THINK INDIA JOURNAL

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22- Issue-14-December-2019

Rural Entrepreneurship Development: A Systematic Literature Review of Developing Countries

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ABSTRACT

Purpose -The purpose of this paper is to review and critique the extant body of literature on rural entrepreneurship and to develop a research agenda for future studies based on the identified trends and themes.

Design/Methodology/Approach–A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was undertaken across 96 journals ranked by the Association of Business Schools (ABS). The initial search yielded 86 papers. Further scrutiny of these studies led to the development of exclusion criteria, resulting in a refined list of 32 articles with advance understanding of rural entrepreneurship. Using an open coding approach, this SLR then identified seven core themes and 16 sub-themes which the extant literature examines.

Findings–This SLR finds that rural entrepreneurship research contributes to understanding of Creation of employment, Improving standard of living, Increase in income and creation of wealth, Increase in per capita income, Balanced regional development, Equitable distribution of economic power, Competition, Risk element, Creation of finance cells, Government schemes. Main elements of the resulting research agenda include calls for more quantitative research, further attention to context and more holistic treatment of a wider range of stories.

Originality/Value–This paper presents the first SLR of rural entrepreneurship research. It not only identifies, analyses and critiques the main streams in the literature, therefore providing an overview of the state of the field, but also highlights areas where these scholars contributes to understanding of entrepreneurship and upon which future research can be build. Rural entrepreneurship is thus established as worthy of investigation in its own right and as an appropriate context in which to explore entrepreneurial processes. Furthermore, this SLR presents an agenda for future research and to advance understanding of rural entrepreneurship.

Keywords: *Rural Entrepreneurs, Cultural and Creative Industries, Entrepreneurship, Small firms*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs play an important role in developing and contributing to the economy of nation. It is

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ISSN:0971-1260
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all more so in a developing country where there are ample opportunities for innovations to exploit the available resources and initiate entrepreneurial ventures. Entrepreneurship is integrally related to variables of environment, structure, strategy and leader personality and that these relationships vary systematically and logically from one type of firm to another (Miller, 1983) (Hisrich & O'Cinneide, 1985). The scientific interest, expertise and desire for learning and career development among the entrepreneurs may lead them to reverie and wish to implement ideas for innovation and organization renewal. The self- employed persons are associated with a business only because they are unable to find other forms of employment. Personal and family funds were the important sources of initial capital and for expansion they re-invested their earnings.

It is also observed that rural entrepreneur is not likely to exhibit any entrepreneurial qualities but urban entrepreneur demonstrate entrepreneurial qualities to some extent. Regarding economic development, social scientists recognize the importance of entrepreneurship as a major determinant for economic and social progress (Kilbey, 1971; Rao 1986). Awareness in respect of opportunities in self- employment and their images about the assistance available from the support agencies which pointed out that favourable climate needs to be created to promote entrepreneurship on a large scale among Science & Technology Personnel (Rao 1983; Sharma,1979). Certain entrepreneurship and strategic management principles, which have been proven applicable for the affluent western world, are also relevant to small scale rural farmers in the third world context who might be expected to struggle in abject poverty in order to scrape an existence (Kodithewakku & Sarath 1997). Entrepreneurship development in rural industries appeared to be the best possible alternative to find employment venues for them (R.K. Jena & Basantha Kumar 1989). In spite of the abundant natural resources, industrial development was slow mainly due to untapped entrepreneurial talent rather than due to lack of basic facilities and financial support. Timely action of the government need to accelerate the process of entrepreneurship development in India. (Deolankar 1984; Khan 1992; Rashid 1995).

This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) finds that entrepreneurship development research contributes to understanding of entrepreneurial importance of entrepreneurship in rural areas, factors influencing entrepreneurship development, problems faced in growth of rural entrepreneurs, and remedies to solve the problems of rural entrepreneurs. In its coverage of these main themes, this scholar provides timely insights into Creation of employment, Improving standard of living, Increases in income and creation of wealth, Capital, Labour, Raw materials, Market, Infrastructure, Paucity of funds, General job creators and Job providers and not the job seekers, Increase in per capita income, Balanced regional development, Equitable distribution of economic power, Competition, Middlemen, Legal formalities, Risk element, Lack of technical knowledge, Creation of finance cells, Concessional rates of interest, Proper supply of raw materials, Offering training facilities, Setting up marketing co-operatives, Government schemes EDC and Incubation centers, relationship between factors influencing entrepreneurship development and problems faced in growth of rural entrepreneurs and the coexistence of remedies to solve the problems of rural entrepreneurs (Fig.3).It also reveals characteristics which facilitate venture development, discovers the mutability of various forms of capital, highlights the necessity of studying diverse experiences

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ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22- Issue-14-December-2019

and identifies benefits and limits of typologies.

