected whose author/s were from the BRIICS countries. Duplications in search results across the databases were removed. The distribution of literature available across the BRIICS countries gives an outright impression on the extent of peer-reviewed publication on social entrepreneurship from each emerging economy (Table 2). Though a variety of discussions may have occurred in the papers, the subsequent sections would focus on the ones that had struck to be relatively more significant to the authors, than the usual definitional debates.

## Social entrepreneurship in Brazil

In comparison to the other countries, literature on social entrepreneurship in Brazil is quite low. The phenomenon is new, scholarly literature is scarce, and the definition found usually in discourse, is more of third-sector organizations (Godói-de-Sousa and Fischer 2012). But social entrepreneurs in Brazil have significant role to play in local development and poverty reduction (Sloan et al. 2014).

Despite the lack of studies and the difficulty to find data for analysis, some researchers attest that the world of social enterprises in Brazil is diversified (Godói-de-Sousa and Fischer 2012). Also, there is the recognition that social enterprises are

**Table 1** Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
Full text	Editorials
Only english articles	Non-english articles
All dates	Commentaries
Scholarly peer reviewed	Grey literature
Empirical papers	Viewpoint articles
Conference proceedings	News articles
Book chapters	Book reviews
Review papers	Articles with <i>only</i> keywords ‘social’, ‘enterprise’, ‘entrepreneur’, ‘entrepreneurship’, or the name of the BRIICS countries
Conceptual papers	
Articles with keywords ‘social enterprise’, ‘social entrepreneur’, ‘social entrepreneurship’, and name of BRIICS countries, in the abstract	



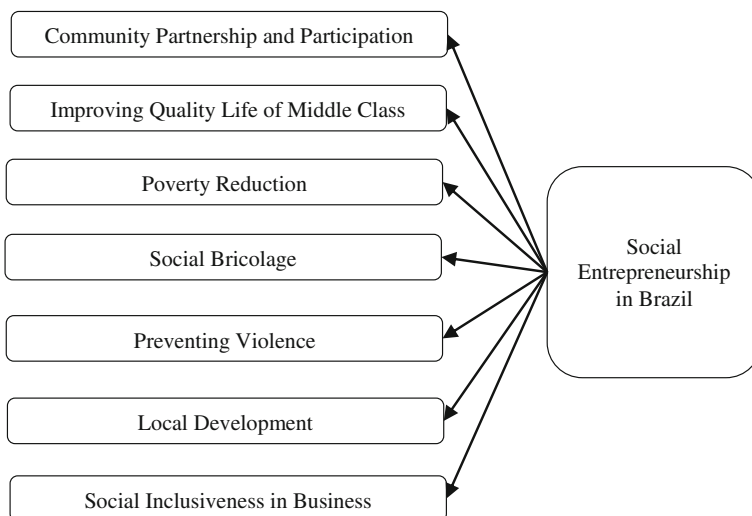
**Table 2** Country-wise search results (SR)\* and papers shortlisted (PS)\*\*

Database	Brazil		Russia		India		Indonesia		China		South Africa		
	SR	PS	SR	PS	SR	PS	SR	PS	SR	PS	SR	PS	
EBSCOhost	7	0	12	0	24	2	30	8	20	6	4	3	
Emerald insight	25	1	17	1	212	17	11	1	310	11	40	4	
Science direct	22	3	25	0	45	10	15	2	40	1	18	3	
ProQuest	12	2	26	0	66	8	8	1	37	5	12	2	
Scopus	59	8	57	3	150	6	40	1	150	4	130	4	
Wiley online	16	1	9	0	22	3	18	0	70	1	21	1	
Total (SR)	141		146		519		122		627		225	1779	
Total (PS)		15		4		46		13		28		17	123

\*Search Results on the basis of inclusion criteria

\*\*Paper Shortlists after implementing exclusion criteria

important for social development and problem solving (Bastos et al. 2016). Despite improvements in public policies and economic developments to combat socio-economic inequalities and poverty in Brazil that had dominated its past, questions have been raised on the quality of life of the middle class in the congested cities of Brazil. Bastos et al. (2016) uses the term ‘social businesses’ for those companies which advocates and practices social inclusiveness of businesses by empowering communities, making them partners in production and consumption of goods and services, enlivening quality of life, minimizing discrepancies, and not financially exploiting the middle class by ways of consumerism. These enterprises have also come to be considered as ‘inclusive businesses’ which may be working in different legal formats as per their nature of work and the legal environment (Godói-de-Sousa and Fischer 2012). But at the core, they have been instrumental in many social change processes (Fig. 3).



**Fig. 3** Social entrepreneurship in Brazil

Scheiber (2014) studied social entrepreneurs' networks that operate towards violence prevention and empowerment of young peoples in Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil. She concluded that the interaction with the community is fundamental for pursuing the objective of a social enterprise, because people become leaders of social activities. There are studies on the interaction of social enterprise with the environment as well. Makhoulf (2011) studied environmental impact of successful social enterprises around the world, including Brazil.

Spitzeck et al. (2013) present an interesting model that combines corporate entrepreneurship and social responsibility. Their case study on the hydroelectric power plant, Santo Antonio in Porto Velho, shows the enterprise preserving the Amazonia environment by converting socio-environmental risks into opportunities through innovation driven competitive advantages. Siqueira et al. (2014) studied three Brazilian micro-finance organizations to research how social enterprises influence economic development in the local innovation system by building and maintaining relationships with complementors, suppliers, and customers. Social enterprises have often been analyzed in a dyadic relationship between the enterprise and its beneficiaries (who often are customers of the enterprise). But very few studies have researched the relationship of a social enterprise with other stakeholders such as complementors and suppliers. Thus, to understand social entrepreneurship, the relationship of the entrepreneur with all associated stakeholders is a significant factor to performance of the enterprise. Sunduramurthy et al. (2016), has mobilized the concept of social bricolage to explain social entrepreneurs' behaviors in different countries, among which Brazil was one. They concluded that the bricolage process is about challenging negative stereotyping and aggregating varied functions so as to optimize available environment, resources or partnerships.

On realising that social enterprises have been overstudied in developed countries, some researchers had analysed the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship in developing countries such as Brazil (Bastos et al. 2016). This review recognizes that the history of a country and the contextual issues affect the development of social enterprises; in a more damaging way when there are factors such as corruption and lack of good governance, that produce social inequalities. In fact, as there is a long tradition of being a solidarity economy in Brazil to overcome social problems, there is a general acceptability and focus on social enterprises contributing to social problem solving.

