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# CONTOURS OF SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

## Abstract

In the heady days of 1989, with imperialism crumbling and the Cold War essentially ended, theoretical scientist Francis Fukuyama proclaimed that we were seeing the 'end of history', resulting in the rise of capitalist democracy and the free market, backed by a cascade of strong innovations. Fukuyama was building on Hegel's theories, but it did not come to an end, of course. Inclusive innovations are need of the hour. The society is burdened with a lot of social complex issues. These complex issues of society are mostly ignored from the innovation genre; however, millions are spent for the commercial innovation. Inclusive Innovations came to existence to serve the underserved. Social innovation construct is a new emerging phenomenon in literature and is gauging attention of scholars, academicians and practitioners. Its presence is in wide range of disciplines and journal. The intersection between innovation and sustainable development is attracting a lot of attention. Being an emerging phenomenon there is a lot of ambiguity around the construct. The objective of this study is to present the state of the art review and to synthesize the existing literature on social innovation. This study is motivated to define the contours of social innovation on the basis of existing literature and give a clearer image of Social Innovation.

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**Keywords** : Capitalist Democracy, Free Market, Social Innovations, Contours

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## Introduction

"Innovation" is a concept popularly used in contemporary European policy debates to respond to the intensity of global competition. Across different modes of creativity, the emphasis is primarily on technological and industry advancement, but less on social creativity. This essay explores the topic of social innovation in the sense of local practice in Hangzhou Region, with the goal of improving it. What's the connection between the thousands of millions and millions of people in India who have earned biometric ID cards, the hundreds of thousands marching in the streets of cities like Paris to oppose the privatization of pensions, and the millions of families getting conditional cash transfers in Latin America? Such activities establish different types of inter-sectoral cooperation, culminating in a variety of "popular denominator topic" (CDS) organizations that are funded by local government. Such activities adopt the ideals of collaboration and alliance and therefore establish a organizational framework for economic planning. In the review of such activities, this essay discusses the essence and characteristics of these activities. 'Civilizations are the result of human innovations' (Simms, 2006). Innovations has been taken for granted nowadays, however who could trust a few centuries ago that man can fly above the oceans. The term innovation imbibes creativity, betterment, growth of the civilization. The term innovations have evolved from its origin back in industrialization age.

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Innovation is the manifestations of the creative capacity of human kind. The literature on innovation was certainly invigorated by Schumpeter's, afterwards the construct has been evolved in different traditions such as technology, psychology, management and many more. Initially Innovation was in the socio-economic light it later on moved to more technological aspect. In the practical world innovations were in every sphere in management techniques, social movements, services, advertising techniques, teaching techniques etc.

Social norms and institutions are structures which promote cooperation between individuals. Social invention is an innovative process that improves the wellbeing of individuals that follow it relative to the status quo. We are modeling the complexities of collective interaction as a teamwork game played on a network. Individuals experimented with a novel approach that would maximize their payoffs given.

Lately, the world has become more conscious towards the societal responsibilities and sensitivity for cultural, environmental, societal, and other issues has emerged. This led to raise of few buzz words such as quality of life, sustainability, environment friendly, equality for all, and this made a shift in innovation from technological tradition. Howaldt and Schwarz (2010) introduced a new innovation paradigm and suggest that a new type of innovation has emerged - social innovation. There are other sorts of innovation terminology in boom such as Frugal Innovation, Jugaad Innovation, Gandhian Innovation, etc. The importance of social phenomenon in innovation is increasing and is widely accepted by academicians and practitioner as well. There is lot of interest is being shown in emerging concept of social innovation in both public and private spectres. The major social evils of all time like access to education, lack of health facility, lack of sanitization, unemployment, proper diet, protecting the environment, inequality etc are likely being proven intransigent by the any one particular strategy or approaches (Phills, Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008).

Sadly, these social, environmental, cultural issues are not fading away, instead it is proliferating. In a failing attempt of any single strategy, there is a need

of public, private and philanthropic collaboration. This complex situation is in need of innovative techniques, efficiently and effectively and this has given boosted the term social innovation.