In reviewing and critiquing the entrepreneurship development literature, this SLR not only provides an overview of the state of the field, but also identifies areas where this scholars contributes to understanding of entrepreneurship and upon which future research can build. Entrepreneurship is thus established as worthy of investigation in its own right and as an appropriate context in which to explore entrepreneurial processes. Based on the analysis of the extant literature, this SLR also develops an agenda for future research. Main recommendations include pursuing longitudinal and quantitative research, devoting further attention to context and engaging in more holistic treatments of a broader range of cultural contexts and geographic areas. The next section of this paper presents the methodology adopted by this review, which is followed by the discussion of findings. Subsequently, conclusions are drawn and suggestions for future research directions are made.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs an SLR approach, which is well- established in entrepreneurship research (Henry and Foss, 2015; Korsgaard, 2013) and appropriate for consolidating literature published across a range of disciplines. Following the guidelines of (Tranfield et al. 2003), this study performed the steps outlined in Figure 1 to systematically analyse the rural entrepreneurship literature. Compared with traditional, adhoc literature reviews, the adopted approach significantly increases the validity, rigour and generalisability of resulting findings (Wilson et al., 2017). First, research objectives and conceptual boundaries were set.

As the principle aim of this study was to analyse and critique extant research on rural entrepreneurship development, it set out to evaluate themes and trends in the perspectives, methods, contexts and findings of this dispersed literature. To achieve this goal, a large range of disciplines and journals were investigated. Given that entrepreneurs cover many different fields, an inclusive definition was adopted. Drawing on Tregear (2005), this study defines rural entrepreneurs as individuals who produce and sell products or services which possess a distinct artistic value resulting from a high degree of manual input.

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ISSN:0971-1260
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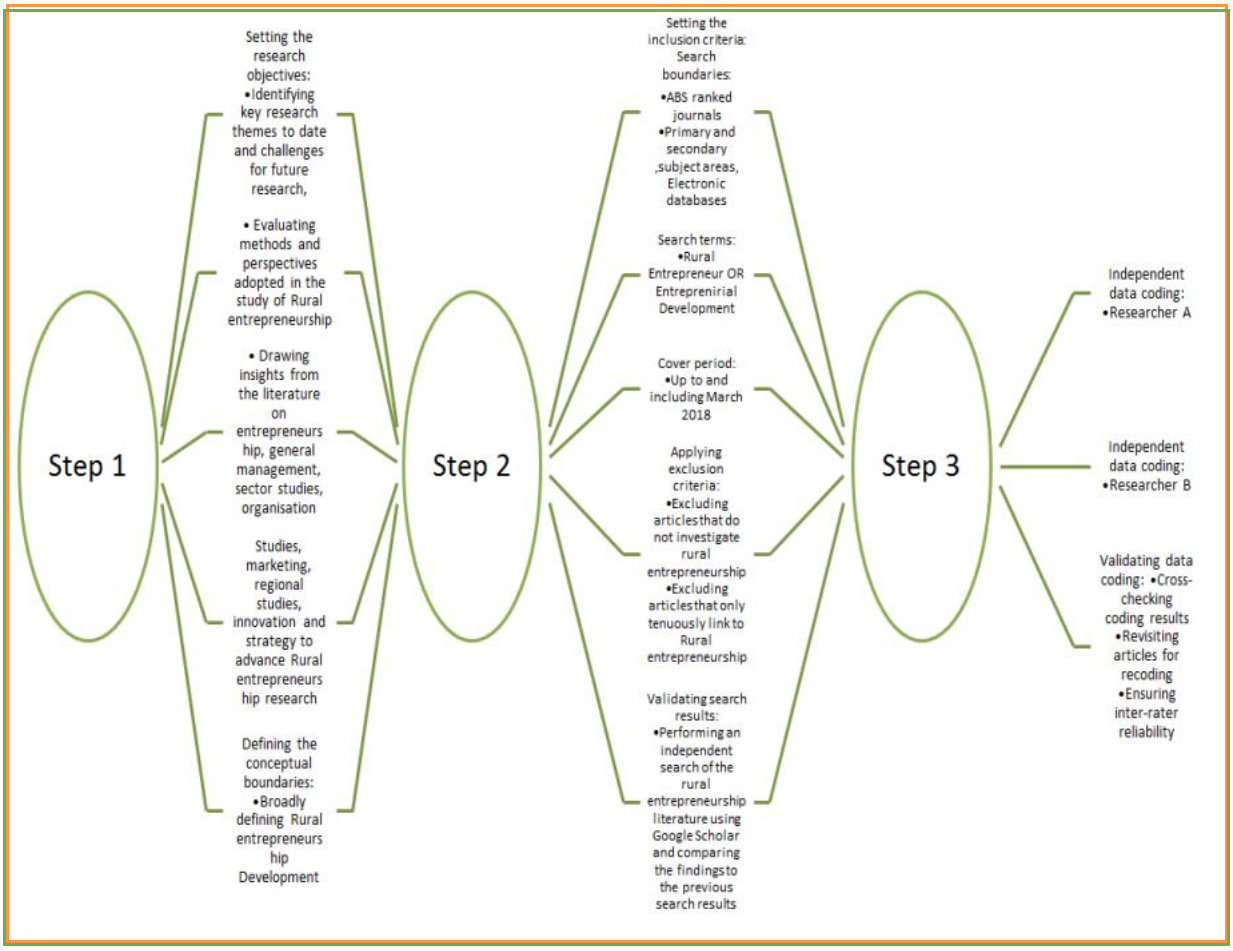