## Social entrepreneurship in Russia

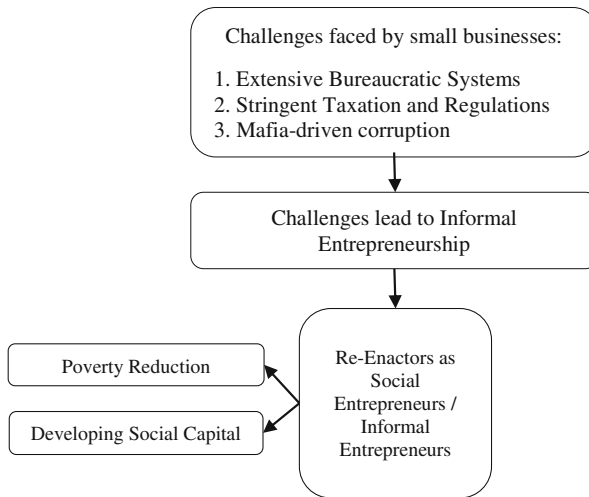
Despite Russia being an emerging economy, social entrepreneurship literature is quite low. The databases search revealed only four relevant articles. The historical past of Russia would explain the lack of social entrepreneurial studies in this country. History stands testimony of a bureaucratic process with rigid taxation and regulatory regime, discouraging entrepreneurship; least to mention the mafia-driven environment muddled with corruption. Consequentially, entrepreneurialism had not been a preferred career choice in Russia. What is gradually earning the identity of social entrepreneurship are those creating a rich social capital by providing goods and services at festivals re-enacting specific historical periods (Gordin and Dedova 2015). This differentiates social entrepreneurship in Russia from that in other emerging markets.

The unstable transition of Russia from a Communist history to a capitalist society in an informal economy context, has led to associating the concept of social status in Russia to possession of highly profitable businesses or powerful political careers periods (Gordin and Dedova 2015). The emergence of a stable economy had been continuously hindered by extensive bureaucratic systems. Stringent legal regulations and taxation have not facilitated the development of small and medium businesses. The advent of social entrepreneurship in the community of re-enactors, in the form of participation in re-enactment festivals to develop communal connections and social capital, seems to have potential in improving the socio-economic conditions of the state (Fig. 4). However, with the absence of a developed ecosystem of social entrepreneurship in Russia, the entrepreneurial re-enactors are also referred to as informal entrepreneurs; also owing to the fact that most of the commercial activities of these re-enactors are performed outside the registration and legislator framework of the state.

Williams and Nadin (2012) studied informal entrepreneurship in Russia by doing a survey of 102 informal entrepreneurs in Moscow. They analysed social entrepreneurship in opposition to the commercial entrepreneurship and concluded that social and commercial entrepreneurship are not opposite but are situated on a continuum. The entrepreneurship ecosystem in the informal economy of Russia includes two actors: commercial entrepreneurs with pure for-profit logics and social entrepreneurs with strong social logics. And there are moments where they have moved from one of the logics to the other. Laine (2013) suggested that the social economy approach involves a multitude of stakeholders in the two frontiers, and ensure more cooperation through social entrepreneurship models adopted by civil society organisations. Social entrepreneurship in Russia is characterised by the creation of social capital, high level of engagement and no-profit gains.

## Social entrepreneurship in India

Social entrepreneurship in India has drawn influence from the Ashoka Fellowship program, and has witnessed the rise of Ashoka fellows over the past two decades. Bill Drayton's dream of creating new age entrepreneurs bridging the divide between capitalism and socialism by amalgamating social innovation and market orientation, had inspired many Indians to become social entrepreneurs (Sen 2007). Some of the globally recognized successful social enterprises are Aravind Eye Care Hospitals, Narayana Hrudayalaya, SEWA, Jaipur Rags, and Sulabh (Makhlouf 2011; Roy and Karna 2015; S.V. Ramani et al. 2017). Quite interestingly, Ramani et al. (2017) consider Mahatma Gandhi as a remarkable social entrepreneur who wanted to transform the sanitation sector of India, through social innovation in toilet technology to make rural India open-defecation-free. Social innovation is difficult amidst a resource constraint environment. It grows in three phases: emergence of the social idea, development of the idea, and then eventual scaling up (Bhatt and Altinay 2013). In an exploratory research of social enterprises in the Indian context, Bhatt and Altinay (2013) identified these three stages as common to all Indian social enterprises adopting socially innovative solutions for generating economic and social value.



**Fig. 4** Social entrepreneurship in Russia

Social entrepreneurship in India is also associated with the emancipation of rural women from social and cultural taboos limiting their capabilities. Haugh and Talwar (2016) postulated entrepreneurial ventures of rural women as emancipatory social entrepreneurship which is triggered by multiple factors, such as, social and cultural barriers, lack of education, limited social networks, lack of skills, lack of access to market knowledge, constrained independence, gender discrimination, rigid governance structures, lack of control over the environment they are embedded in, lack of role models, lack of access to resources, power relationships in family and society, and lack of empowerment (Servon and Doshna 2000; Ardrey et al. 2006; Rao 2014; Bhardwaj 2014; Haugh and Talwar 2016). Quite consequentially, the development of women is one of those pressing issues that have taken the center stage of development in emerging economies (Sen 1999). The study by Haugh and Talwar (2016) of women social entrepreneurs in rural India leads to the finding that rural women emancipatory social entrepreneurship had brought changes in the attitude of men towards women and their work, changes in attitude of society towards gender discrimination, and changes in the role of men in family units. The success of empowering women through social entrepreneurship is seeded in the business model of the social enterprises (Datta and Gailey 2012).

Tandon (2014) calls for in-depth qualitative research on social enterprises and their regional contexts to identify social structures enabling learning interactions between workforce and beneficiary community members, and the boundaries enclosing them, such as power boundaries and boundaries of competence (Santos and Eisenhardt 2005). The involvement of human resource within the enterprise, as well as community stakeholders, both men and women, is found to be reiterated in a study of community-based Indian social enterprises by Sloan et al. in Sloan et al. 2014. Community participation in the operations of the enterprise led to social progression in terms of elevating earned income opportunities and reducing poverty situations. This leads to the creation of rich social capital that is a necessary antecedent to the success of social enterprises in an indeterminate environmental situation as prevalent in an

emerging economy like India (Roy and Karna 2015). Personal attributes of social entrepreneurs stimulate social innovation and social value creation by engaging with the beneficiary communities.

Basargekar and Rawat (2015) revealed family environment, educational and professional background as strong stimulants in social entrepreneurship practice in education sector, with majority of social entrepreneurs in this sector being women. Apart from education, housing for the underserved is another social entrepreneurship sector in India. About 26.53 million lack proper houses, of which 99% are economically backward; a social need addressed by housing sector social enterprises like Janaadhar (Mukherji 2014). The challenges faced by such enterprises are high cost, land acquisition issues, regulatory pressure, access to finance, and creating a market (Mukherji 2014).

In India, the notion of corporate social entrepreneurship to address needs of the BOP consumers had recently taken social entrepreneurship discussions to new dimensions. The concept entails networking of certain corporates with NGOs to avail their network, resources, activities, and actors, to generate sustainable solutions for the neglected problems in the local powerless communities at the bottom of the pyramid (Ghuri et al. 2014). Some of the antecedents to corporate social entrepreneurship are socio-economic conditions, socio-political movements, organizational capabilities, organizational resources, and millennium development goals requiring global attention (Agrawal and Sahasranamam 2016). Outcomes are observed in solving perceivable problems like access to quality water by marginal communities (Mission Swasth), providing market intelligence and new technology related information to farmers (ITC's e-Chaupal), and providing financial inclusion to the marginalized (ICICI Foundation).

