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## Preface

Post-independent India has come a long way from a ‘developing, third-world poor nation’ to a vibrant middle-income, emerging market, consumerist economy-driven democracy with an enviable young workforce. We are at a crossroad today with a clear demographic advantage on our side and an opportunity of unprecedented dimensions knocking at our door steps. While business and entrepreneurship skills reside in our psyche from time immemorial, their union with modern science and technology is what will catalyze a paradigm shift in the existing levels of unemployment taking the country forward to newer heights. High-quality technical education on one hand and development of technology-based entrepreneurship skills on the other, working in unison, are the only potent solutions for improving the quality of life and generating employment in our country. As a community, IIT Kanpur realized the importance of this mission soon after our country’s economy was opening up in the mid-nineties. Being a premier and leading technology institute in India, we were one of the pioneers in establishing a technology-based business incubator within our campus.

Today, the SIDBI innovation and Incubation Center (SIIC) nurtures a vibrant ecosystem, operating under the Office of the Dean of Research and Development. Our mission is to become an exemplary unit for technology-based mentorship, innovation, intellectual property management, and entrepreneurship, eventually leading to definitive and inclusive societal impact.

It is our pleasure to present before the readers a bouquet of some pertinent case studies and our shared experiences in various facets of our activities. We hope that this issue of *Directions* will be useful for prospective business incubators, managers of technical schools, groups aspiring to start tinkering laboratories, start-up accelerators, and all stakeholders in the fast emerging innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurship space in the country.

We, as editors of this issue, have thoroughly enjoyed our work in compiling this issue, which, incidentally, is also the first edition of *Directions* being published by Springer. All the contributors have done a splendid job in bringing forward the nuances of their activities, which eventually contribute to the strong innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem of the institute. We must mention here that several new initiatives are under active planning as well as execution. This includes the construction of Science and Technology Research Park, finalizing the Student Entrepreneurship Policy, execution of the INVENT Social Entrepreneurship Program, expansion of the Tinkering Laboratory, establishment of the NIDI-Prayas Center, and implementation of Entrepreneurship In Residence program, to name a few. There is a long way to go and indeed best times are yet to come! We hope that the readers from different cross sections will not only enjoy the articles, but also get inspired to join hands in different capacities to develop the vital ecosystem in the country.

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Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship

Case Studies from IIT Kanpur

Phani, B.V.; Khandekar, S. (Eds.)

2017, XVI, 71 p. 76 illus., 74 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-981-10-3333-9