Fig.1. Steps Out line of Literature Review

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Several inclusion and exclusion criteria were employed to capture relevant, available research on rural entrepreneurship. Following the examples of other SLRs (Baldacchino et al., 2015; Wilson et al.,2017),the search was limited to articles published in journals ranked by the Association of Business Schools (ABS) Academic Journal Guide 2015 (Wood and Peel, 2015). While the ABS list has been criticised for various reasons, it has emerged as a widely accepted standard for journal quality and ratings (Rowlinson et al., 2011). Rather than limiting the search to entrepreneurship journals (Korsgaard,2013) or only the "big five" within this category (Henry and Foss, 2015), this SLR searched seven subject categories which were expected to feature rural entrepreneurship research: "Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management", "General Management, Rural Entrepreneurship", "Innovation", "Entrepreneurship Development", "Organisation Studies", "Regional Studies Planning and Environment", "Sector Studies" and "Strategy" .

Journals of high quality (i.e. those ranked at ABS) were targeted by this review, as articles published in these outlets are generally rigorously designed and of high standard (Baldacchino et al., 2015). Within the entrepreneurship category, journals ranked at ABS Grade 2 were also included to ensure

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ISSN:0971-1260
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that no relevant articles of an acceptable standard (Wood and Peel, 2015) were omitted from this search. Furthermore, two unranked journals, Craft Research and Journal of Modern Craft, were included because of their particular relevance.

As shown in Figure 2, full-text searches for the Boolean search terms "Rural Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Development" were first conducted in the 96 journals that met the inclusion criteria explained above. While searches of each journal's electronic database yielded over 5,000 initial results, less than 2 per cent of these articles (86 results) mentioned the search terms in their abstracts, titles or keywords, indicating that dedicated rural entrepreneurship research is relatively rare. This significant discrepancy was largely due to the diverse uses of the term "Rural", such as "rural development" or "rural planning". The remaining 86 articles were then studied to determine whether they did, in fact, contribute to knowledge of rural entrepreneurship, or only maintained a tenuous link to the subject, such as using large samples containing only a minority contingent of rural entrepreneurs (e.g. Andersén, 2012; Huang et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2004). Papers were independently screened by both researchers to ensure that all relevant articles were included in this review.

