Event Report

Webinar on

"Boosting Green Economy: Is E-mobility the way forward in Rajasthan?"

Thursday | 10th December 2020 | 16:00 – 17:30 hours (IST)

BACKGROUND

CUTS International, with the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) India, organised a webinar titled 'Boosting Green Economy: Is E-mobility the way forward in Rajasthan?' on Thursday, 10th December, 2020. The webinar was organised to launch the research report titled, 'Exploring the impact of Jobs Ecosystem: A case study of Jaipur, Rajasthan'.[1]

The key objective of the webinar was to deliberate on the key findings of the study and discuss ways to mainstream the concept of just transition in policy making for the automotive and transport sector.

The webinar attracted approximately 65 participants from across various industries and stakeholder categories including Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), research organisations, enterprises and media.[2]

The video recording of the webinar is available here.

KEY SPEAKERS

I. Opening Session

- *Welcome Remarks*: **Pradeep S Mehta**, Secretary General, CUTS International
- *Opening Remarks*: **Mandvi Kulshreshtha,** Program Adviser – Economy of Tomorrow, FES India
- *Key Note Address*: **Ravi Jain,** Secretary and Transport Commissioner, Government of Rajasthan
- *Presentation*: **Trinayani Sen**, Senior Research Associate, CUTS International

II. Panel Discussion

The discussion was moderated by **Sarthak Shukla**, Assistant Policy Analyst, CUTS International. The panelists were:

[1] Project webpage: https://cuts-ccier.org/exploring-the-impact-of-electric-mobility-on-the-jobs-ecosystem/ Report: https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/Impact_of_E mobility_Transitions_on_Jobs_A_case_study_of_Jaipur-Rajasthan.pdf

[2] Some media coverage of the webinar is available at:< https://www.apnnews.com/right-time-to-transition-into-electric-mobility-in-rajasthanravi-jain-secretary-and-transport-commissioner-government-of-rajasthan/> <https://www.energetica-india.net/news/working-on-rolling-out-our-ev-policy-secretary--transport-commissioner-of-rajasthan><https://www.pninews.com/right-time-to-transition-into-electric-mobility-in-rajasthanravi-jain/>

- **Anumita Roy Chowdhury**, Executive Director, Policy and Advocacy, Centre for Science and Environment
- **Arindam Lahiri,** Chief Executive Officer, Automotive Skills Development Council
- **Aditya Ramji,** Senior Manager - Economist**,** Mahindra and Mahindra limited
- **Ruchir Shukla,** Director – Electric Mobility, Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

- The discussion began by setting the environmental context of the Electric Vehicles (EVs). With the increasing vehicular emissions and traffic congestion, EVs are viewed as the possible solution to all the transport-related problems. Hence, EVs have become the buzz word in the auto industry sector as well as among the policy makers and industry. Recent State EV policies announcement, such as Delhi and Telangana, in addition to several existing State policies, have further corroborated these sentiments.
- However, the discussion highlighted certain barriers that needs to be addressed before building a case for adoption of zero-emission vehicles.
- 'Mobility' as a concept needs to be deciphered in depth, before embarking upon electric-mobility for an effective on-ground implementation of the policies. There is a need for policymakers to understand the city-level paradigms, such as commuting patterns and consumer behaviour, in order to ensure effective implementation of policies and regulation.
- From a manufacturing point of view, the discussion focused on the importance of manufacturing the vehicles at a price parity at which their potential consumers can purchase and operate them. This requires investment on state-of-the-art technology, skilled manpower and smart manufacturing lines. All of this is an added cost to the enterprise, which are recovered through price of the vehicle, which can be minimised by efficient operations and sound management. However, cost minimisation should not compromise on the safety-related aspects and salaries of the workers engaged in this sector, as such 'race-to-the-bottom' often leaves out the concerns of the vulnerable and informal workers.
- The panelists also deliberated upon the need for "Just Transition" in the auto sector. Given the high degree of informality in the Indian workforce, the impact of EVs would be different in the Indian job ecosystem both qualitatively and quantitatively. The transition will entail losses in jobs across the formal and informal segments of the automotive ecosystem, which are exclusive to the ICE value chain as well as the addition of new roles based on the requirements of the EV value chain. Thus, the transition must be just, sustainable and inclusive.
- It was also observed that innovation and technology has a crucial role in achieving this transition. However, currently, Indian EV sector lacks the vision, resources and required regulatory certainty for fostering an enabling ecosystem that can help them achieve global competitiveness. Thus, there is a need to align the efforts in a systemic way in order to reap the envisaged benefits of EV.
- The automotive industry is also facing few challenges in the skill and jobs ecosystem in India. One of the major challenges is to make the sector more attractive for the younger

workforce and attract more women workers in the skilled segment. Another challenge is the required skilling of the existing workforce. However, slowly, the industry has been overcoming this challenge through training of trainers and collaborating with the academic institutions. In the service sector, sensitisation of EVs has started and it is envisaged that more new jobs, specific to EVs, will be created. Thus, if the industries have a good migration strategy to up-skill and re-skill their workforce, the net job loss will be minimal in the sector.

- Furthermore, it was discussed that it is important to understand the source of electricity for charging the EVs. EVs can only be termed as a 'green technology' when it's been powered through clean energy. Thus, it is imperative to reform the power sector and infuse grid storage capacity for supporting the Renewable Energy (RE) technologies.

WAY FORWARD

In conclusion, there is a need to align our efforts across carbon-intensive sectors, in order to realise the climate ambitions. Transport sector is a fit-for-purpose sector with the transformative change of EVs. However, the overarching economic principle of rolling out EVs should adhere to the pillars of just transition, which includes justness on account of social, economic and environmental factors. This is only possible if a holistic, ecosystem-based approach is adopted and crucial concerns like skilling of workforce, mainstreaming of environment-friendly technologies and efficiency of manufacturing are considered.

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