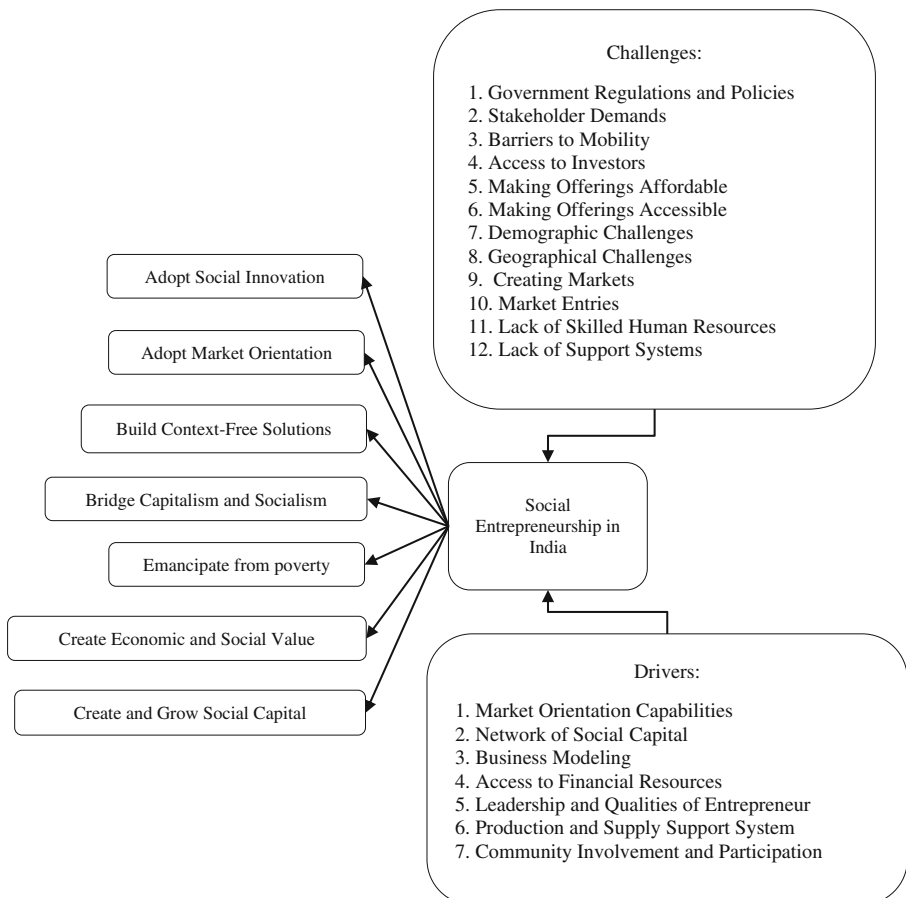
For social enterprises in India, challenges are the rapidly changing environment, degree of awareness and acceptance in the market, affordability and accessibility of offerings, availability of investors, organizational structure, associated stakeholder requirements, and dilemma surrounding scalability (Goyal et al. 2016). To combat constraints in such an environment, social enterprises connect multiple stakeholders with a common purpose, innovate managerial practices, and institutionalize those practices through the social network of stakeholders (Maguire et al. 2004; Roy and Karna 2015). The elements comprising the competitive environment, the factors streaming from customer profiles, macro-environmental factors, diversity of social needs in tune with the millennium development goals, and orientation of the enterprise in fulfilling the social mission, are essential elements constituting the context in which social enterprises function (Goyal and Sergi 2015). Thus, there is need to develop cases on the strategic planning of social enterprises in linking social missions to social value creating actions (Rangan 2004) and for gaining competitive advantage in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) environment of emerging economies like India (Roy and Karna 2015).

Satar and John (2016) identified critical success factors (CSFs) that eventually determine the success of social enterprises: business plan, entrepreneurship orientation, entrepreneurial leadership, social network, innovation in financing, planning of triple bottom-line, marketing initiatives, engagement with community, organizational culture in the enterprise, measurement of social impact, frugal innovation, and support of government structures and institutions. Sodhi and Tang (2011) identified successful

social enterprises from nine countries, including India, as facilitators for micro-entrepreneurs to ease their access to micro-financial credits, market intelligence, market potential, basic raw materials, sales opportunities, and cost reduction opportunities. Figure 5 comprehensively illustrates social entrepreneurship in India.

## Social entrepreneurship in Indonesia

Historically speaking, the country had seen a transition from dictatorship to democracy. Indonesia had developed a national culture and legal framework of rejecting business competition due to the control of the economy in the hands of colonial occupation by the Dutch in the past, limited freedom of business for indigenous people, encouragement of social and welfare-oriented organizations by the Dutch, and control of social organizations by the dictators Soekarno and Soeharto so that they work for the government (Hatta 1954; Polman 2011; Idris and Hati 2013). Eventually, only cooperatives were considered as legal social organizations. Welfare activities were



**Fig. 5** Social entrepreneurship in India

encouraged. Work was extensive on food, microcredit, and foreign-aid. The subsequent democratic environment, indicated tolerance towards integration of business model and social mission by authorizing four types of registrations for business organizations in National Mid Term Development Plans (NMTDP) 2015–2020. They were Limited Corporation, Cooperative, Foundation, and Association; though no specific legal identity called Social Enterprise.

The inception and growth of social entrepreneurship in Indonesia can be credited to the formation of the Indonesian Social Enterprise Organization (AKSI) in 2009, the start of ASHOKA, the efforts of British Council Indonesia (BCI) in nurturing community-based social enterprises by providing access to seed-funds and network in association with Arthur Guinness Foundation. Issues like poverty and food security have become issues of highest concern; with the SMEs in the informal sector driving the economy. Observe the failures of government, market, and communities, as opportunities for social entrepreneurship in Indonesia. Earlier work on entrepreneurship by Tilley et al. (2007) categorized enterprises as Sustainable Enterprises, Environmental Enterprises, Economic Enterprises, and Social Enterprises. In a study by Gunawan (2014) of entrepreneurial types in Indonesia, it was revealed that most of the Indonesian entrepreneurs can be classified as Social Entrepreneurs and Eco-Entrepreneurs (Fig. 6). It was observed that the motivation factors for social entrepreneurship, in descending order of being a dominating factor, were economic benefits, passion for change, and the feeling of ownership of an enterprise.

