

# Roundtable Report on Green Micro Entrepreneurship

Addressing SDGs 8 and 12 with  
Sustainable and Low-carbon  
Economy



**Gokhale Institute  
of Politics and  
Economics**  
(Deemed to be University)

Centre for Excellence  
in Entrepreneurship  
and Development  
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## Context

**'Local resources meeting local wants'** advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, offers a potential panacea to the double crisis of climate change and sustainable development. Micro enterprises, by their small scale and localized footprint, can potentially meet local demands by adopting renewable resources, environmentally friendly practices, and circularity to reduce their carbon footprint, while generating incomes. Businesses engaged in helping organic farmers, setting up renewable energy generation, managing waste, promoting eco-tourism, and local craftsmen, are some examples.

For the Indian economy, an inclusive growth strategy for poverty reduction and the transition to environmentally sustainable paths are critical in the development trajectory. By operating in harmony with the local natural and cultural ecosystems, these enterprises can minimize resource consumption, reduce emissions, and contribute to mitigating climate change. By enabling individuals from marginalized and economically disadvantaged backgrounds to establish their own businesses, micro enterprises empower them to generate income, accumulate assets, and improve their living standards.

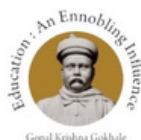
## What are Green Micro enterprises (GME)?

Self-employed persons or small businesses that meet local demands while keeping a low ecological footprint and generating local employment, are how we look at green micro enterprises. Such micro enterprises can potentially solve local problems while generating revenue in their communities. They provide a regional and eco- friendly solution to the twin objective of sustainable development and job creation. They aid in creating lower carbon footprints and have a lot of potential for inclusive growth and lowering poverty. They enable income generation, asset accumulation, and higher living standards by empowering marginalized people to start their own businesses. This bottom-up strategy can promote social justice and economic independence.

***Such micro enterprises can potentially address challenges of waste, pollution, renewable energy, ecosystem restoration, and other such issues that are crucial in the transition to a greener economic growth and sustainable development. To march towards such sustainable development, it's important to create green entrepreneurs and green-collar jobs. "***  
***- Dr Gurudas Nulkar***

To promote GMEs, the Center for Excellence in Entrepreneurship and Development (CEED) in collaboration with the Center for Sustainable Development (CSD) proposed to conceptualize Green Skilling Centre's that can train and empower local youth to take up such enterprises. The Centre's will impart knowledge, skills and capabilities and help participants develop business plans, apply for funds, and promote their businesses. They will play a vital role in creating self employment opportunities and promote entrepreneur development initiatives to meet India's potential for Green business for Micro enterprises. This, we believe, will be an effective strategy in promoting and supporting the growth of micro enterprises for achieving sustainable development objectives, creating resilient communities, and fostering social equality.

***"Green Skill Centers stand out as an essential tactic for promoting GMEs. These facilities would give local youth the knowledge and abilities they need, assisting them in creating business plans and obtaining funding.***  
***- Ms. Pradnya Godbole***



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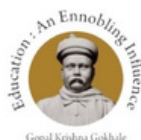


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## About the Roundtable

The Roundtable was conducted under the aegis of the Center for Excellence in Entrepreneurship and Development (CEED) in collaboration with Center for Sustainable Development (CSD) at Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) on 9th August 2023 from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm . The Roundtable was chaired by Dr. Ajit Ranade. The Roundtable was a platform for stakeholders to share ideas, insights, and best practices around growth of green micro-businesses. It discussed green entrepreneurship, challenges involved therein and possible approaches to mitigate them, with stakeholders from different domains. It aggregated insights from various relevant fields and created a policy-design dialogue on this topic.



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## Round Table Meeting Details

<u>Time</u>	<u>Session Plan</u>
3:30 - 3:40	Welcome note by Dr. Ajit Ranade
3:40 - 3:50	Context setting by Dr. Pradnya Godbole (CEED) and Dr. Gurudas Nulkar (CSD)
3:50 - 4:00	Introduction of Speakers and Felicitation (Memento)
4:00 - 5:00	<p>Round table discussion with inputs from notable speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Giriraj (Maharashtra Bamboo Promotion Foundation)</li> <li>• Dr. Girish Sohoni (Ex BAIF)</li> <li>• Vivek Sawant (MKCL)</li> <li>• Uday Panchpor (MKCL)</li> <li>• Arti Kirloskar (Kirloskar Vasundhara Foundation)</li> <li>• Sonali Phadke (Studio Alternatives)</li> <li>• Aditya Joshi (Inora BioTech)</li> <li>• Anand Chordia (Suhana Masale, Eco Factory Foundation)</li> <li>• Dr. Ajit Ranade (GIPE)</li> <li>• Dr. Gurudas Nulkar (CSD-GIPE)</li> <li>• Pradnya Godbole (CEED-GIPE)</li> </ul>
5:00 - 5:10	Concluding thoughts by all speakers
5:10 - 5:15	Vote of thanks by Prof. Gurudas Nulkar
5:15 onwards	High - Tea