The construct of social innovation is not fully developed in the research world, it is an emerging concept in the discipline of social sciences majorly (Westley, 2013). Social innovation can be seen in private, Public and NGO sector. Construct of social innovation is at times interchangeably used as social entrepreneurship or social enterprise etc (Antadze and Wesley, 2010). The difference between in these concepts are that social entrepreneurship is human oriented construct such as orientation and beliefs etc of any individual who wants to work on any social problem, where as social enterprise is an organisation set up with a social goal, and social innovation is moreover the tool of working towards and social problem (Sharra and Nyssens, 2009). Authors at times had described social innovation as "holy grail" because human civilization has always seen a lot of innovation worth of billions being inconsiderate of the social significant value, and social innovation majorly focuses on the social significance (Seelos and Mair, 2012). Which innovations are social innovation still remains a relevant question in the academia some authors believe that Social Innovation is totally different then the technological or management innovation and also requires different process and model (Bignetti, 2011). Second school of thought thinks social innovation are interrelated with other technological innovations (Bulutet.al, 2013). And there are authors who believe that Social Innovation is furor or very dubious construct to define its contours (Pol and Ville, 2008). European Union considered social innovation as a major change maker in social dimension and is a part of policy making in EU. Some authors has mentioned aspects of Schumpeter's theory of innovation but not considered it as starting point, where as some authors take his theory as base for social innovation. Commercial and other innovation are proliferated in the society, well read and explored in the research field, and has been availed a huge chunk of money as well. Whereas social innovation in its infancy yet, despite of serving a greater significance. This paper will try to do contouring of the construct.

## Conceptualisation

Table 1 : Literature Conceptualisation

| Author                              | Conceptualisation   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Bhatt and Altinay, 2013             | Social Innovation are those innovation which are created by and diffused by social enterprises, in order to fill the gap left unmet by the institutions.  |
| Howaldt, and Schwarz. 2010          | Social innovation need not be necessarily in the form of technological innovation it could be in any other form such as cultural, environmental, economical etc.  |
| Mulganet.al, 2007                   | Social innovation could be activities or services which are motivated to solve any social problem of society, and it should be diffused through the organisation whose primary goal is social.  |
| Centre for Social Innovation (2014) | Creating, developing, adapting and integrating the new concepts and practices which puts the planet or the people first are Social Innovations. Social Innovations are in force to solve the social, environmental, cultural and economical problems. To provide a long term and sustainable result Social Innovation are those changing system which alters the perception, behaviours and structures permanently which causes the social issues. Social Innovations could take place in different sectors such as for profit, non for profit or philanthropic etc and could be contributed by groups, individual or organization etc. |
| The Bureau of European Policy       | Advisors (BEPA), 2010 "innovations that are social both in their ends and in their means" and argues they are an effective way to "empower people" and "drive societal change"  |
| Mumford, 2002                       | Social innovations are widespread and it involve multiple factors. The outcomes of Social Innovation vary in the terms of depth and impact as it is in the case of any other innovation.  |
| Howldt et.al, 2014                  | Social innovation has many meanings at times they conflicting to each other, the construct is spread over many areas such as management research, organisational research, innovative studies, sustainable development, social economy, could be seen in local competitiveness or territorial development. This could lead to multiple frameworks for the construct.  |
| Phillips et.al, 2014                | Social innovation and social entrepreneurs are interlinked, and innovation theory is not the base for social innovations. Institutional theory creates social Entrepreneurship as a base for Social Innovation.   |
| Zapf, 1989                          | Author states that Social Innovation's productivity is impacted by the human touch or symbolic resources, whereas technological innovation's productivity is based on the administration of the physical energy and materials.  |

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| The Young Foundation, 2012 | "Social innovations are new solutions(products, services, models, markets, processes, etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and/or better use of assets and resources." In other words these innovations are beneficial for society and to enhance the capacity of society as well. |
| Heiscal, 2007              | Social Innovation are modification in the existing normative structure, Cultural structure, or regulative structure of any society, in order to enhance its capabilities an improvement in economic and social performance.  |

Source : Literature

### Attributes of Social Innovation

As seen above from the literature Social Innovation is a very vague concept, as Social Innovation is a multi disciplinary construct. This paper will try to find attributes of social innovation so that measurement of social innovation could be done. Following are the different aspects of social innovation.