However, a unique contextual factor to Indonesian social entrepreneurship is the influence of Islamic value of the population, which is the world’s largest Muslim population (Idris and Hati 2013). Though religiosity was earlier postulated as important

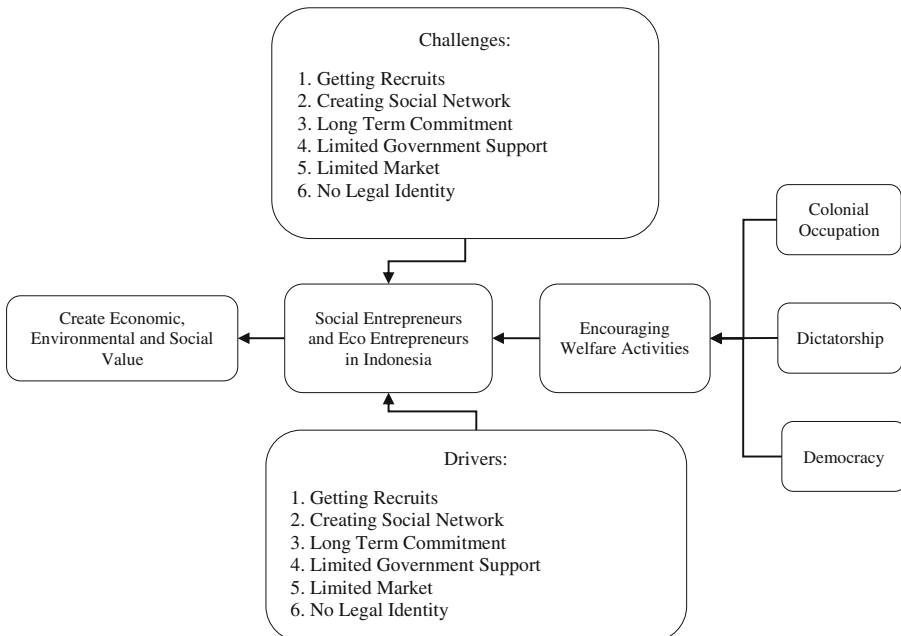


Fig. 6 Social entrepreneurship in Indonesia

factor influencing support intentions of people (Reitsma et al. 2006), Hati and Idris (2014) found that not just religiosity, but many other socioeconomic factors, played a not-so-significant role in the support intentions of Indonesians towards social enterprises. The credibility, element of trust, and expertise of the social enterprises have a correlation with their branding, which draws support intention from Indonesians. Indonesian social entrepreneurs use their charismatic leadership to perform so as to emerge as examples, create identity of their social enterprises, and create social value. They face challenges in identifying the right recruits with shared values, creating a strong social network, and long-time organizational commitment to social change (Rostoani et al. 2014). In a study of sanitation social enterprises in Indonesia, Murta et al. (2016) identified lack of market demand, lack of capacity-building opportunities, limited government and financial support, as the key challenges to achieving scalability as well as impact. Overall, literature available in the context of Indonesia was quite limited.

## Social entrepreneurship in China

Social entrepreneurship has been in evolution in well-established innovation-driven economies such as Europe, United States of America, Canada, and Australia, but not a usual matter of discussion in emerging and transitional economies, especially if it is a former communist country (Wang et al. 2015). Social entrepreneurship research in China is still at a very nascent stage, with very little attention drawn from the academic sector (Yu 2016). The origin of the term in China can be traced back to an article published in the Peking University-based journal, *China Social Work Research*, in January 2004. The nascent nature of the phenomenon in Chinese context is due to the political connotations attached to the transition of China from its former communist identity, institutional frameworks, and social systems (Wang et al. 2015). The remarkable economic growth of China came at a cost of environmental damage as well as unfair treatment of workforce. Social enterprises are needed to fill up the environmental and social gaps. Zhang and Miao (2011) find United Kingdom's CIC (Community Interest Company) to be better suited for China. CICs are not-for-profit entities designed to address social issues profitably, but distribute the profit back into the enterprise. Devices like 'asset lock' enable the assets and funds to stay within the social enterprise for the social purpose.

Social entrepreneurship in China can be related to the concept of 'Danwei', which existed during earlier socialist regimes. 'Danwei' meant workplaces providing food, housing, retirement benefits, and education for family. Qiye Danweis were profit oriented enterprises, Shiye Danwei were nonprofits, and Xingheng Danwei were government administrative units. Qiye Danweis have often been discussed in popular discourse of being quite close to the social entrepreneurship concept (Curtis 2011). Historically, Chinese social entrepreneurship is rooted in the advent of rural entrepreneurship triggering economic transformation of China from a communist system to a market-based economic system. The historical context of rural entrepreneurship being gradually perceived or transformed into social entrepreneurship differentiates social entrepreneurship in China from that in other emerging economies (Lan et al. 2014). Rural entrepreneurship had been instrumental in bringing economic development as



well as social welfare at community level (Poon et al. 2009). It gradually came to be acknowledged as social entrepreneurship due to the gradual positive correlation between rural entrepreneurship and socio-economic development. This promotes economic growth of rural interior regions, which are relatively disadvantaged in comparison to the rural coastal areas.

Social entrepreneurship in China is driven by its historical, cultural, and socio-economic contexts. The burgeoning social enterprises in China have different origins, social missions, registration formats, and operational models (Yu 2011). In the past decade, there had been a trend of nonprofit organizations transcending to a social entrepreneurship model to explore and leverage revenue opportunities, in addition to voluntary grants, for financial and social sustainability. The transformation from the banishment of foreign NGOs under the leadership of Mao Zedong after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, 1949, to the establishment of China Social Enterprise Foundation in 2007, is testimony to the ideological revolution that the state and its people had brought in. Despite the ideological transformation, perceptions about business modeling for social change is still a doubtful and uncertain concept for many Chinese citizens, primarily due to a trend of perceiving people in nonprofits as those with a much higher purpose than those in business (Zhao 2012). Figure 7 gives a framework of social entrepreneurship in China, the purposes of these enterprises, and the challenges faced.

The dichotomy surrounding the term ‘social entrepreneurship’ gave rise to a new term in China, which was ‘welfare NPOs’. These welfare NPOs (non-profit organizations) are mostly registered as ‘civilian-run non-enterprise units’ (Wong and Tang 2007). They may be ‘individual-run, community-run, shareholder-run, or joint venture units’. These are funded privately for meeting specific social commitments, with returns in terms of fees. Unlike NGOs, the funding for these institutions does not come from charitable donations or government grants, but from private resources. Wong and Tang (2007) found out that the welfare NPOs find it hard to survive due to continuous struggle in meeting cost constraints, fighting social misconceptions of state-run enterprises being friendlier, lack of government support in resolving resource

