

# JOURNAL OF BRICS



# STUDIES

Volume 4 ★ Number 1 ★ July 2025

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Editorial

# Making BRICS Work for its People and for those in the Global South

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Guest Editor

Since 2009 and more specifically in the past five years, there has been growing global fascination with the burgeoning BRICS as many countries express interest at its membership. From five to ten nations after the Johannesburg Summit of 2023, BRICS Plus (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Plus Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates), BRICS Plus has become a formidable global multilateral powerhouse with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over \$28,5 trillion (28% of global GDP) and a combined population over 3.5 billion people (45% global population).

BRICS has prioritised its operations to be pegged against its three main pillars of cooperation, i.e., (a) Political and Security Cooperation, (b) Finance and Economic Cooperation, and (c) Cultural and People to People Cooperation. (3.5 billion people). To date, one of the boldest initiative distinguishing BRICS from all other multilateral formations outside of the United Nations (UN) system include the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB). Outside of the NDB, there are numerous initiatives coming of the annual declarations which are adopted by the heads of states at the various BRICS Summits.

This special issue was conceived out of the 2nd BRICS Research Institute Conference co-hosted between the University of Kota from and Durban University of Technology that took place between 13th and 15th February 2023 at the University of Kota in India. The conference keynote address and opening were delivered by the honourable Vice Chancellor of the University of Kota, Professor Dr Neelima Singh. The theme of the conference was *"Growth and Sustainability of Livelihoods in the BRICS countries: Knowledge Sharing in Social Justice, Governance, and Multilateralism,"* and the primary objective of the conference was to solicit contributions from BRICS scholars regarding advancements made by BIRCS in the themes of: (1). *Entrepreneurship and development research;* (2). *New Development Bank – as a Catalyst for the BRICS Economic Growth and Development;*(3). *Climate emergency and challenges for BRICS countries;* and (4). *BRICS people-to-people exchange and cultural integration through tourism and air transport.*

A total of 203 abstracts were received towards this conference as follows: 63 for the theme of *Entrepreneurship*, 62 towards *New Development Bank – as a Catalyst for the BRICS Economic Growth and Development;* 46 to *climate emergency* and 36 towards *BRICS people-to-people exchange and cultural integration.* A total of 40 full papers were received post conference and subjected to double-

blind peer review process by an esteem team of BRICS scholars. A total of eleven papers that went through the double-blind peer review process made it to this publication on the basis of their quality.

In this publication, papers are clustered in only three main themes which are (a) Climate emergency and challenges for BRICS countries, (b) BRICS and COVID-19, and (c) Entrepreneurship and future perspectives in BRICS.

Given the rapid developments within BRICS and thus related data, it is an achievement that this special issue comprises papers that result from both primary research as well as literature reviews and secondary sources. The papers have been selected to represent aspects of the challenges and opportunities that are part of BRICS and aim at giving the reader a holistic insight as to how BRICS academics approach these topics. Moreover, the reader is invited to use their critical thinking in comparing and identifying synergies between the different papers which not only allows them to gain a more holistic yet detailed understanding of issues and opportunities within the BRICS framework but also allows them to exercise in a way, a more multilateralist approach in understanding by being invited to take a more active role when engaging with the literature. Since the conference in 2023 and as of October 2024, BRICS has expanded to becoming BRICS+ with the additions of Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia; surpassed the GDP of the G7; expressed strong intentions of de-dollarization, received 34 formal expressions of interest to join BRICS+, paving the way to a new inclusive multilateralism never seen before.

The BRICS Research Institute is at the forefront of producing unique scholarly research output, which is of paramount importance in the paradigm shift the world is currently experiencing. As the saying goes "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity."