

Thinking Social Roundtable – Chennai



The second thematic roundtable of “**TSEC Thinking Social Roundtable**” series, organized by IIM Calcutta Innovation Park (IIP), was held on 19th December 2014 at the Park Sheraton Hotels & Tower in Chennai, under the aegis of Tata Social Enterprise Challenge (TSEC). The Chennai chapter of IIM Calcutta Alumni Association was instrumental in supporting the Roundtable. The theme of the Roundtable was ‘**Clean Energy**’. The main objective of this roundtable was to provide a platform, for the champions of Clean Energy entrepreneurship ecosystem to exchange their experiences and ideas thereby perhaps create a set of best practices for the industry to emulate.

The thematic TSEC Roundtable was structured around an introductory address from IIP and the Chennai chapter of IIM Calcutta Alumni Association followed by Panel discussion with subsequent Q&A round and ending with a valedictory and vote of thanks from the IIMC Alumni Chennai chapter.

The speakers for the day comprised eminent entrepreneurs, VCs, bureaucrats who have made their mark in the clean energy sector in India. The audience (a strong presence of 42 registered participants) comprised of professionals, entrepreneurs, innovators and NGOs mainly from the clean energy sector.

Prof Ashok Banerjee; Dean of IIM-Calcutta, in his introductory address pointed out the global importance of the theme and emphasized its importance in India. Prof Banerjee outlined the structure of the Innovation Park and also discussed how its functions focus on clean energy, social issues, livelihood, education and healthcare as the core areas.

Mr Mali Mahalingam of the Chennai Chapter of IIM Calcutta Alumni Association in his introductory note credited IIM Calcutta for influencing the Chennai Chapter in becoming a proactive one.

Prof Ashok Banerjee moderated the Panel discussion and requested all the Panelists to share their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities of the theme.

Mr. Pashupathy Gopalan: Managing Director, of MEMC's and SunEdison's South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa operations, in his address said 'today more people are without electricity than that of when electricity was invented'. He believed that there is a huge gap between the demand and supply for energy requirements. Surely, for this reason clean energy and more specifically solar energy would surely replace conventional energy in the near future to bridge the gap.

Mr. Sudeep Jain, IAS, Chairman and Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Energy Development Agency, believed to address 100 % demand of energy through solar ' we need real innovation and for this we require Industry, Academic, Entrepreneurs and the Government to working coherently.'



Mr. Madhusudan Khemka, Managing Director ReGen Powertech believed that passion was the main driving factor for an entrepreneur-'As an engineer nothing gives me more satisfaction than creating a wind turbine; and then watching it work for the first time'. He believed more awareness was needed to attract entrepreneurs in this sector, as it was a very profit-making sector.

In her address Ms Alka Upadhyay of Tata Sustainability Group emphasized on how the Tata Group wants to transform from 'grey to green'. She pointed out 'Bombay House –The Head Office of the TATA Groups was the first building in India to get gold category for a Green Building.'

Mr. Shyam Menon of Infuse Venture insisted 'Micro grid funding would be the next big thing'. He also believed that proper technology would make renewable energy more affordable. Also Infuse Venture wanted to 'focus a lot on how to enable adaptation of technology, new or existing.'

The Q&A round witnessed almost 100% participation from the audience. There were many significant issues discussed and addressed by the audience and the panelists.

The second TSEC Roundtable concluded with Mr Ajay Jain's valedictory note on behalf of Chennai chapter of IIM Calcutta Alumni Association.