

IISc (India) - UNU-MERIT (Netherlands)

RESEARCH WORKSHOP

February 17th, 2016

On studying development as an evolutionary process of catch-up
with illustrations from the WASH sectors

10.00 – 10.40: **On the development and exploitation of catch-up stories as tools for research, strategy making and policy design** by Shyama V. Ramani

Catch-up is a term coined by evolutionary economists to describe how follower countries developed industrial capabilities to catch-up with the sectoral performance of richer ones. The 'catch-up' literature has explored the reasons for such divergences in catch-up paths through case studies of the historical evolution of countries and sectors. It has shown that rather than being a homogeneous or linear process, catching-up in terms of scientific, technological and industrial capabilities building is likely to be costly, difficult, nation-specific and non-systematic with sectoral and cluster idiosyncrasies. Thus, technological catching-up cannot be taken for granted. However, catch-up remains a very general approach albeit very useful for understanding and policy design. Additionally, it has rarely been applied as a tool to study how the poor within a country can catch-up with the main-stream population.

In response to the above, Professor Ramani's contribution to this literature has been to two fold. First, to standardize the construction of catch-up case studies through game theoretic representation of processes. And second, to apply catch-up notions more widely than just in the construction of technological and innovation capabilities in order to understand the multifarious processes of economic development.

Key ideas that will be discussed: role of science, systems, systems of innovation, micro vs macro, role of complexity, inductive vs. deductive approach, usefulness of game representations, role of models, evolution of economics as a lens to understand the world, economic development, our approach, the WASH sectors.

10.40 – 11.00: Question and Answers

11.00 – 11.30: Tea/Coffee break

11.30 – 12.30: **The concepts and methodology outlined in the preceding session will be illustrated through case studies** (each presentation will be for 15 minutes)

- *Role of technology and innovation: How the game changes with integration of nature* by Dev Saha

- *WASH Strategies of Schools: What is and What can be* by Sangeeta Venkatesh, Anu Govind and Chloe Sorel

- *Catch-up paths of villages towards 'Nirmal' status* by Shankhajit Sen

- *Why it should matter for firms to play smart in WASH interventions* by Rushva Parihar

12.30 – 1.00: Questions and Answers