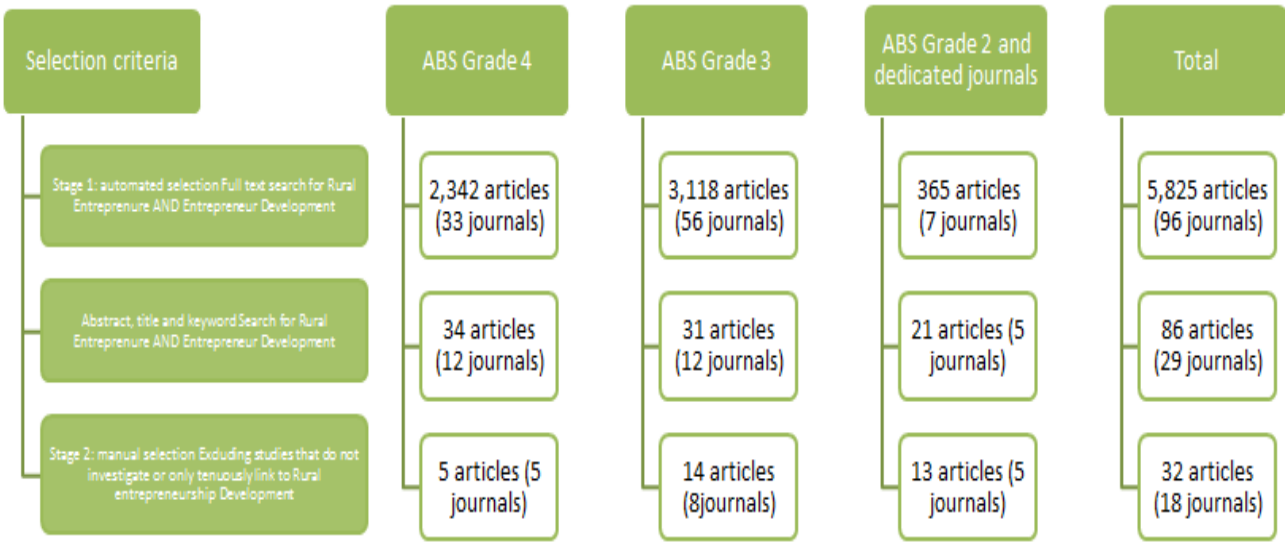

Fig. 2 Selection Criteria for and classification of journals

A total of 32 papers were selected based on this evaluation process. As suggested by Wilson et al. (2017), an independent search of Google Scholar was subsequently conducted to confirm the search results and to minimise the risk that the rigidity of the review process led to exclusion of relevant papers. Figure 2 provides an overview of the journals that published the articles included in the final sample, ordered by subject category. While this review is based on a relatively small number of studies, this was found to be a strength, rather than a weakness, as it enabled critical engagement with each study and the discovered themes (Korsgaard, 2013). Indeed, Baldacchino et al. (2015, pp. 214-215) advocate for small sample sizes in SLRs and argue that "what matters most is whether

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ISSN:0971-1260
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the topic is likely to be of interest to the field, the rigor of the search criteria in ensuring that the work is relevant and focused, and the scientific quality of the outputs identified." This SLR supports this view, finding that the application of strict selection criteria guaranteed that included studies were not only pertinent, but also of high quality.

Papers were coded using an "open coding" approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) to identify central themes. In order to ensure a high degree of inter-rater reliability, coding differences were discussed between the researchers and papers were re-visited until agreement was reached. As a result of this iterative process, seven central themes were identified which are examined in detail in the discussion of findings. These core themes divide into 16 sub-themes which represent specific subjects explored by rural entrepreneurship research. On average, each article in this review addresses three themes (a minimum of two and a maximum of five). The main goal of adopting this review technique was to the determine patterns in the extant literature and to identify gaps that require further investigation. These are discussed in relation to trends in publication, methods, contexts and themes.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this SLR are presented in this section. First, general trends in the literature are described, including publication distribution, research methods and approaches, and contexts and perspectives (see appendix for an overview of the 32 articles included in this review). Second, the core themes identified in the literature are discussed, ordered according to their degree of coverage.

Publication Distribution

Scholars have studied rural entrepreneurship for over 25 years (see Figure 3). The earliest article explores how entrepreneurial people make use of skills to create new markets (Kawaljeet Singh 2001). Although it investigated a subject that continues to attract academic attention (K. G. Karmakar and N.P. Mohapatra 2009; Arun Agrawal & Nicolas Perrin (2009), this founding study did not provoke an immediate debate within the academic community. Bhattacharya (1979) was among the first to respond to the call for more research into entrepreneurship development. This study, along with several that were published in its wake, has had a significant influence on current scholarly discussions. A Google Scholar search quantifies this impact, revealing the following papers to be the most frequently cited of those reviewed: Khan, 1992) at 356 citations, (Joseph & Pavlin, 1992) at 301 citations, (Brimmer, 1995) at 237 citations, (Rashid 1995) at 235 citations and (Lumpkin and Dess 1996) at 208 citations. Interest in rural entrepreneurship has significantly increased following the publication of these seminal articles, as demonstrated by the fact that two-thirds of the reviewed papers (n=22) were published in the last ten years.