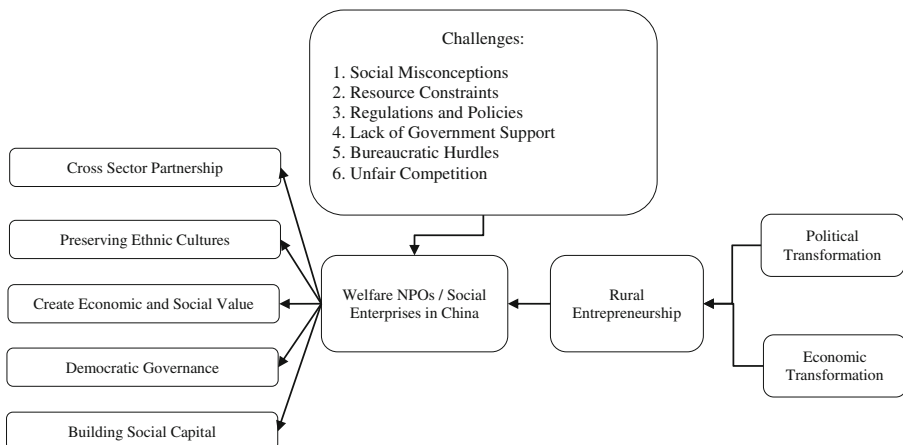


Fig. 7 Social entrepreneurship in China

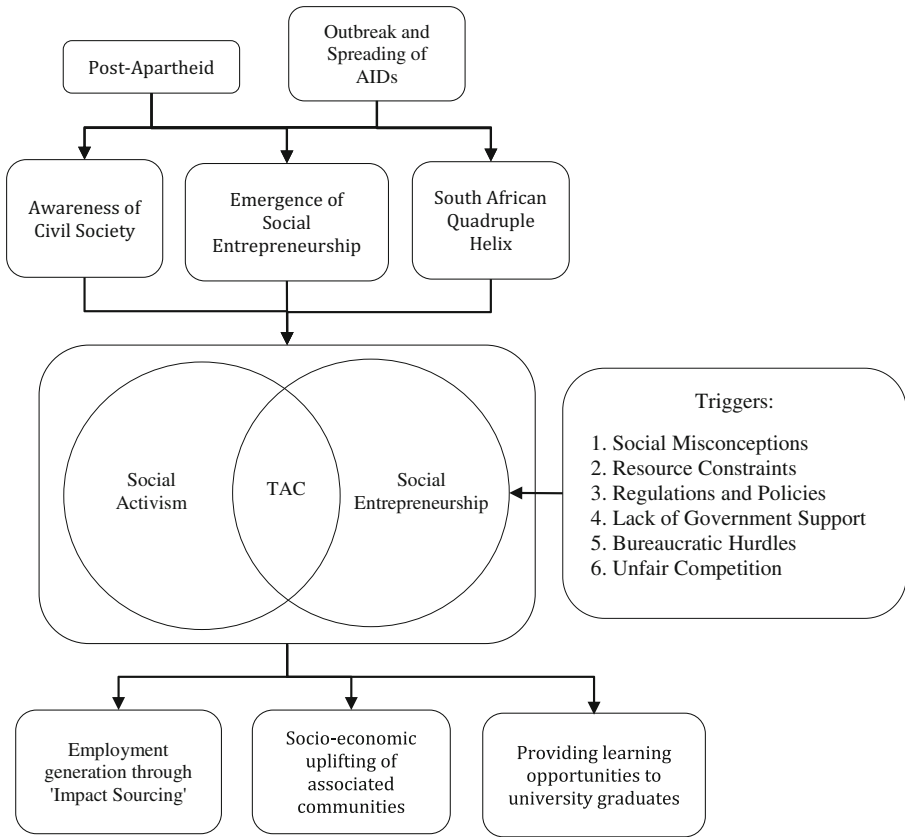
problems, and un-fair competitive grounds created by privileges enjoyed by state-run institutions. But these welfare NPOs are stronger alternatives to conventional non-profits in China in dealing with development challenges (Yu 2016). Lan et al. (2014) developed a conceptual framework that puts the social enterprise in a competitive market economic environment, as it not a grant driven enterprise, but one with a business model to generate own revenue. They found out that the primary concern of social enterprises is to enhance social welfare, increase income of rural households, make the business eco-friendly and sustainable, achieve prosperity for all stakeholders, and preserve ethnic cultures.

Quite interestingly, Chinese social entrepreneurs had been using HRD strategies in collaboration with HRD practitioners for effective societal development through social entrepreneurship (Kim et al. 2012). The motivation for social entrepreneurship in China is strongly connected to moral sentiments, like, level of education, struggle, unemployment, and poverty (Yiu et al. 2014). The occupational background of individuals and entrepreneurial development of the region, emerge as vital factors framing the attitude of Chinese youth towards social entrepreneurship as a tool to leverage conditions of ‘shared necessity’ and ‘shared destiny’ (Defourmy and Kim 2011). However, irrespective of the background and the environmental factors (institutional as well as social), ‘desirability’ and ‘feasibility’ of the social entrepreneurship activities are central points in the social entrepreneurial decision-making process, which are affected by the human capital and social capital available with the social entrepreneur (Jiao 2011). All of these are an embracing of a ‘socialist market economy’ that progressed through powerful Chinese socio-economic reforms, open market economies, and the legacy of a socialist economy (Poon et al. 2009).

## Social entrepreneurship in South Africa

Just as emancipation from undesirable socio-economic conditions had been the agenda of social entrepreneurship endeavors in the context of other emerging economies, it is no different in the context of South Africa. There has been a strong drive for social change at not-for-profit and social entrepreneurial level to face epidemics like HIV/AIDS, deep plunges in life expectancy, incomprehensible political denialism, and failure of health policies. It was a “Quadruple Helix combining civil society, higher education, public research organizations, and business, together with an independent judiciary” that led to major shift towards the turnaround from this grave situation (Kahn 2016). Kahn considered the TAC (Treatment Action Campaign) as a successful social entrepreneurial initiative, instrumental in providing ARV (anti-retroviral) therapies to HIV positive patients. TAC also displays a mix of social activism and social entrepreneurship. From protests against government denialism and legal victories compelling government in providing ARVs, to scientific research in association with university-based research groups and doctors despite major resource constraints, TAC displayed virtues of both activism and entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship has been on the rise in the recent years in South Africa, and is being increasingly recognized by the populace because of the deficits it bridges and the impact creates (Fig. 8). However, there had been issues constraining the growth of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in South Africa, such as deficits in national



**Fig. 8** Social entrepreneurship in South Africa

budgets, decreasing donor funding, dearth of leadership, immigration, insufficient basic infrastructure, and the struggles of transition from apartheid to democracy (Karanda and Toledano 2012). However, not only the civil society has emerged as an advocate of revolutionary thinking powered by good governance and universal rights, the shift of enterprises from being controlled by state institutions to being more independent, due to the political transition to democracy, had also factored in as critical triggers for more social enterprises in South Africa (Sesan 2006; Masendeke and Mugova 2009; Kuria 2011; Karanda and Toledano 2012). The increase in the number of social enterprises in South Africa is also because of their potential to bridge the deficit of traditional government initiatives and efforts of NGO’s (non-governmental organizations) in dealing with critical social issues. But the institutional environment is not always favorable for social enterprises in South Africa because of fluctuating political and economic stability (Urban 2013; Urban 2015).

