

Innovation *in* India

Combining Economic Growth
with Inclusive Development

Edited by
Shyama V. Ramani



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Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-107-03756-4 — Innovation in India
 Edited by Shyama V. Ramani
 Frontmatter
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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
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 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107037564

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First published 2014

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Innovation in India : combining economic growth with inclusive development /
 edited by Shyama V. Ramani.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Summary: "Examines the evolution of sectoral system of innovation in industries that are important to India's economic development"-- Provided by publisher.

ISBN 978-1-107-03756-4 (hardback)

1. Technological innovations--Economic aspects--India. 2. Economic development--India. I. Ramani, Shyama V.

HC440.T4I563 2014

338.954--dc23

2013038168

ISBN 978-1-107-03756-4 Hardback

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I would like to dedicate this volume to
All the contributors of this book and their families,
And in particular to my own family and parents -
Kalyani and M.S. Venkataramani,
And to my cheer-leading team: Raji, Raja, Divya, and Vivek.

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Prologue

This collective volume is a testimony to how an informal network bound by a common motivation can generate an innovation – namely, this book! It all started with a visit to New York in 2005 at the invitation of Professor Claude Henry of the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris. He told me that Professor Richard Nelson was organising a meeting with Professor Jeffrey Sachs to get economists together to discuss how technology and innovation could contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and that I would certainly enjoy the brainstorming. Dick, as Professor Nelson is fondly called, is one of the fathers of evolutionary economics and the national system of innovation approach – subjects I knew only by name at that time. The meeting was fascinating. I had never before gone to a meeting with so many economists to simply brainstorm and debate about what would be good to study. After listening to Dick, I have become his devoted disciple. I totally loved his style of teaching and his generosity in imparting knowledge and holding stimulating discussions. I began to work with him and Franco Malerba, one of his many loyal students, on a book dealing with sectoral systems of innovation in a set of developing countries¹. Now, Dick did not just solicit authors to submit chapters. He organised meetings and there was a lot of debate on the contents and it was a collective process of knowledge generation, coordinated by him and Franco. I learnt a lot from working with Dick. And it just occurred to me that we should be doing something similar on India.

Why did I want a team? Well, India is a big country. It has a lot of industries and a lot of poor people. The dynamics of innovation generation is different in different sectors, and when targeting different communities. This multidimensional subject cannot be deeply analysed by only one scholar. It requires a team and a collective process of knowledge generation.

¹ Franco Malerba and Richard Nelson (editors), *Economic Development As a Learning Process: Variation Across Sectoral Systems* (Edward Elgar, 2012).

Right from 2006, I started talking to those who I thought might be interested in working on this book. They were academics I met in different conferences, especially GLOBELICS², which is the main international meeting place for scholars interested in sharing ideas on how technology and innovation can spur development and growth. But I did not have money to organise meetings. I had no research contracts. I just had strong intentions. So the process of putting the book together has been somewhat slow. There were some wonderful takers and a few leavers. Indeed, every individual who has contributed a chapter to this book is a scholar who was personally motivated to do it too – who believed that it is a good idea to explain the dynamics of innovation generation in India to the world! So this book is the fruit of cooperation between a set of academicians who were spread over three continents but managed to work as a team off and on for four years, exchanging ideas over emails, and intermittent meetings, to bring out the present volume with its detailed examination of the Indian innovation system. I would like to thank all the contributors for their wonderful work, and particularly Gita and Smita for egging me on when I felt like giving up!

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Cambridge University Press team and the editors Sana Bhanot and Suvadip Bhattacharjee for their kind support throughout!

Last but not the least – thanks Dick for your enthusiasm!

² <http://www.globelics.org/>