## List of Speakers

- **Dr. Giriraj** (Maharashtra Bamboo Promotion Foundation)
- **Dr. Girish Sohoni** (Ex BAIF)
- **Vivek Sawant** (MKCL)
- **Uday Panchpor** (MKCL)
- **Arti Kirloskar** (Kirloskar Vasundhara Foundation)
- **Sonali Phdke** (Studio Alternatives)
- **Aditya Joshi** (Inora BioTech)
- **Anand Chordia** (Suhana Masale, Eco Factory Foundation)
- **Dr. Ajit Ranade** (GIPE)
- **Dr. Gurudas Nulkar** (CSD-GIPE)
- **Pradnya Godbole** (CEED-GIPE)

## Discussions

*“Increase in GDP has not been supported by the growth in the job market owing to extensive automation and digitization. Subsequently, there has been improvement in the efficiency of the process however, at the cost of the ecosystem. We cannot have truly sustainable development, if it is not sustainable on any one of the 3 axes - environmental, social & economical.”*

*- Dr Ajit Ranade*

## Moving Traditional economy to Regenerative/Restorative (value add)

The ongoing “Great Acceleration” in loss of biodiversity, climate change, pollution and loss of natural capital is tightly coupled to economic activities and economic growth. Doughnut economics, post-growth and degrowth are alternatives to mainstream conceptions of economic growth that offer valuable insights. Here, it is essential to shift from a conventional economy, where growth is consumption driven to a restoration economy, where huge human capital is deployed to restore the natural capital crucial to current and future generations. This will bring in immense emerging opportunities having duo- fold advantages, sustainability and value creation. It will help to draw down carbon dioxide and contribute to a positive long term trajectory on climate change while adding more biodiversity for the future and ensuring justice, equity and inclusion within and between societies and economic markets.

*“The key to this shift is held with creating green products and services with value-add alongside the expected creation of natural capital.”*  
**-Girish Sohoni**

## Waste to Wealth

Waste is usually thought of as unwanted or unusable materials. Waste is any substance which is discarded after primary use, or considered worthless, defective, and of no use. A starting point towards managing waste is in recycling and reusing, attempting several trial and errors to achieve significantly lower production cost and environmental impact. One such success story in waste management that showcased optimal waste transformation to wealth was by Anand Chordia.

*“The waste my business was producing was a huge concern to me, that was my starting point of turning farm waste to non- farm waste and plastic waste into essential economical products like plastic bricks, t-shirts and several other consumable products.”*  
**-Anand Chordia**

## Leveraging Networks

*"The waste my business was producing was a huge concern to me, that was my starting point of turning farm waste to non- farm waste and plastic waste into essential economical products like plastic bricks, t-shirts and several other consumable products."*

**-Anand Chordia**

Entrepreneurs and start-ups can greatly contribute to innovation and thereby improve productivity and customer experience and provide more affordable services. They can help advance the current trend toward networks of different value chain participants such as suppliers, platforms, service providers and customers, integrated through common commercial models and data. Entrepreneurship is considered a vital component of that shift.

It is important to develop the skills and infrastructure for services required for modern farming like drone based drenching service, satellite based advisors, etc. This will aid mechanization of small holder operations as well and can benefit the entire value chain.

*"The example of delving deeper into existing enterprises and markets like Organic Ganpati Market and Bamboo Rakhis can be a means of widening the scope."*

**-Uday Panchpor**

## Upskilling for green collar jobs

*"The pressing issue here is to enable green enterprises with skilled and trained workforce ,so it is important to emphasize on the need of training initially."*

**-Arti Kirloskar**



The conversation about climate change is making a global shift towards a greener economy and emergence of related jobs inevitable, but our education system is still unprepared to make this transition. The supply of talent in this industry is less than the demand at this point in time. There is a need to create special programmes for this or embed some part of the attributes of these types of skill sets so that people become more rounded professionals. Several systemic challenges must be addressed to accelerate the skill building efforts. These barriers include lack of policies for green skill development, funding gaps, inadequate skill infrastructure, exclusion of vulnerable groups, and lack of collaboration among key actors.