- A. **Need for Social Innovation:** There are so many social, cultural, or environmental issues of society in a need for sustainable solutions. Horizons of social innovation are broad. It is generally said that need of social innovation occurs where the institutional gap of serving the under served is huge. But there are research proving that social innovation's role is greater than mere serving the institutional gap by solving the problems, as it is also creating capabilities to stop the social issues from origins. According to Mulgan, 2006 Deficit of social innovation occurs in many arenas such as : Ageing populations, in societies where there is lot of Diversity in culture and traditions in order to maintain harmony, in healthcare sector, in psychological sector fighting the evils such as depression, anxiety etc., with teenagers transition, emancipations of ex criminals, in climate change etc.
- B. **Form of Social Innovation:** Innovation could be in form of products, processes, markets and organizational models(Drucker, 2002). One school of thought takes innovation as the base for social innovation and other school of thought believe both are different hence social innovation will be in different forms then the technological innovation. As per the Young Foundation, 2012 Social Innovation could be in any form while meeting the social need, such as products, services, models, markets, processes, etc. Social innovation can majorly be seen in product / content dimensions, Process Dimension and Empowerment Dimension (Moulaert et al, 2005).
- C. **Scale of Social Innovation:** Social Innovations can be seen in the form of Innovative performance or an organizations innovativeness. Being a vague concept scale is myriad too. Innovativeness can be measured at any scale be it individual, organizational, national and transnational (Gopaldas, 2015). According to Bundet et al, 2015 Social innovation as well can be at multiple scales such as Macro, Meso and Micro level (National, Regional and Municipal).
- D. **Platform of Social Innovations:** Social Innovations are historically seen as an outcome of those individuals wanting to bring changes in the world, serving the society. The need might arise from the discontentment of existing situation or lifestyle. The world has seen some very renowned individuals in social innovation's zone such as Nobel Prize winner Mohammed Yunus, Waangarimathai etc. There are social innovations happened in a group or in movement as well such as wave of feminism, environmentalism etc. In these cases, pointing origin is difficult as they have involved millions of people and many

leaders of these far reaching movements. Individuals are the carrier for social innovation as they plant a seed of Idea, and then SI could be diffused by Groups, Private organizations, Public organizations, Philanthropic organizations, Movements or in Policies and planning.

- E. Stages of Social Innovations :** Stages of social innovations are moreover same as any other innovation's stages. The process starts from the generation of Ideas which arises by identifying the needs, this process is very complicated as social problems are very different and vast and are mostly subjective. After identifying the needs and potential solutions of these needs, a workable Idea is generated. Second stage is Developing, Prototyping and Piloting Ideas this stage could be time taking one, developing and prototyping the idea is not an end, this might not be successful in real world. Piloting becomes necessary here before implementation. Third stage is Assessing, scaling up, and Diffusing good ideas After successful piloting, this stage needs strategy and skills to scale up the Idea. Diffusion of Idea can happen through franchising, adapting, replicating etc. fourth stage is Learning and Evolving as any other innovation this also continues to change. In a dynamic environment any innovation needs a continues improvement. (Mulgan, 2006)

## Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship

As per many definitions social innovations are diffused through social enterprises or the businesses whose main objective is social. These two concepts are generally used interchangeably, where as social entrepreneurship is one of the platforms for social innovation. Social Innovation could be developed in private sector, public sector or governmental sector and on any scale such as individual, group or movement. Whereas Social entrepreneurship is a skill set of an entrepreneur to solve any social issue. And social enterprise is a for organization with the primary motive of solving any social issue. The common ground between all these terms are the institutional Gap, Social

Problems, Providing solutions. The nature of existence is different for all these terms. Bibliometric study of social innovation concludes that social innovation and social entrepreneurship are closely interrelated on the basis of their key word analysis of the construct (Silveria and Zilber, 2017). Whereas some authors consider social innovation as one of the attributes of social entrepreneurship (Bedi and Yadav, 2019). There are variations in the concept of social enterprises between Western nations and the United States, both because of discrepancies in the nature of each country and because of the position performed by the government. In the U.S., the non-profit industry has developed a collaborative approach to tackle socioeconomic problems in urban areas. Socially-oriented businesses and non-profit organizations. In the other side, because of the European tradition of the collective market, social problems are most frequently dealt with by cooperatives in Europe. Nevertheless, many forms of social service groups often operate in a number of ways. Citizens and the State of each nation value social enterprises and the EU has provided an atmosphere in which social enterprises will prosper. Both in the U.S. and in Europe, social ventures have lately arisen and have taken different forms to address the varied societal demands that cannot be addressed through traditional means. The 1990s witnessed global societal issues such as environmental concerns, violence in developed nations, human rights abuses, homelessness, and questions about how to create a prosperous, evolving world. As the need for CSR has grown, the organization is required to be socially conscious and tackle social problems through its core business and philanthropy efforts. There are also founders in social entrepreneurship in Japan, but their numbers are not increasing. After 2000, several individuals have formed organizations to help social projects and/or to research global issues (Tanimoto, 2008).