The rising inequality between highly developed economic segments and segments on the brink of survival, has significant impact on socio-economic growth of the country, as well as employment creation; thereby creating a lack of self-belief and skills in many individuals, making them feel that entrepreneurship is not meant for them (Rwigema et al. 2010; Urban 2013; Urban and Kujinga 2017). Social enterprises

in South Africa do ‘impact sourcing’, which is the recruitment and skill development of people from subsistence or disadvantaged communities for business services, which enables local embeddedness of the enterprises in the communities, and getting known as ‘hybrid’ enterprises which are competitive as well as impactful in socio-economic uplifting of the associated communities (Manning et al. 2017). The staff hired through impact sourcing is loyal to the enterprises, and have strong connections with the community. There are social enterprises hiring and training youth from impoverished communities, who have also played contracting roles to provide such staff to other companies interested in hiring such people. This also generates employment opportunities in an ecosystem frequently criticized for unemployment. Surprisingly, there is lack of government funding for impact sourcing, whereas majority of the funding comes from global private and not-for-profit sponsors. There are also constraints in meeting international standards, as well as a lack of awareness among global companies on impact sourcing in South Africa.

South African social entrepreneurs conduct themselves as informal leaders to address local issues. Zahra et al. (2009) coined the term ‘social bricoleurs’ to refer to social entrepreneurs leveraging their personal life experiences and motivation to merge with local reality as informal leaders, and drive social change. The kind of social opportunities and social needs dealt with social enterprises and their style of community engagement are driven by the socio-economic background and personal life experiences of the social entrepreneurs (Piore and Sabel 1984; Sesan 2006; Masendeke and Mugova 2009; Karanda and Toledano 2012). Quite interestingly, Daya (2014) identified the influence of power-relationships in the context of social entrepreneurship in the crafts sector of South Africa, and cautions the readers against the commodification of producer communities, who would be perceived as beneficiaries in the conventional sense, but needs closer examination on power issues as more and more communities get exposed to the vulnerability of being commoditized by social enterprises.

## Discussion

The paper attempts to review past research on social entrepreneurship in the context of the emerging economies, and organizes the findings into a comprehensive framework. There are five constructs that can be identified as sub-concepts coming together under the concept of social entrepreneurship in the context of emerging economies. In no specific order of importance, they are:

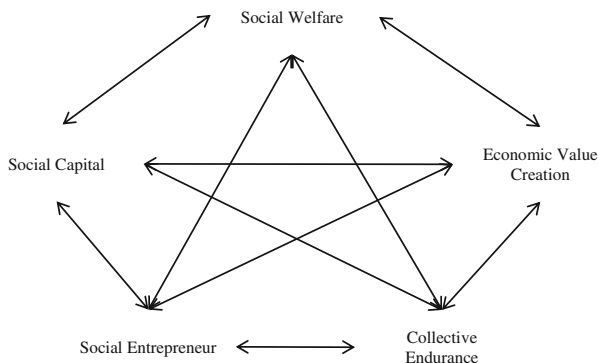
- (1) Social Welfare – Creating significant social value in powerless and marginalized communities for emancipation of men and women from socio-economic problems, and thereby improving the quality of their lives.
- (2) Social Capital – Creating a rich human resource base through community participation and impact sourcing to develop and maintain relationship with multiple stakeholders for successful initialization and institutionalization of the social and economic value creation practices of the social enterprise.
- (3) Social Entrepreneur – The key individual whose socio-cultural-economic background and diversity of experiences, which have a significant role to play in everything related to the success or failure of the social enterprise.

- (4) Economic Value Creation – Creating economic value for the financial sustainability of the enterprise and for emancipation of beneficiary communities from economic backwardness.
- (5) Collective Endurance – Efforts at the enterprise, entrepreneur, and community level, to battle challenges in the regulatory, political, and social environment, to generate and maximize economic and social value created by the social enterprise.

Social entrepreneurship in the emerging economies is a combination of all these sub-concepts. Figure 9 demonstrates a kaleidoscopic view of the different constructs converging together as different dimensions to the social entrepreneurship concept in the context of the top emerging economies of the world – the BRIICS countries. Representation of combinations of different dimensions and variables in a kaleidoscopic relationship structure for theorizing was presented by Gartner (1985) in his creation of a conceptual framework for describing new venture creation. Each of these sub-concepts converging in the social entrepreneurship concept would require in-depth exploration by future researchers in the context of the BRIICS countries. The constructs may exist at varying degrees for any enterprise set in the context of any of the countries, or in different combinations and with detailed factors unfolding among them in their relationship with each other.

### Social welfare

The construct *social welfare* emerges from past research in the context of all the BRIICS countries. And welfare generation is a consequence of establishing an element of trust with the community (Pillay and Mitra 2015). In Brazil, we see social enterprises with the primary objective of solving social problems and improve the quality of life of people (Bastos et al. 2016). In Russia, the re-enactors in the re-enactment festivals are perceived as social entrepreneurs whose purpose is to develop strong social connections among people (Laine 2013; Gordin and Dedova 2015; Goyal and Sergi 2015). In India, social entrepreneurship had started creating significant social welfare through emancipation of women (Haugh and Talwar 2016), reaching out to local powerless communities (Ghauri et al. 2014), providing necessary variant services like education and financial inclusion to marginalized communities (Agrawal and Sahasranamam 2016).



**Fig. 9** Social entrepreneurship in emerging economies

In Indonesia, social entrepreneurship is very much community-based, and intends to solve issues like food security and poverty Praton and Sutanti 2016. In China, the very reason for the inception of rural entrepreneurship, which later transformed into social entrepreneurship, was economic and social welfare at community level (Poon et al. 2009; Lan et al. 2014). South African social enterprises emerged out of a strong environment of social activism and have been impactful in uplifting communities (Kahn 2016; Manning et al. 2017). The ‘social’ of social enterprises in the emerging economies is inclusive of the powerless and marginalized communities at rural locations, suffering from poverty, gender-bias, and other socio-economic issues. This is different from the ‘social’ of social entrepreneurship in the western context, as poverty or lack of education or poor infrastructure, are not major problems of the west. Therefore, even if in the global context, social welfare is a key dimension in social entrepreneurship, the meaning and dimensions would change in the context of emerging economies. While some studies isolate social innovation as a different concept under the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship, the authors propose social innovation to be considered in social welfare because social innovation is one of the means to achieve social welfare (Bhatt and Altinay 2013). Given its importance, social welfare is undoubtedly an integral part of the social entrepreneurship concept.