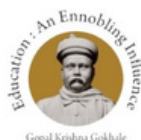
***“To extent of skilling of workers, one needs to know the demand associated with it. Currently, there is a huge mismatch between demand and supply of skilled workers. The demand is not being able to be met by the existing supply in the market. There is asymmetric information on this front.”***

**-Aditya Joshi**

The move to a climate-neutral country will have a significant social, economic and employment impact. A socially just transformation needs people to have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to shape and cope with profound change. Education and training systems and institutions can act as catalysts and support a shift to a more sustainable society. There is a need for a wide range of initiatives and actions on the environment and sustainability so that learning for sustainability becomes a systemic feature of education policy and practice.

***“To extent of skilling of workers, one needs to know the demand associated with it. Currently, there is a huge mismatch between demand and supply of skilled workers. The demand is not being able to be met by the existing supply in the market. There is asymmetric information on this front.”***

**-Aditya Joshi**



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## 'Go Green, Go Digital'

*"A supporting network or online marketplace to enable collective growth and match demand with the needed supply of green collar service providers would be highly effective."*

**-Girish Sohani**

Going green can be any action that works towards the ultimate goal of making more environmentally friendly decisions. Digitalization, though it has the adverse impact of increasing our carbon footprint, can work in multiple ways to foster sustainability in business. For example, the "factories of the future" could very well become "factories for the future" by fundamentally changing the way we produce products. Enterprises using automation could use minimum amount of resources while maximizing output and also reducing harmful by-products.

*" 'Go Green, Go Digital' as green and digital techniques go hand in hand would help bring dignity to green collar jobs."*

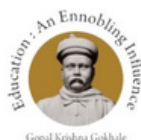
**-Vivek Sawant**

## Dignity Deficit

The fundamental issue faced by the consumers and employers is not being able to find skilled workers. The supply of skilled laborers is extremely scarce. This is mainly due to the 'Dignity Deficit' associated with these jobs. Young people, like the children of plumbers, don't wish to learn these skills due to the stigma surrounding it.

*"The next generation of the " Ustaads" are now moving away from their family tradition for menial jobs in the city. It is hence crucial to bridge this gap."*

**-Sonali Phadke**



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The concept of 'Eco Warrior' was highlighted and how it can help create a sense of pride around the green collar jobs. In practice, however, social dialogue and other stakeholder consultations are highly effective to inform and shape appropriate policies. Good practices in dealing with this matter could provide useful and practical approaches. Branding can be a means to uplift their dignity, like currently seen in the workers working at Zomato, Swiggy. Standardization in this sector could help provide stability. Having uniforms, standard rates can be some initial steps to address these problems.

## How green is green?

***“How green is green? How does a consumer in a cost sensitive market be affirmative of the product? How and who does the customer build up trust for a particular organic product?”***

***-Sonali Phadke***

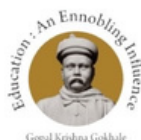
A need to develop a certification system by a regulatory authority could mitigate the issue of building trust for a particular organic product. The authority would be responsible for approving upcycled products, even the process, supervise and provide an overview to the entire ecosystem. This badge of approval from a regulatory body will also help with improving the mentality of the customers and be a means of self marketing of the product. The value of the product will be spoken by the means of this certification. Currently, the upcycled waste to wealth segment is an extremely unorganized sector and lacks incentives like tax exemptions to incentivize the growth of this sector.

## Collaborations between green entrepreneurs

It is crucial to focus on the need for more crosstalk between the green entrepreneurs. Findings, learnings and lessons learned should be shared to benefit all. This could be done in several ways and forums, but this is the need of the hour for the entire ecosystem to be strengthened.

***“‘Small within Big’ would be really beautiful and better!”***

***-Dr Giriraj***



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## Suggested way forward

- Look to enable upskilling workers through vocational training and apprenticeships on the job to meet the growing demand for green-collar jobs.
- Move to reduce dependence on conventional employers and focus on using micro-entrepreneurship to convert job seekers into job creators.
- Find innovative ways for the value addition of green products to replace the conventional consumerist economy with a restoration/regenerative economy.
- A robust system to determine the demand needs to be formulated to know how many workers need to be skilled for demand supply balance.
- A need for a regulated marketplace is needed for such interactions.
- Bridging the gap associated with the stigma surrounding green collar jobs among the youth.