

Summary Report

Workshop on Circular Economy in the Textile and Apparel Sector

Date: 10 September 2019

Venue: NID, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

The workshop featured speakers from the government, academia (design, textiles, strategic business management), and industry (brands, exporters) and entrepreneurs. The discussions were focused on the *role of innovation, and integrating sustainability and circular economy practices in the way of doing business*. It was emphasized that incorporating circular economy principles in production and consumption is no longer a choice—it is a must do for the survival of businesses in the long run. Consumers today are demanding sustainable and lasting products. Collaborative efforts, including actions from the government and private sector, as a key to forge the agenda also emerged as a point for discussion

Inaugural session

Praveen Nahar, Director (NID, Ahmedabad) opened the proceedings by welcoming the audience and briefly describing the initiatives undertaken at NID to help the industry adopt circularity. He stressed the need for circular initiatives in the light of changing consumption and production patterns and called for a closer industry academia linkage to facilitate more uptake of circular designs and circular practices. This was followed by an address from **Arindam Das, Director (NIFT, Gandhinagar)**, who mentioned that awareness (starting at the schools' level) must be created on the sustainable or circular design aspect of businesses and physical infrastructure. He added that the textile sector in India could benefit immensely by implementing quality norms for recycled fibres and fabric. He also urged the participants to consider the role of technology in pursuing circularity. Next, **Shri H J Vyas, Additional Industries Commissioner (Gujarat)**, stated that Gujarat government worked continuously towards the benefit of industry, helping entrepreneurs, disbursing funds that help industries become green, or better comply with norms. He appreciated the timing of this workshop and dialogue as a new policy is currently under discussion. He appealed to the industry to step up their commitment towards green business; the government would support in all possible ways.

Shri B N Satpathy from NITI Aayog joined via teleconferencing. He informed the audience that the **Central Government was in the process of creating circular economy policy** for industrial sectors; he invited the audience to play an active role in providing policy inputs for circular economy in the textile and apparel sector and appreciated CRB's role in taking the lead for developing a Circular Apparel Strategy paper that can serve as a roadmap to Circular Apparel policy. **Devyani Hari, Director (Programmes) at Centre for Responsible Business**, briefly described the circular economy agenda and how everybody could benefit by collaborating on relevant issues facing industry as well as consumers. She also outlined the PROGRESS Project, and the importance of circular economy conversations within value chains of brands.

NID Faculty members also made short presentations showcasing projects/ initiatives undertaken by their students in collaboration with the industry.

Panel Discussion

Chandan Chatterjee, CEO of Atal Innovation Lab (Business Incubation Centre) at Gujarat Technological University, moderated the panel discussion. **Shikha Shah, Co-founder and CEO of Fibre Labs**, opened the discussion with a focus on developing **entrepreneurship culture among women**. She mentioned that society must address several mindset issues for women to be able to succeed as entrepreneurs. She also mentioned how circular economy business models can create wealth for all. She highlighted that large brands and corporate can play a role in developing an ecosystem that is conducive to women entrepreneurs. **Abhishek Bansal, Head of Sustainability at Arvind Ltd.** mentioned his company focuses on the three key inputs for textiles: fibre, water, and chemicals. Adopting circularity in these areas will ensure overall reduction in carbon footprint and other environmental impacts. He discussed some innovative collaborations of the company to realise its sustainability targets such as tie up with local municipalities to receive the sewage waste which is then treated and used by the company to reduce the usage of freshwater in the production processes. **Aditya Goyal, CEO, Anubha Industries** told the audience that circular practices start right at the farmers' level and organic farming techniques can improve water retention capacity of soil, enhance soil quality, and eliminate the use of insecticides and fertilizers. For instance, more than 90% of cotton production was from GMO seeds, which exacerbates the problem of water and pesticide use, unlike conventional methods.

Naresh Tyagi, Head – Sustainability, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd. (ABFRL), highlighted some of the initiatives taken by ABFRL to make their supply chain sustainable. He mentioned that Peter England, one of the largest selling brands in India, has instituted a take-back programme for used garments sold by the brand. ABFRL follows a zero-waste policy;. He highlighted the need to communicate on circular economy practices originating in India. He also stressed that an appropriate labelling process in the apparel sector would go a long way in driving the conversation towards sustainable practices.

Siddhartha Lulla from Intellectap informed the audience about the Circular Apparel Innovation Factory and their focus on fostering innovation and collaboration for circular apparel practices in the Indian textile and apparel sector.

Concluding Remarks

Dr Chatterjee closed the session by summarizing the discussion points, and added some thoughts **on skilling**. He mentioned that teaching skills wasn't enough, as preparing the industry and workers for take-up of such skilled labour are required. He also advised that the skilling programmes have to be cognizant of local cultural practices and requirements.

An important aspect that emerged during the panel discussion was the need to **educate consumers and increase awareness** about circular and sustainable apparel. The panellists, however, cautioned that communication has to be open and complete to avoid any misinformation.

Agenda

Time	Sessions
0930 – 1030	Registration and Welcome Tea/snacks
1030 – 1040	Opening remarks Praveen Nahar, Director, NID Ahmedabad
1040 – 1050	Circular economy in the national development agenda NITI Aayog
1050 – 1110	Keynote address Additional Industries Commissioner, Gujarat
1110 – 1120	Guest address Arindam Das, Director, NIFT Gandhinagar
1120 – 1130	Vote of Thanks and Introduction to Circular Apparel in India Devyani Hari, Director – Programmes, Centre for Responsible Business
1130 – 1200	NID Approaches to Circular Economy Faculty from Textile, Apparel and Strategic Design Management, NID
1200 – 1225	Tea Break and exhibition
1225 – 1345	Panel discussion: Opportunities and Challenges of Circular Economy Transition in the Textile and Apparel Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moderator – Chandan Chatterjee, GTU ● Abhishek Bansal, Arvind Ltd. ● Aditya Goyal, Anubha Industries ● Siddharth Shah, Intellectap ● Naresh Tyagi, Aditya Birla ● Shikha Shah, Fibre Labs
1345 – 1400	Closing Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NID ● CRB
1400	Networking Lunch