### Social capital

Another construct emerging from past research is *social capital*. While researching social entrepreneurship in the Indian context, Roy and Karna (2015) postulated that creating a rich social capital is a necessary antecedent to the success of social enterprises. That includes a social connect with a wide variety of stakeholders in order to innovate and institutionalize those practices. Creating strong social capital is one of the key competitive advantages of social enterprises (Goyal and Sergi 2015). In fact, in any business set up, social capital plays a vital role in implementing strategic initiatives (Lehtimaki and Karintaus 2012). In a study of Brazilian social enterprises, Siqueira et al. (2014) spoke of the vitality of social enterprises building rich social capital by developing and maintaining relationships with complementors, suppliers, and customers, many of whom would probably be from the very communities that are being served. In Indonesia, creating strong social capital to identify recruits with shared values is an important challenge (Rostoani et al. 2014). For recruiting those with like minds and for whom the social mission of the enterprise is also close to their hearts, ‘impact sourcing’ is done by South African social enterprises, which strengthens their social capital embedded in the community and encourages more youth to pursue social entrepreneurship or become part of social enterprises (Manning et al. 2017; Mandyoli et al. 2017). In the Chinese context, the social capital is one of the key dimensions in the inception and scaling up of social enterprises (Lan et al. 2014). This construct emerges as an important dimension of social entrepreneurship in emerging economies. The new dimension of ‘impact sourcing’ in the South African context leads the way to identify how the same exists in the context of other emerging economies. Participation of community with social enterprises in the Indian context (Sloan et al. 2014) is also indicative of ‘impact sourcing’, though the term is not explicitly used in past peer-reviewed published social entrepreneurship research in the Indian context. This

construct would need more research to understand what it means and how it exists in the context of social enterprises in all the BRIICS countries.

### **Social entrepreneur**

While propounding the cluster concept of social entrepreneurship, Choi and Majumdar (2014) considered the *social entrepreneur* as an integral part of the social entrepreneurship concept, though the construct needs further research on how different a social entrepreneur is from other types of entrepreneurs, in innovating, risk-taking, and change-making capacity. The concept of ‘social bricolage’ was postulated by Zahra et al. (2009), and then researched again by Sunduramurthy et al. (2016) in their research on social entrepreneurship in Brazil and South Africa. The relationship of the entrepreneur with social capital, his/her challenge to negative stereotyping, and the ability to aggregate resources for the social mission and economic sustainability, are some of the important dimensions of ‘social bricolage’. Leadership qualities of the social entrepreneur, and his background, are critical success factors for social enterprises (Masendeke and Mugova 2009; Karanda and Toledano 2012; Satar and John 2016). Lan et al. 2014, in their study on social entrepreneurship in the Chinese context, postulated the social entrepreneur to be of the key dimension in the inception and scaling up of social enterprises. The framework of social entrepreneurship in the emerging economies would be meaningless without the inclusion of social entrepreneur as a dimension. Social entrepreneurs need to be studied more to understand their relationship with their institutional and political environment, which is not observed in past research. In fact, in entrepreneurship research itself, contrary to popular thought, the entrepreneur is still empirically insufficiently researched in terms of how they recognize and maximize opportunities (George et al. 2016) in face of complex macro and micro environmental situations. In the context of emerging economies, the impact of the diversity of social, cultural, political, economic, technological, and legal factors, on the entrepreneurial intentions of the social entrepreneur, needs more enquiry and analysis.

### **Economic value creation**

An important aspect of social entrepreneurship is combating socio-economic inequalities and poverty, as observed in social entrepreneurship research by Bastos et al. (2016) on Russia, Roy and Karna (2015) on India, Pratono and Sutanti 2016 on Indonesia, Poon et al. (2009) on China, and Manning et al. (2017) on South Africa. Poverty and socio-economic backwardness have been common historical backgrounds for all the emerging economies. Emancipation from this dreadful condition by economically mobilizing the beneficiary communities, with the use of innovative earned-income strategies, rich social capital, social innovation, inclusion of community as stakeholders, community participation, market orientation, and business modeling, has been viewed by many authors as a major aspect of social entrepreneurship (e.g., Sodhi and Tang 2011; Spitzeck et al. 2013, Bhatt and Altinay 2013; Siqueira et al. 2014, Sloan et al. 2014; Mukherji 2014, Choi and Majumdar 2014; Lan et al. 2014; Roy and Karna 2015; Pratono and Sutanti 2016; Manning et al. 2017). Economic value is thereby created for the beneficiary communities as well as for the enterprise. The key to successful social entrepreneurship is achieving economic sustainability while

maintaining the social mission; without being dependent on traditional donations as received by NGOs or government funding (Scheiber 2014; Yu 2016). This aspect of social entrepreneurship in the emerging economies is very much in tune with past research, as identified by Sengupta and Sahay (2017) in their review of the social entrepreneurship phenomenon emerging from past research in the Asia Pacific context. They observed that a common consensus among past researchers, both in Asia-Pacific as well as on both sides of the Atlantic, had been that “social enterprises are hybrid enterprises with dual purposes of social value creation and market orientation, at varying degrees, to achieve a double bottom line of economic and social wealth”. History shows us the transition of these emerging economies from economic backwardness to sector specific and policy-oriented developments. The meaning and approach towards the acceptability of social entrepreneurship in each of these BRIICS countries have much to do with the deep rooted cultural, social, and political backgrounds of the people. Economic value creation has led to liberation of many from epidemics, social prejudices, and economic backwardness, suffered by people in the past. The complexity of issues faced by these countries are different from that faced by North American or European countries. It is important for future research to explore this construct further in each of the BRIICS countries to identify the dimensions, and come up with a scale to measure the economic value creation by social enterprises in emerging economies.

### **Collective endurance**

All the six BRIICS countries have their own history of political transitions, social transformations, and economic backwardness. The transition of Russia from a communist past to a capitalist present had been no easy journey, with the term ‘informal economy’ getting synonymous to the Russian economy (Gordin and Dedova 2015). India has a historical past sketched by external invaders, followed by colonization by the British, and then a transition to an independent democratic republic. When we talk about the VUCA environment today of the emerging economies (Roy and Karna 2015), India has experienced it historically. The consequence is a huge diversity of languages and social norms, thereby causing complexities in social acceptances. Indonesia had seen transitions from colonial occupation by the Dutch to dictatorship by Soekarno and Soeharto, from dictatorship to the current democracy (Idris and Hati 2013; Pratono and Sutanti 2016). That has resulted in limited freedom for entrepreneurship by indigenous people. Similarly, in the Russian context, business and social are perceived differently, thereby making social entrepreneurship a challenging proposition. China too had to go through ideological revolution from a communist state to a socialist market economy, which has built a social belief of non-profits having a higher purpose than businesses (Poon et al. 2009; Zhao 2012; Lan et al. 2014). Poverty and economic equality had also been a socio-economic struggle for long, which led to the inception of rural entrepreneurship in China. South Africa had to witness long struggle with Apartheid and then the epidemic of HIV/AIDS, apart from political transitions from a colony to a sovereign republic. The continuously fluctuating political and economic stability in the history of the country had led to a challenging environment for social entrepreneurship to grow (Karanda and Toledano 2012; Urban 2013; Urban 2015; Kahn 2016). While the historical events and struggles of political transitions of



these economies had framed deep rooted social norms and complex social issues for long, present situations pose challenges for social enterprises in these emerging economies. Those are in the form of deficit of national budgets, decrease in donor funding, fluctuating economic and social stability, failures of states in policy making and implementations, dominating social misconceptions, regulatory and taxation regimes, lack of market intelligence and linkage for underserved or non-served communities, mountain of neglected problems in powerless communities, barriers to mobility and social acceptances, complicated access to finance, lack of skills, gender discrimination, power relationships in institutional frameworks, and lack of legal definitions for social enterprises. These are some of the hostilities and barricades faced by social enterprises in all these emerging economies, which emerge from past research (Servon and Doshna 2000; Ardrey et al. 2006; Zhang and Miao 2011; Karanda and Toledano 2012; Mukherji 2014; Ghauri et al. 2014; Laine 2013; Haugh and Talwar 2016; Bhardwaj 2014; Gordin and Dedova 2015; Goyal and Sergi 2015; Roy and Karna 2015; Goyal et al. 2016; Kahn 2016). Social enterprises in these economies had been battling their way through these with a *collective endurance*, which is close engagement with the communities, considering them as stakeholders, building and connecting social capital, understanding and partnering with the society at large, all for sustainably generating social welfare and economic value.