Rural entrepreneurship research has been published in a number of highly ranked journals including Journal of Business Venturing (Smith et al, 1997), Journal of Rural Studies (Smallbone, 1995), International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research (Singh & Saeed, 2011) Asia Pacific Journal of Research in Business Management and (Stathopoulou et al, 2004) International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research. As might be expected, most papers (n=21) belong

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ISSN:0971-1260
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to the category Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management. The International Small Business Journal (n=5) and Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development (n=5) feature the highest number of relevant articles, followed by International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research (n=4). Surprisingly, no relevant articles have been published in highly rated journals covering "entrepreneurship development", "Rural Entreprenureship" or "employment generation". However, as several papers included in this review have advanced understanding in these areas (e.g. Danis and Andrew Shipilov 2002; Garavan et al, 1997; Gifford, 1998), it is expected that rural entrepreneurship research will gain more acceptance in these disciplines in the future.

Research Methods and Approaches

Several methodological trends were discovered by this SLR. Included articles are almost exclusively empirical in nature. Only Mathias and Smith (2015) provide a mostly conceptual discussion, in which they advocate for the use of autobiographies, revealing a dearth of purely conceptual papers on rural entrepreneurship. While this is common for an early-stage research field in the social sciences (Wilson et al., 2017), it is essential that scholars engage in more theoretical discussion to advance knowledge and provide conceptual guidance for future empirical studies. Within the reviewed empirical work, this SLR finds that the majority of studies adopt qualitative approaches (n=20), followed by mixed method (n=8) and quantitative approaches (n=3).

Main Theme	Creation of employment, Improving standard of living, Increases in income and creation of wealth, Increase in per capita income, Balanced regional development, Equitable distribution of economic power, Competition, Risk element, Creation of finance cells, Government schemes	
Sub Theme		Capital, Labour, Raw Materials, Market, Infrastructure, Paucity of funds, General job creators and job providers and not the job seekers, Middlemen, Legal formalities
		Lack of technical knowledge, Proper supply of raw, materials, Offering training facilities, Setting up marketing co-operatives, Concessional rates of interest, EDC and Incubation centers.

Fig.3 Conceptual Understanding for Rural Entrepreneurship

Qualitative studies in this review primarily implement multiple case study designs, though some do not state this explicitly (e.g. Drakopoulou Dodd et al., in press; Pret et al., 2016). While most of these studies (n=10) are cross-sectional, a growing number (n=6) adopt longitudinal designs (Flanagan et al.,2018; García-Rosell and Mäkinen, 2013; Pret and Carter, 2017) and explore changes in behaviours over time (Al-Dajani et al., 2015; Blundel, 2002; McAdam et al.,2014). The rich insights such studies generate suggest that additional longitudinal research should be undertaken. Furthermore, this

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ISSN:0971-1260
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SLR finds only three single case studies (Atalay, 2015; McAuley and Fillis, 2005; Warren, 2014) and one ethnography (Chu, 2016), indicating that there is a need for more research designs which allow for researcher immersion.

