

Book Review

Policy Perspective on Innovation and Sustainable Development

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Innovation and Sustainable Development is a theme that has attracted much attention in the recent decade. Innovation can contribute to sustainable development, particularly, in the context of climate change and sustainable development goals (SDG). Hence, it has lately become the topic of much research and debate. Unless sustainable development is discussed in terms of specific issues, linkage between innovation and sustainable development cannot be clearly understood. In theory and practice, there is a need for context -specific analysis and policies connecting innovation with sustainable development.

The edited book titled “Policy Perspective on Innovation and Sustainable Development” is the fourth volume in the ‘India S&T Book Series’; brought out by CSIR-NISTADS under its project “Indian S&T and Innovation Policy (ISTIP)”, and the first volume under the newly launched NISTADS Tracks in Policy Research (NTPR).

The book is divided into five broad parts, each representing a sub-theme —. Part 1: Regional Innovation System; Part 2: Industrial and Sustainable Innovation; Part 3: Traditional Knowledge, IPR and Informal Innovation; Part 4: New Opportunities: Policy and Perspective; and Part 5: MSME: New Opportunities and Challenges. But all the parts are not connected, and nor all of them deal with innovation and sustainable development. As a result, there is no narrative that unites parts or chapters within a specific domain. Some chapters have no mention of sustainable development and innovation. Even discussion is missing in the case studies/themes covered in the context of innovation and sustainable development ;take Part I as an example.

Part 1 on Regional Innovation System reflects upon the importance of regional innovation system and the underlying institutional networks in varied regional contexts such as textile cluster in Surat, dairy industry in Anand, start-ups in Bengaluru, horticulture sector in Jammu and Kashmir and Bamboo industry in the North-Eastern region. Chapter 1 by Tabassum *et al* highlights dynamics of textile cluster of Surat and discusses reasons for its lacking global competition, despite there is a comparative advantage in terms of labour. The authors argue that lack of product as well as organizational innovation culture in the region are the main reasons behind the below par export performance. Rais and Kuruvilla in Chapter 2 discuss important role played by Amul in the transition of Indian dairy industry and factors behind the success. They highlighted the importance of the institutional innovation along with the product and process innovations in bringing about this transformation. Chapter 3 by Bala Subhramanya provides an in-depth analysis of the factors behind emergence of Bengaluru as an entrepreneurial hub and the role played by innovation ecosystem in that. Chapter 4 by Sheeraz Ahmed highlights potential of horticulture sector in J&K and steps required thereof. The author emphasized the importance of forging connectivity among actors and ensuring forward and backward linkages. Yogesh Suman *et al* in Chapter 5 discussed regarding Bamboo industry in the North-East and pointed out challenges and suggested ways to promote it by making entrepreneurs to access available technologies and skills for producing quality products not only for domestic markets but also to capture international markets.

But in the absence of a conclusive summary, which on the basis of the case studies could link Regional Innovation System with sustainable development or with innovation and sustainable development, Part I reads more of a collection of case studies lumped together under some rubric. In fact the editors could have used available literature on the Regional Innovation System and sustainable development to argue that Regional Innovation System(s) in India can contribute to sustainable development and could have suggested policy measures to facilitate their contribution. They could have drawn on the policy suggestions listed in each chapter.

To cut a long story short, this is equally applicable for the other parts as well.

The final Chapter 23 'Perspective ' even though gives some general conclusions but does not add much value to theory or practice.

This edited Volume has a collection of different sectoral case studies but in the absence of an overarching and unifying theme, they remain just case studies and hence are of lesser relevance for policy- making. As a result the publication fails to provide a coherent set of policy perspectives on the themes/issues discussed in the chapters. There are at least two chapters related to traditional knowledge but offers nothing as a policy perspective on traditional knowledge. So is the case with agriculture, MSME and textiles. Thus in terms of value addition to the debate on innovation and sustainable development, it contributes very little to the already available literature.

The volume can be a good reference reading for policy- makers, academic, researchers, who are searching for case studies to have some ideas regarding them.

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