Liberalization, Growth and Regional Disparities in India

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Madhusudan Ghosh

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Madhusudan Ghosh
Department of Economics & Politics
Visva- Bharati
Santiniketan, Birbhum
West Bengal, India

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To My Parents

Preface

The Indian government has been concerned about how to achieve high economic growth with equality and to reduce unemployment and poverty. The issues have been given sharp focus in all the plans, and various policies have been adopted to achieve the objectives. However, it has been perceived that the benefits of the high rates of growth achieved in the last two decades have not reached all sections of the population and all parts of the country in an equitable manner. Recognizing the need to make growth ‘more inclusive’ in terms of the benefits of growth accruing to those sections of the population and to those regions, which have been bypassed by the high rates of growth, the Approach Paper to the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012–2017) has chosen ‘faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth’ as its central theme.

At the backdrop of impressive progress of the Indian economy during the last two decades, this book has evaluated the performance of the economy on some income and non-income dimensions of development at the national, state and sectoral levels. It has examined regional economic growth and inequality in income from agriculture, industry and services. In view of the importance of the agricultural sector despite its declining share in gross domestic product, special focus has been given on the performance of agricultural production and spatial efficiency in food grain markets. It has also discussed inclusive growth, employment, rural poverty, education, health and human development, focusing primarily on their regional disparities during the post-reform period vis-à-vis the pre-reform period.

Materials used in some of the chapters are drawn from my articles published in *Oxford Development Studies*, *Journal of Economic Development*, *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *Indian Journal of Human Development*, and *Margin—The Journal of Applied Economic Research*. Some of the chapters were presented in the conferences at the University of Bordeaux IV (Bordeaux, France), IBS Hyderabad (Hyderabad), Bankers Institute of Rural Development (Lucknow), Centre for Economic and Social Studies (Hyderabad), and Agro-Economic Research Centre (Santiniketan). I have benefited from discussions at the conferences. I am thankful to my parent institution (Visva-Bharati) for providing

travel grants to attend some of the conferences. I am also thankful to the anonymous reviewer of Springer (India) Pvt. Ltd. for useful suggestions for revising the manuscript.

Earlier versions of some of the chapters were written for a major research project entitled 'Economic Reforms and Regional Convergence in Indian Agriculture', sponsored by the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi. Financial support from the UGC is gratefully acknowledged.

The book could not have been completed without moral support from my daughter and wife. I am thankful to them.

Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan

Madhusudan Ghosh

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