

SCALING UP

SHARING ECONOMY IN INDIA?

FRIEDRICH
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environmental research and action group



WEBINAR REPORT

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BACKGROUND

Sharing economies are systems whereby underutilized resources are shared to decrease waste, either for a fee or free. While the sharing of goods is nothing new, digital platforms have allowed the scale of sharing to expand dramatically, as individuals can now costlessly access collective resources with ease.

Sharing economy in its current state does not fully embody all values of a circular economy. Sharing allows more intensive use of resources, thereby decreasing waste--a fundamental principle of the circular economy.

As the sharing economy continues to grow, it will be necessary for legislators and companies alike to ensure that sustainability and cooperation are at the forefront of sharing economy's mission.

Sharing economies can create deep and lasting social transformation, have the power to lift people out of poverty through job creation, and create more sustainable, impactful modes of exchange.

Sharing Economy has the potential to service up to 90million jobs in India's non farm economy, transact over USD 250 billion in volume of work and contribute 1.25% to India's GDP. Approximately 56% of new employment in India is being generated by the sharing economy.

In the Post Pandemic world, societies and economies need to rethink and innovate more sustainable ways of doing business that is less extractive. The world has seen that interference with biodiversity has a significant impact on human health. Sharing economy combining the principles of Circular Economy offers an exciting possible avenue for increased sustainability and equity.

The fourth Webinar of this series - The Sharing Economy: How to scale it up? introduces the broad concept of scaling up a sharing economy and covered essential topics like 'how to scale up a sharing economy and 'impacts of scaling up a sharing economy.

SPEAKERS

AISHWARYA RAMAN



Director and Head of Research at Ola Mobility Institute

Aishwarya Raman is the Director and Head of Research at the Ola Mobility Institute (OMI), a new-age policy research and social innovation think tank developing knowledge frameworks at the intersection of mobility innovation and public good. An M.Sc. in Sociology from the University of Oxford, Aishwarya has over a decade of professional experience in the mobility domain. She is the co-founder and ex-CEO of AutoRaja, one of India's earliest and largest book-an-auto services. Today at OMI, Aishwarya conducts research in areas such as sustainable urban mobility, electric mobility and energy, gender, accessibility and inclusion, future of work and the platform economy, Artificial Intelligence, and much more.

KETAN KRISHNA



Head of Human Resources, RentoMojo

Ketan Krishna is the People Head at Rento Mojo, the market leader in the rental ecosystem. He loves technology and is bullish on the future of HR Tech. He believes that the HR function of the future would be a lot like that of Product Management; you understand technology, understand business, and design products that work. This belief led to him getting on to the advisory board of a few HR Tech companies. After completing his Post Graduation from MDI Gurgaon, he started his career with Aditya Birla Group in 2006. A life & career coach, Ketan believes that Ordinary by birth is a chance; living ordinary is a choice.

SPEAKERS

PIYUSH DHAWAN



Cofounder, Circular Collective

Piyush Dhawan is a German Chancellor Fellow, Humboldt Fellow and a TEDx speaker. Piyush has worked with the United Nations and German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) for ten years. He is also the co-founder of the Circular Collective with the aim is to facilitate, activate and enable discussions for Circular Economy in India. He has represented India at many international conferences including the European Forum Alpbach (Austria), Global Environment Academy (Oxford), DAAD in Mongolia, Germany and Thailand and G20 Summit (Korea). Piyush is also working on a new project to make the Coffee Sector Circular!

KEY THEMES OF DISCUSSION

1. Paradigms of Mobility

Speaker Aishwarya Raman shared how India can leverage its demographic dividend for economic recovery and growth, create millions of livelihood opportunities in the digitalised mobility economy using the four paradigms: shared, connected, electric and autonomous mobility in India based on research by Ola Mobility. Shared Mobility is highly utilised in India and public transport accounts for 55% of all trips in the country.

2. Platform Economies

The speakers discussed how India is becoming a leading frontier in sharing economy and this is enabled by the digitalization of life, platformization of jobs, paradigm shift in mobility economy from ownership of driven vehicle, to ownership of ride and finally platforms offer the masses affordable opportunities to monetise idle assets.

3. Subscription Models

Ketan Kirshna shared the emergence of subscription based services that use the sharing economy in their business models. This subscription model involves receiving the consent of customers after which the product/ service is offered in exchange of a fee or recurring payment. For successful subscription models there is a need for trust, reliability, flexibility and affordability which also resonate with the values of the sharing economy.

4. Implications of Language

During the discussion, the speakers shared that beyond the the economic scope of sustainable development, Circular Economy places a stronger focus on environmental issues while sharing economy deals with the social implications of society.

5. RESOLVE Framework

Piyush Dhawan introduced the resolve framework in the circular economy that puts forward the process of regenerating and restoring natural capital, sharing through maximum asset utilisation, optimising system performances, looping by keeping products and materials in productive cycles, virtualising by avoiding resources to deliver utility virtually and exchanging appropriate resources and technology that could be used in the sharing economy.

QUESTIONS

1. Are circular economies and sharing economies as concepts convergent or divergent?

Piyush Dhawan: A sharing platform is more like a business model whereas the circular economic model is more towards your internal operations, which caters more towards core businesses.

2. From a policy perspective, what is preventing businesses in the sharing economy from scaling up?

Ketan Krishna: There is a need for acceptance of using rental and furniture appliances or devices as a tax saving/ HRA component. This will incentivize people to move towards switching to rental services. Tax brackets and components influence consumption so looking at rental services in the tax-saving/ HRA component is essential. This acceptance will enable scaling up in tier 1 and tier 2 cities.

3. How can businesses become fully circular in their functioning and principles?

Piyush Dhawan: Ideally every business in order to remain in business in the next years should move towards circularity because of depleting resources and their dependencies on water and energy. So ideally every company should go towards circularity. It is difficult to say how circular a city, business or country is because of dependency on non-renewable resources and tools and instruments to measure circularity.

4. Can you give us some insights about gender diversity amongst gig workers in the mobility sector in the sharing economy?

Aishwarya Raman: Mobility is still primarily a male-dominated occupation. When platform businesses started in this space, they were unable to find enough women to onboard. As platforms have matured, we have realised that platforms offer the dual benefit of flexibility and choice of labour. Irrespective of gender, people can monetize their assets when and where they want. This is an option that is not available in traditional forms of employment. Another advantage is platforms are able to augment asset ownership. According to studies, it is evident that those that start with no asset whatever are able to gain access to new assets in the form of skills, new physical assets like two-wheelers, three-wheelers or four-wheelers and access to finance. These two advantages act as an inflexion point to bring more women to the platform economy.

5. How can we create a circular economy in the FMCG sector? Since most of the plastic pollution comes from that sector. Are local zero waste shops or refillable services the only options?

Aishwarya Raman: Refillable services and zero waste shops could be designed. "Jugaad" is a way of life in India, where we reuse these plastic containers at home for multiple purposes. At a consumer level, we can try to avoid buying and look at alternatives.

Ketan Krishna: It has to start from us consumers, we can expect organizations to change, they will, but what can we do individually to come up with innovative solutions and lead by example. It involves unlearning centuries of conditioning.

Bharati Chaturvedi: The plastic waste management rules actually require brand owners to take away multilayered plastics, collect them to a certain percentage based on their sales and either recycle these or dispose of them in ways that are in alignment with the laws of the land.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS



FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is a non-profit German foundation committed to the values of democracy and social justice



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CHINTAN ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND ACTION GROUP

Chintan is a non-profit that works on sustainability through the lens of solid and hazardous waste, and air pollution.

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