

Cryptocurrencies: A modern myth or the currency of future

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Abstract:

This article investigates the evolution of cryptos and if they could serve as a modern myth or futures money. In recent years, digital currencies such as bitcoin and Ethereum have drawn a lot of attention, with some speculators predicting they would eventually replace fiat currencies. Others counter that cryptocurrencies are merely speculative investments with no real intrinsic value. This article explores the mechanics and history of digital currencies and assesses their potential as a brand-new form of money. It examines cryptocurrency's decentralisation, security, and volatility, as well as its advantages and disadvantages when used for trade and investment. The effects of virtual currencies on the world financial system are also examined, including the risk of disruption and any regulatory issues. Ultimately, the goal of this paper is to present a fair viewpoint on the prospects for cryptos and how they might change the way we view money. It is obvious that virtual currencies have so far had a considerable impact on the world of finance and may do so in the years to come, despite the fact that there are still a lot of uncertainties and hazards attached to them.

Key words: Cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, Decentralization, Virtual Currency, Network-based system, Digital currencies, Digital Money.

Introduction:

Crypto³ is a type of digital or online currency that must operate independently and utilizes cryptographic mechanisms for protection. It's a network-based system that is not governed by any specific body of power, be it governmental or economic. The most prominent virtual currency seems to be Bitcoin. The exchanges are tracked and verified using blockchain-based. The Bitcoin Network, LTC, XRP, and ETH were a few other well-known currencies⁴. In addition to being swapped on numerous platforms, cryptos may be employed to make purchases for both goods and services. They can, however, quickly change in value due to their reputation as being unpredictable. Despite the fact that some regard crypto as a novel and exciting incentive to invest, others are still dubious about its long-term stability and profitability.

Features of cryptocurrencies:

Decentralization: Cryptos are fragmented, which indicates that they are not under the jurisdiction of a singular body, such as a bank or the government. However, a global chain involving computers and servers would be responsible for their upkeep and verification.

Anonymous or fictitious: Users do not need to identify themselves when using cryptocurrencies because there is no requirement for a central authority. When a transaction request is made, the decentralized network will review, validate, as well as register each trade on that network as necessary. A cryptographic signature and data encryption scheme have been utilized by digital currencies like Bitcoin to authenticate these operations. In addition, to transact on the decentralized system, users can construct anonymous digital identities and wallets while still being able to safely authenticate their transactions.

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³Nakamoto, S. (2008). Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System. Retrieved from <https://bitcoin.org/bitcoin.pdf>

⁴Buterin, V. (2014). A Next-Generation Smart Contract and Decentralized Application Platform. Retrieved from <https://github.com/ethereum/wiki/wiki/White-Paper>

Inevitable and inflexible: Transactions performed using cryptocurrencies are permanent. Due to their irreparable and unchangeable aspect of cryptos, only the holder of the relevant private key is able to move their digital content, and once a trade has been stored on a block chain, it cannot be altered. Modifying the operation is not impossible, but secure cryptography makes it exceedingly difficult because it requires changing the majority of multiple nodes. All operations are clearly documented in the block chain and accessible by everyone to prevent suspicious trades (that can't be undone).

Scarcity and Restricted Supply⁵: The supply of fiat money, like as dollars as well as Euros, is limitless since financial institutions are free to print an endless number of them. As terms of various economic plans, central banks frequently alter the values of the currencies of the nations. The majority of nations regularly manipulate their economy in order to cause growth in the economy over time. Fiat money tends to depreciate in appreciation over time because of rising prices. Holders of fiat money could therefore be forced to pay for the value declines as well as deal with the risk of currency manipulation. Contrarily, the majority of digital currencies have a finite and predetermined quantity of the cryptocurrency that is built into the algorithm that underlies them at the time of their creation.

For instance, there's a maximum of 2.1 crores set available, and when this sum is achieved, no more may be created by mining. To avoid currency manipulation and value erosion over time, cryptocurrencies purposefully create scarcity.

THE NOTIFICATION OF THE MOVE BY THE RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

A note headed "Segregation of Trading⁶ in Digital Money" was published by the Reserve Bank of India on April 6, 2018, and it forbids banks, including commerce, cooperative, settlement, banks finance smaller and non-banking financial institutions, from offering services to almost any person or organization using cryptocurrencies. It consists, in essence, of a statement to all organizations subject to Bank regulation. They include keeping an account up to date, registering, exchanging, clearing, settling, and offering debts secured by digital tokens. Entities that already deal in bitcoin have a three-month window from the moment the notice is published in which to stop doing so.

WHAT MADE THE GOVERNMENT BAN THE VIRTUAL CURRENCY?

Due to the nature of uncontrolled cryptos as well as persistently disparaging statements made by government officials, RBI has produced public notices and press releases that served as a warning to the public. The RBI stated in a press release on April 5, 2018, that "Virtual Currency (VC), also with a variety of so-called digital currencies, fear of rising consumer security, market integrity, and bank fraud, among others⁷."

