

Scale vs. Sustainability

Evolving Business Models for Technology Based Solutions in Emerging Markets

Vineeth Vijayaraghavan
Director - Research & Outreach, Solarillion Foundation
10-11am, Wednesday April 6, 2016
Rm. 260 Dreese Laboratory

Talk Abstract: A number of technological solutions, typically first world technologies, have been deployed in underserved markets for years as charitable donations. However, over the last decade, there has been the emergence of technology-driven solutions that serve the bottom of the pyramid customers in emerging markets. These solutions in most cases have involved technological innovations as a result of redesigning and architecting solutions for severely resource constrained environments. This has resulted in unique business models and human resource models that have worked well in limited scale and specific environments. However, such solutions do not lend themselves to the traditional model of scaling due to a number of overheads and other factors and thus threaten sustainability. The talk covers this challenge, with examples, and discusses potential opportunities and trade-offs involved.

Vineeth Vijayaraghavan is the founding editor of Panchabuta, one of India's leading Renewable Energy and Cleantech Industry focused information and intelligence providers. As the editor, Vineeth covers the sector with the intent to bring to the local and global audience, news, insightful analysis and commentary in this space. As an independent online resource, Panchabuta also focuses and contributes to policy making in the cleantech and renewable energy space in India by providing valuable inputs to various organizations and stakeholders in the ecosystem. Vineeth is also the Director (Research and Outreach) at Solarillion Foundation, a nonprofit research and outreach foundation working on research, outreach and implementation of sustainable energy and engineering solutions for emerging markets. In this capacity he has worked to develop stakeholder participation and strengthen the ecosystem for social enterprises – which are expected to provide next generation technology led low cost scalable solutions to more than 800 million rural Indian's at affordable market prices and serve as a vital connect between traditional NGOs, Government and corporations. Vineeth, has represented national and international forums in the capacity of clean energy industry expert and has been quoted in the national and international media. He was nominated from India for the BRIC Clean Energy and Exchange program in the US in October 2011 and is an alumnus of the ACYPL (American Council for Young Political Leaders) program. A thought leader in the space, he has been speaking and moderating industry and stakeholder panel discussions on subjects ranging from renewable energy financing, projects and its viability in the Indian context and often assisting stake holders with critical inputs in shaping policies relating to renewable energy, specifically solar, wind and bio energy in India. He is also actively involved in sustainable initiatives, energy security and next generation energy efficiency and management solutions including smart grid, rural micro grid and distributed generation solutions. He is passionate about technology solutions that can assist the more than 400 million Indian's with limited to no access to energy. Prior to founding Panchabuta, he was a consultant to project developers in the field of thermal energy for projects in South Tamil Nadu. He has also been associated with captive wind farm projects and energy plantation initiatives. Vineeth holds a Master of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio and a bachelor's degree in Engineering in Electronics and Communications from the University of Madras.

