IndiaLICS International Conference 2025

INDIA'S INNOVATION SYSTEM: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

DECEMBER 11-13,2025

CALL FOR PAPERS

Organised by

SCIENCE POLICY INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF KERALA

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Concept Note

IndiaLICS is the India chapter of Globelics, an international network of scholars who apply the concept of Learning, Innovation, and Competence-building System (LICS) as a framework for promoting inclusive and sustainable development in developing countries, emerging economies, and societies in transition. The 2025 IndiaLICS Conference will focus on global perspectives on India's Innovation System.

The global economy is passing through difficult times. Economic growth prospects are weak, and sustainability and inclusivity are under question. Global governance institutions are crumbling, and global public goods are increasingly being usurped by the private sector. Innovation monopolies are ruling the roost. The corporate sector operates across national boundaries without paying taxes, while receiving huge amounts of subsidies and tax concessions. Monopoly innovation firms are increasingly encroaching upon areas such as agriculture and even space technologies. This kind of emergence of the global innovation system has created a high degree of inequity and has dramatically changed the production system, where the employment of human labour is not only shrinking but also changing the organization of work into a digital platform. It has altered the definition of the worker, and the worker with capital earns meagre earnings, while profits are pocketed by the platform owners. The substitution of the human mind with artificial intelligence has far-reaching impacts and severe implications for the education sector. In this backdrop, the critical issues faced by the national innovation system in theory, practice, and policy are a matter of great concern for scholars of innovation and development studies.

Although India is projected as one of the bright spots in a crisis-ridden global economy, its innovation system is still in its infancy and is transitioning under the huge burden of challenges in shifting from an agrarian to a developed country. India has reached lower-middle-income country status, despite three and a half decades of vigorous economic reforms. This is precisely because of the lack of industrialization. However, India's pace of technological improvement is relatively slow, despite several new initiatives such as Public Digital Infrastructure, Unified Payment Interface, and the revolution in digital technologies. The rapidly expanding start-up ecosystem has also added to India's strength as a global player in innovation, making it the third-largest start-up ecosystem in the world. The success of these new initiatives and their impact need serious examination so that challenges faced can be addressed in time. The recent policies of India, such as the Atal Innovation Mission, Digital India, and Skill India, have pushed the industrial and innovation capabilities of India toward achieving a knowledge economy. However, their efficacy needs to be investigated.

India's recent efforts in the G20 and BRICS to bring innovation to the central agenda have encouraged countries to ponder the significance of addressing grand challenges through joint efforts. India has brought to international attention significant and emerging discourses on SDGs, green development and Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE), technological transformation, reforming multilateral institutions, and women-led development.Several strategically important industries, complemented by academic centres of excellence and government support, have systematically shaped and built a resilient innovation system in India. The key sectors shaping India's role as a significant player in the global innovation system are fintech, healthcare, green technologies, biotechnology, agritech, pharmaceuticals, and space. India's fintech industry has advanced to the extent of adopting emerging technologies such as blockchain and digital banking. Landmark innovations within the sector, such as paperless lending, secure payment gateways, and mobile banking, have helped shape the face of India's digital revolution.

The Indian pharmaceutical sector is also one of the strongest in the world, especially in the production of vaccines and generic medicines. Despite global disruptions caused by the COVID- 19 pandemic, India's pharmaceutical industry remained steadfast in supplying vaccines across the world. Fifty per cent of the global demand for vaccines is met by the Indian pharmaceutical industry. In terms of green technology, the country has been at the forefront of innovation in green energy generation and green technology deployment. India's recent efforts to advance solar energy through the International Solar Alliance have succeeded in bringing countries together and prioritizing the green transition. Within the green sector, innovation in the EV industry—such as EV manufacturing, battery technology, and charging infrastructure—is becoming increasingly robust.

As agriculture remains a significant sector, industrializing it through agritech is the need of the hour. Precision farming, drone-based monitoring, and AI-driven solutions have considerably strengthened the sector. All these initiatives need examination to assess how far they have promoted inclusiveness and sustainability. India's pathways to building monopolies with minimal regulation have created the highest levels of economic inequality. Are the new monopoly businesses engaging in the right kind of innovation? This is an area that warrants investigation, and scholarly contributions will shed light on this question. India's evolution in mission-oriented innovations regarding space technologies is quite impressive, but their use in establishing India as a leading player in the space innovation system—with robust technological capabilities and sectoral policies—is the need of the hour. Scholarly contributions in the areas of national, regional, sectoral, and meso innovation systems are required to inform policymaking for a sustainable and developed India.

Nonetheless, for a complex country like India, commonly used indicators of innovation—such as gross domestic expenditure on R&D, R&D expenditure by business enterprises, the number of research papers, and the number of researchers in science and engineering—are not sufficient to assess the opportunities and challenges in innovation. These indicators do not necessarily suggest measures for policymakers to stimulate the innovation ecosystem in India. The issues involved in the Indian innovation system are intertwined with other factors, such as highly differentiated markets and income disparities, among others. Despite these challenges, what India's innovation system distinctively offers to the world are high-impact solutions at low cost, particularly in sectors of socio-economic significance such as health, space, technology, and

sustainability. Additionally, it offers lessons to low- and middle-income countries on how they can foster innovation through frugal approaches within a robust policy ecosystem.

The IndiaLICS conference to be held at the University of Kerala in 2025 will bring scholars and practitioners from different spheres, including academia, industry and government, to reflect upon India's innovation trajectory and future pathways from a global perspective.

SUB-THEMES

1. Innovation System: Theory, Performance and Policy
2. Global Public Goods and Global Innovation System
3. Innovation Policy and Innovation Networks
4. The Relevance of the Indian Innovation System in the Global Economy
5. Innovation, Development and Self-Reliance (Atamanirbharbharat)
6. India as a player in the Global Innovation System: Evolution, Trends and Policies
7. Academia-Industry Linkages: Opportunities and Challenges in International Collaborations
8. Trade, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and India's Innovation Ecosystem
9. Measuring India's Knowledge Economy: Indicators, Data, and Methodologies
10. India's Integration in GIS of Emerging and Critical Technologies
11. India and National Innovation Systems of Other Countries: Insights from Cross Comparisons
12. Global Economic and Social Strategies for Sustainable Growth: Reflections from India's Innovation Trajectory
13. Inclusive and Frugal Innovation in India: Grassroots Solutions, Jugaad, and the Informal Economy for Grand Challenges
14. Entrepreneurship, Employability, and Gender Equity in India's Innovation Landscape
15. Lessons from Sectoral Innovation: Indian Solutions to Global Challenges

1. Health 2. Space 3. Green 4. Automobile 5. Transport 6. Pharmaceuticals 7. Agriculture

**The Sub-Themes are indicative but articles beyond the indicative topic will be accepted.*

Abstract Submission: **01 September 2025**

Abstract Acceptance: **10 September 20205**

Full Paper Submission: **20 November 2025**

Please send your submissions to : spi@keralauniversity.ac.in