Regarding data collection techniques employed, all qualitative studies in this review draw on interview data, which most supplement with observations and review of relevant documents (e.g. Flanagan et al.,2018; Pret and Carter, 2017). Rarely does research in this field access historical accounts (Blundel, 2002) or utilise focus groups (García-Rosell and Mäkinen,2013) to generate data. Extant studies mostly employ grounded theory (e.g. Cater et al., 2017;Tregear,2005) or thematic analysis techniques (e.g. Al-Dajani et al., 2015; McAdam et al., 2014) and a growing number include their emerging first-order concepts and second-order themes to prove the validity and reliability of their findings (e.g. Kraus et al., in press; Pret et al., 2016). In comparison, linguistic-based approaches, such as narrative (Bruni and Perrotta,2014) and discourse analysis (García-Rosell and Mäkinen, 2013; Parry, 2010), are far less common. Similarly, content analysis of social media data (Drummond et al., 2018) is almost absent from the literature. Thus, such alternative data collection and analysis techniques are encouraged in order to penetrate the often informal and idiosyncratic worlds of rural entrepreneurs. Other unconventional approaches, such as metaphor (Drakopoulou Dodd, 2002), imagery (Clarke and Holt, 2017) and video analysis (Clarke, 2011), should also be adopted to advance understanding of rural entrepreneurial practices.The mixed method studies in this review can be grouped into two camps. First, there are those which conducted pilot interviews before distributing surveys (Bhagavatula et al., 2010; Kuhn and Galloway, 2015; Paige and Littrell, 2002). Second, there are studies which carried out a survey (Bouette and Magee,2015;Fillis,2004; McAuley, 1999; Reijonen and Komppula, 2007) or explored extant data sets (Danson et al.,2015) before following up with in- depth interviews. In both cases, designs could be improved by exploring temporal factors through longitudinal research, which was not found in any of the mixed methods studies reviewed here.

The quantitative studies in this SLR draw either on secondary data to perform longitudinal analyses (Esposti et al., 2017; Teixeira and Ferreira) in press or on surveys conducted at a single point in time (Getz and Petersen, 2005). Clearly, more research is needed in this vein to supplement and give context to these few data points. Given that qualitative approaches dominate in emerging fields, the small number of quantitative studies at this stage is unsurprising. However, the time has come to begin testing the theoretical constructs that have been developed, to check their applicability to wider populations and to draw generalisable conclusions. Encouragingly, while most studies in this review adopt positivist approaches, several recent papers (n=6) are set in alternative paradigms, namely, social constructivism (García-Rosell and Mäkinen, 2013; Parry, 2010) and interpretivism (Al-Dajani et al., 2015; McAdam et al.,2014; Pret and Carter, 2017; Pret et al., 2016). Such paradigmatic diversity is further encouraged, as a broad range of perspectives enables "debate, friction, creativity and ultimately new theories and understandings" (Grant and Perren,2002, p. 202).

Research Contexts and Perspectives

This SLR shows that rural entrepreneurship research has been conducted within a range of countries. The majority of studies in this review are set within India (n=19) and in particular the UK (n=10).

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ISSN:0971-1260
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Dedicated research in the USA (n=5) is far less common. It may be, as Shultz (2015, p. 458) suggests, that rurals have earned a higher reputation in Europe, where they are seen as providing "diversity and competition [to] the largest companies", than in the USA, where both academics and the general public are more interested in cultural elites (i.e. celebrities).As only ten studies explore rural entrepreneurship outside of western cultures, specifically in china (Chu, 2016), India (Sarwade and Balasheb, 2000), Nigeria (Kolawolw,O.D and Torimiro D.O (2005), Mexico (Yu,Li, Artz, & Georgeanne, 2009) and UK (Smallbone et al., 1995), there is a clear need for more research into a broader range of cultural contexts and geographic areas.

According to Smallbone et al., (1995), there is much that we can learn from studying the "activities of the desperately poor in the under developed "bottom of the pyramid" regions of the global south", as entrepreneurial motivations and behaviours can vary greatly in these contexts. Future studies could investigate what role culture plays in the values, beliefs and practices of rural entrepreneurs in these regions and compare their findings to research in western cultures. It could also explore how cultural change proceeds not only around rural entrepreneurs, but through their work (Mali (1998), and how they use culture to their advantage, rather than simply following its mandates (Chen (2001). As exchanges with customers become both more transnational and technology-reliant, it would be interesting to examine how rural entrepreneurs adapt to the changing needs of customers from different contexts and to the growth of the knowledge economy (Tulus Tambauan, 2000). (Liao and Sohmen, 2001) argue that the development of the rural entrepreneur has not been straight forward, and controversy resulted from the conflict between the expansion of the primarily, private sector and the decline of the dominant, state- owned economy.

