Advancing Circular Economy Education for a Resource-Efficient Future

Concept Note

Venue: Stein Auditorium

Background

Circular economy principles are becoming increasingly recognized as essential for sustainable production and consumption. In addition to benefits on environmental protection, waste management and reduction in unsustainable production and raw material dependence, circular economy principles will stimulate innovation and create jobs to drive sustainable economic growth. However, many people remain unfamiliar with these principles, hindering the shift towards more sustainable practices. Education and innovation are crucial for unlocking the full potential of a circular economy and achieving a sustainable future.

Policymakers face significant challenges in moving away from the traditional linear economy model of 'take, make, dispose,' which has driven industrial progress for centuries but resulted in unsustainable resource use. One major challenge is the lack of understanding and education on circular economy principles, preventing the development of effective policies that encourage businesses to adopt sustainable practices while remaining economically viable and competitive. Industries often resist circular economy practices due to concerns about financial feasibility and technological practicality.

Public awareness and understanding of waste reduction, product reuse, and sustainable consumption are also lacking. Inefficient waste management exacerbates global crises such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Education can play a vital role in raising awareness, shaping attitudes, and promoting sustainable behaviour. Educational campaigns can help individuals understand circular economy principles, empowering them to make sustainable choices in their daily lives.

The Mobius Foundation is dedicated to promoting circular economy principles and empowering stakeholders for a sustainable future. Since its inception in 2019, the International Conference on Sustainability Education (ICSE) has been addressing circular economy and related issues in its thematic sessions which included “Education for Advancing Circular Economy” in ICSE 2019, “Sustainability through Circularity” in ICSE 2021, and “Closing the Loop: Circular Technology for Climate Action” in ICSE 2022. During COVID-19 pandemic, the Mobius foundation organised 4 virtual "Training of Trainers on Circular Economy" (ToTCE) programs for educational institutions and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the plastics sector. It aimed to equip educators with the necessary tools to incorporate circular economy models into their curricula and to assist SMEs in overcoming technical, financial, and systemic challenges to adopt more sustainable practices. Among four training sessions: two were for educational institutions (October and December 2021) and two for SMEs in the plastics sector (November 2021 and January 2022).

Objective

The session aims to equip youth, educators, policymakers, and industry leaders with the knowledge and tools to implement circular economy principles, fostering sustainable practices, promoting resource-efficient development, and generating actionable recommendations.

Expected Outcome

- Enhanced understanding and awareness among participants regarding circular economy principles.
- Sharing of experiences, learning from experts and practitioners in the field.
- Strengthened partnerships, networks and collaborations.
- Development of actionable recommendations.

Session Flow

Day 1: 19th September, 15:45 Hrs-16:45Hrs
Venue: Stein Auditorium

Time: 60 minutes
Mode: *Panel Discussion (50 Minutes) followed by Question & Answer session of (10 Minutes)*

Moderator: *Prof. Aparna Uma Raman, visiting faculty at IISC Bangalore and RV University and board member and advisor at Udjan Foundation & Innomantra Consulting, Banglore & Singapore*

Expert Speakers:

1. Dr. Ramesh Chandra, Member of National Institution for transforming India, NITI Aayog (Chair)
2. Prof. Manjusri Mishra, Professor & Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in sustainable Biocomposites *(TBC), University of Guelph, Canada*
3. Prof. Amar Mohanty, Professor & Distinguished Research Excellence chair in sustainable materials, *University of Guelph, Canada*
4. Mr. Sunil Kumar Yadav, Director, ESG & Decarbonisation Advisory, KPMG, Singapore
5. Dr. Santosh, Head of Department, Dept. Of Food Engineering and Technology, CIT Kokrajhar