### Future research opportunities

Each of these five constructs identified through this literature review can be huge areas of enquiry within the framework of social entrepreneurship in emerging economies, and needs to be explored in detail, for enabling a better understanding of the issues in the BRIICS countries. Though years of research has not led to final consensus on the definitional problem, there are certain characteristics which have come to be considered as common qualities of social enterprises (Daya 2014). One common characteristic is prioritizing social mission over wealth-maximization; the primary beneficiaries being marginalized people whose critical social or economic needs are met through socially sensitive business model, that balances market orientation and social value creation (Daya 2014; Sengupta and Sahay 2017). Without doubt, social entrepreneurship differs from the BOP (Bottom of the Pyramid) concept of Prahalad (2004), in which the BOP is considered as untapped and non-catered potential consumers for businesses, whereas a social enterprise is supposed to have a much more inclusive approach that considers the poor ‘consumers’ as ‘partners’ or ‘stakeholders’ in the business. Social entrepreneurship is not just about working ‘for’ communities deprived by traditional market-driven businesses, but ‘with’ those communities. In Brazil, social enterprises are ‘inclusive businesses’ where communities are partners and empowered to take charge of initiatives and activities of the enterprises. In India, community embeddedness through social innovation was widely practiced by Mahatma Gandhi. Social enterprises in India are also community-based; achieving women empowerment and emancipation from economic backwardness. However, this does not emerge repeatedly in other countries. In South Africa, ‘impact sourcing’ enables empowerment and employment of youth who would have otherwise been unemployable. Though human capital is an important dimension in the overall business and economic environment of emerging markets (Bello et al. 2016), ‘impact sourcing’ does not surface from social

entrepreneurship scholarly literature of other BRIICS countries; apart from mentions in some research papers of generating workforce from within the community so as to generate rich social capital.

In China, community welfare had been a core purpose of rural entrepreneurship, that gradually gave it the identity of social entrepreneurship. However, literature from other countries do not speak about social entrepreneurship emerging from rural entrepreneurship, despite the fact that agrarian sources of income and poverty issues had been common to all the emerging countries. The concept of Welfare NPOs in China, which are community-run, is an inclusive model where the community members are stakeholders in the enterprise. Though social enterprises in other emerging economies are community-driven as well, and not necessarily dependent on donations and government support, no evidence was found on what differentiates the Chinese Welfare NPOs from social enterprises in other emerging economies. South African social enterprises are frequently recognized as community entrepreneurs because they are driven by their background and personal life experiences.

Social entrepreneurship in South Africa is linked to social activism. But the review process did not show such relationship between social entrepreneurship and social activism in the context of other emerging economies. In post-colonial India, activism and advocacy had been instrumental in democratization of social issues and in bringing rural, lower-cast, and backward communities, and rural women, to mainstream discussions and social solutions (Nielsen and Nielsen 2016; Witsoe 2016). Activism in China is about questioning authoritarian regime and inefficient policy implementation and addressing critical issues in need of social change for the better (Distelhorst 2015). Brazil's National Health Council is known for human rights-based activism just as HIV activism by South Africa's TAC (Kenyon and Garcia 2016). Yet, the review could not find how social entrepreneurship is related or influenced by social activism in the other countries.

The historical background of all these economies reflect political transitions or movements for identifying solutions to conventional capitalist or non-democratic practices leading to structural shut-out of one populace at the cost of another. The role of governments (past and present) emerges repeatedly in the literature on all the six countries. The emergence of social entrepreneurship in Russia have linkages with the political past of Russia, the current policy and legal systems in the country, and the mafia-driven corruption. Similarly, in Indonesia, the overall environment had been congenial to welfare activities. Post-colonial India had seen the co-existence of socialist, communist, democratic, hard conservative, and soft conservative leaders, influencing the political thinking, social life, and public affairs of the masses (Guha 2017). However, no study was found on how social entrepreneurship in the Indian context is affected by the political environment in the country. China's earlier communist state leads to the perception that social enterprises should be not-for-profit. However, no literature was found on how the political past and present of these countries impact social entrepreneurs and their enterprises.

To address all the gaps, the future researchers may address the following research questions by conducting cross-country research in the BRIICS nations:

- 1) How do social enterprises across all the BRIICS countries create and sustain emancipation of the beneficiary communities from social and economic backwardness?

- 2) How do social enterprises across all the BRIICS countries use ‘Impact Sourcing’?
- 3) How is social entrepreneurship connected to rural entrepreneurship in all the BRIICS countries?
- 4) How do social enterprises across all the BRIICS countries differ from each other in their institutional frameworks?
- 5) How does social entrepreneurship and social activism co-exist in the context of the BRIICS countries?
- 6) How are social enterprises in the BRIICS countries affected by the macro-environmental factors?

## Conclusion

The objective of this integrative review was to explore conceptual perspectives surfacing from the past research on social entrepreneurship in emerging economies, create country-specific frameworks synthesizing past research in those country-contexts, suggest future research opportunities, and integrate the perspectives to suggest a social entrepreneurship framework relevant to emerging economies. The framework on social entrepreneurship in emerging economies accommodates different conceptions presented in past research, which qualifies it to be inclusive of the variations in the national and local social entrepreneurship practices in the six BRIICS countries. However, this framework is proposed, and needs to be researched in the context of the emerging economies. It is vital to have more empirical research with cross-country data collection and analysis for improving this framework and making it more relevant and closer to reality. It would be a necessary move towards a better understanding of the common ‘meaning’ and dimensions of social entrepreneurship in the BRIICS countries, so as to identify those unique characteristics that set them apart from other enterprise formats. Answering the suggested research questions for future research would be a good point to start for more refinement of the framework, and contribute to the development of the social entrepreneurship phenomenon.

**Acknowledgements** We thank all the past researchers/authors whose published works (articles, books) were reviewed for writing this paper; without their work, this article would have not come to existence. We also thank the anonymous reviewers whose valuable insights and comments have a significant role to play in finally making this paper a valuable read for future researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.

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