## Impact of Social Innovation

Social Innovation has speeded its wings across different sectors, which creates myriad of frameworks for assessing its impact. As per Hiescala, 2007 Social Innovation impact the institutional framework of any society, it could bring change in any of the structure such as

cultural structure, normative structure or regulative structure etc. Social innovation provides a sustainable solution to social problems, the impact can be seen in reducing the social evils or at times eradicating the social issues. In Russia, social innovation has resolved many social problems and was beneficial for the society as a whole, often its impact is seen as public good (Pole and Ville, 2009). Some of the authors has seen the impact of social innovation is improvement in quality of life, creating the market, labor market integration, etc. Social innovation is a one of the inclusive innovations and hence impacting the development and growth of societies in a sustainable manner. There could be a short-term outcome and a long-term impact in transformation of society through these innovations.

## Discussion

Addressing the environmental problems of the 21st century needs major improvements in the way contemporary culture views and maintains habitats. In particular, several scholars argue that the radical restructuring of the predominantly sectoral, expert-centered ecosystem-management systems of modern Western societies is required. There is a growing emphasis on a more flexible, interconnected, collective strategy. The growing prevalence and acceptance of the notion of social disruption is partially a result of and reaction to difficult and tumultuous times. The threats posed by existing national welfare programs are numerous and varied: long-term economic instability and ever-increasing global economic competition; growing gaps and rising or decreasing living standards for all. Social technologies to deliver services to disadvantaged people have emerged in a number of nations, where governments, elected authorities and social pioneers have sought to create innovative solutions to a range of underserved or unmet needs (Ewert and Evers, 2014). Considering the dynamic challenges and circumstances under which it operates, the care sector is increasingly threatened by every discrepancy between rising and diversifying demands and insufficient public policy resources. As a consequence, this is an environment where social creativity has become exceptionally vivid and creative. Global

developments involve numerous innovative and motivating projects from around the globe that tackle challenging and profoundly disturbing social problems. If it is offering support and housing to those who become homeless; helping to restore the lives of individuals suffering from addiction; introducing healthcare, community and elegance to deprived neighborhoods and belittled communities. Offering fellowships and innovative ways to study, function and relate to oppressed and socially vulnerable communities needs appreciation for the tremendous good that social developments have achieved. Social technologies blend the creativity and ambition of their designers and supporters with innovative approaches to adapt to social problems.

There has been lot of talk about it being an enduring term or mere a Buzz word. After synthesizing the literature Social Innovation seems to be the innovation which will resolve any social problem or stop it from initiation only. It could be any form (Idea, Content, Process, product or movement etc.) as long as it is serving the purpose i.e. solving or controlling the social problem. These innovations can be platformed by many organizational structures with the primary motive being serving the societal problems. Need of social innovation arises in many arenas of society and myriad of opportunity exists for these innovations in society. Social innovation being a part of public policy could also serve any society as it happened in Russia. However, one particular measure for measuring social innovation is yet to be explored, this could be taken up in further research on the construct. Urgent demands for "innovation" have become more common as citizens continue to understand both the necessity for a profound shift in interpersonal interaction with each other and their world, and the disastrous effects of failure or ill-informed actions as to how such transition might be affected. Nevertheless, change from awareness to practice is sometimes slowed by a lack of capacity to move ideas and information across fields, "thinking environments" and backgrounds, and an unwillingness to coordinate intervention through borders and sizes that characterize a social structure. Social networks provide new platforms for accelerated recruitment and diffusion of information and may thus play a key

role in this process. The big issue is how and how social networks will help promote developments that transcend the apparently insurmountable chasms that distinguish local approaches from the large transformation of the system; that is, whether they support "cross scale" developments. Using a nuanced lens to consider the meta problems confronting the planet, and using a systemic innovation paradigm to illustrate how local creativity expands in order to achieve large organization impacts, this paper suggests that centralized entrepreneurship strengthens the awareness of the networked entity. We concluded that even being a new and emerging phenomenon social innovation could be of great impact for nations. By the end of discussion, we came to conclude social innovation is an enduring term and could lead to sustainable development or transformation of societies.

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