Research that crosses national boundaries should therefore be encouraged, as only three studies in this review explore rural entrepreneurship across multiple countries (Kurba,2006; Chakraborty and Borman, 2014); Yu,Li, Artz, & Georgeanne, 2009). Regarding the different sectors that extant studies examine, this SLR finds that the majority of papers (n=19) explore multiple industries. Those studies that focus on a single sector investigate either brewing (n=5), food (n=4) or textile industries (n=4). Thus, given the range of entrepreneurs that are being practised, from such contemporary forms as teddy bear making (Pret et al., 2016) to traditional ones, like pottery (Desai & Hessels, 2008), understanding could be extended by future studies which conduct in-depth investigations of other types of Rural Entreprenurial Activities. This SLR also reveals that extant studies adopt a variety of perspectives from Creation of employment (n=6) Improving standard of living (n=6) Increases in income and creation of wealth (n=5), Capital (n=4), Labor (n=4), Market (n=4) Infrastructure (n=3). Paucity of funds(n=6), General Job creators and job providers and not the job seekers (n=6), Increase in per capita income(n=4), Balanced regional development(n=3), Equitable distribution of economic power(n=3), Competition(n=6), Middlemen(n=5), Legal formalities(n=4), Risk element, Lack of technical knowledge(n=5), Creation of finance cells(n=3), Concessional rates of interest(n=5), Proper supply of raw materials, Offering training facilities (n=6), Setting up marketing co-operatives(n=5), and Government Schemes EDC and Incubation centers(n=3) As such in Figure 3, this review shows that rural entrepreneurship is an ideal context for exploring a range of subjects from coopetition (Flanagan et al., 2018) to sustainable tourism (García- Rosell and Mäkinen, 2013) and emancipation

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ISSN:0971-1260
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(Bruni and Perrotta, 2014). Scholars from other disciplines should therefore consider conducting their research within the context of rural entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSION

Rural enterprises are an integral part of the cultural industries (Brouwer & Maria, 2002), which account for 1,600 billion dollars of commerce annually, representing 3.4% of global national product (Stathopoulou, et al.,2004).Consequently, broad range of studies have explored entrepreneurship in this sector from a variety of perspectives (Figure 3), such as Creation of employment (Selvaraj 2003; Dutta 2009), Improving standard of living (Jeremy et al., 2010) Increases in income and creation of wealth (Batra and Dangwal, 2006), Capital (Pawar, 1990), Labour (Rashid, 1995), Infrastructure (Kolawolw and Torimiro, 2005; Singh, 2010), Market (Sharma & Balamurugan, 2012; Srivastava and Syngkon, 2008), Paucity of funds (Kilbey, 1971; Sharma 1979), General Job creators and job providers and not the job seekers Hisrich and O'Cinneide, 1985; Wortman 1990), Increase in per capita income (Alistair, 1995; Attahir, 1997), Balanced regional development (Tambaunan,2000) Equitable distribution of economic power (Kurba, 2006), Competition (Leitch and Harrison,1999; Mohamed, 2001) Middlemen (Bachkaniwala et al., 2001), Legal formalities (Dutta,2009; Brimmer, 1995), Risk element, Lack of technical knowledge (Gaikwad and Tripathi, 1970; Berna 1960), Creation of finance cells (Bhattacharya,1984) Concessional rates of interest (Awasthi & Sebastian, 1996) Proper supply of raw materials, Offering training facilities (Shahadat and Mohammed 2006), Setting up marketing co-operatives (Saxena, 2007) and Government Schemes EDC and Incubation centers (Satish, 2010).

However, a comprehensive overview of the literature on this subject has, thus far, been missing. This SLR contributes to knowledge by systematically reviewing and critiquing research into rural entrepreneurship. Moreover, based on this analysis, it draws a number of conclusions from the extant literature and offers an agenda for future research, which includes a list of potential research questions that are worthy of investigation. The review of general trends in the literature revealed that interest in rural entrepreneurship has increased significantly over the last five years and that a large number of high quality journals have published relevant studies in this domain. However, there are still improvements to be made. Considering the dearth of conceptual papers on rural entrepreneurship, it is suggested that scholars engage in more theoretical discussions to advance knowledge and provide conceptual guidance for future empirical studies. Furthermore, this SLR recommends that research adopt more longitudinal designs to generate understanding of temporal factors and processes. As the majority of qualitative studies in this field conduct thematic analyses of interview data, more diversity in the adopted approaches (e.g. narrative, imagery and video analysis techniques) would be beneficial. More quantitative research is also highly encouraged so that extant theoretical constructs can be tested and generalizable conclusions drawn.

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ISSN:0971-1260
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