The RBI alerts consumers to potential hazards while dealing with virtual money in a news statement dated December 24, 2017. These dangers include:

- Losses brought on by malware assaults, compromised login credentials, forgotten passwords, etc. Due to the lack of centralized authority over the institution, an e-wallet loss might lead to the inevitable loss of any virtual money that was stored there.
- The effect of speculation is indeed the price fluctuation of digital money, which has the potential to result in

⁵Kshetri, N. (2018). Blockchain's roles in meeting key supply chain management objectives. *International Journal of Information Management*, 39, 80-89. doi:10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2017.12.003

⁶Reserve Bank of India. (2018). Segregation of Trading in Digital Tokens. Retrieved from <https://www.rbi.org.in/scripts/NotificationUser.aspx?Id=11243&Mode=0>

⁷Nair, N. (2018). Is RBI's digital currency option a solution to its cryptocurrency ban? *The Economic Times*. Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/will-rbis-digital-currency-option-be-a-solution-to-its-cryptocurrency-ban/articleshow/65651116.cms>

possible consumer loss due to the value of the virtual currency. For instance, in the past, resentment over cryptocurrencies was expressed in 2014 when the cost of Bitcoin, the most well-known currency, rose by \$1,000. There is a halt shortly after that, but the noise persisted till the price of Bitcoin crossed the \$10,000 mark in December 2017. Retail investors began to gather in digital money exchanges in this nation without even being mindful of the dangers, which caused the volume to increase in December 2017 and January 2018.

- Because virtual currencies cannot be tracked and it is challenging to identify whether such a transaction is taxable, their use can result in financial fraud, tax avoidance, and fraud. Additionally, RBI noted in a report that suggested dealing in such crypto money could lead to criminal activity. It can be used to buy and sell drugs and firearms.
- As an established exchange platform, dealing in virtual currency carries both legal and financial dangers for investors, some of which are unclear due to the platforms' unclear legal standing. Notwithstanding price volatility, there is a huge risk to traders because of the growing number of un-registered traders in this nation.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE AFORE-MENTIONED CIRCULAR

The outcome of this choice will result in a doubled RBI. One would be that people who bought and sold digital currencies as an investment with the purpose of generating instant money now must cease. The main issue is that the majority of Indian currency exchanges, such as Zebpay and Unocoin, require users to conduct transactions via their bank accounts. Investors will no longer be able to deal with this digital money using your bank account as a result of the recent change. Many exchanges may still conduct cash transactions in the interim, but these are unlawful. The exchange of cryptocurrencies should now be closed as a further outcome of this action. The time limit for closing down operations has been extended for entities under RBI regulation.

The circle's effects include that up to this point, numerous applications opposing the RBI notice have indeed been lodged in the High Court as well as in the Supreme Court. The first to submit a Kala Virtual Eco-system case to the High Court of Delhi. After that, the Supreme Court heard a challenge to the circular from the Digital and Blockchain Foundation of India⁸, a cryptocurrency exchange consortium that had been integrated within the Internet and Mobile Association of India. The Apex Court received a petition from a number of exchanges, including CoinDelta, Koinex, Throughbit, and Coin DCX. On July 3, 2018, the Supreme Court took this matter under consideration after rejecting all petitions and making its decision.

The omission of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to foresee the issue:

The RBI is merely acting like an ostrich that thinks that keeping its head in the sand will protect it from trouble. RBI thinks that by forbidding cryptocurrencies, nobody will deal with them and all the problems will disappear. Is the RBI naive in this way? Does it not realize that only legitimate users will be impacted by this? Does RBI think that traders on the VC will stop?

It merely suggests that business in the quickly expanding VC will move elsewhere. Outside of India, people will purchase and sell on the exchange. There are many ways for people to send money (even through LRS) outside of India that can then be used to purchase VC in the future. People may sell the money and conceal their revenue in order to avoid disclosing it to the tax authorities, which can result in abuse. How did the tax authorities find out the specifics of the recent cryptocurrency exchange India transaction for tax purposes? When repeatedly questioned, police and other enforcement agencies looking into questionable transactions were given information about the transfers in India. It also aids in crime-solving.

⁸Digital and Blockchain Foundation of India. (2018). Supreme Court of India. Retrieved from <https://www.newindianexpress.com/business/2018/jul/20/over-300-plead-in-supreme-court-in-support-of-cryptocurrencies-1846181.html>

Now, how will they obtain the data? Additionally, since Indian VC firms are still permitted to operate using capital, some may wind up amplifying the hazards mentioned before.

The majority of the Indian labour market works to ensure that the dangers are suitably minimized, so enabling trade and commerce including cryptocurrencies. Currently, several cryptocurrency exchanges in India run thorough KYC user checks and avoid dealing in cash to maintain transaction traceability. In actuality, RBI did not recognize the effort put forth by the opening exchanges. In any event, taking this action will simply impede the exchange of the will to act legally and transparently. In any scenario, rogue users will carry on using cash or another clandestine method.

Moreover, India's virtual currency sector referred to Andreas Antonopoulos, a crypto expert, as "Free Money" and the RBI failed to see the upside to this technology. Blockchain enabled crypto, which makes it challenging for VC to separate blockchains from cryptocurrency. After step RBI, international investors and business people will be unsure about whether India is the best country for innovation. Although Japan has adopted a different position from India with the help of venture capitalists, several of the world's most industrialized nations, like the USA, have done so because they saw India as having significant potential for innovation in manners. This action by India has put a stop to innovation in this field.

Moreover, this action not only runs against the objectives of enhancing India's digital payments systems, but it also infringes upon the fundamental freedoms of businesses operating in the Valley to engage in trade, business, and employment

CONCLUSION

Banks in India stopped offering banking services to the organization after the Apex Court, on July 6, 2018, refused to offer any support to commercial entities engaged in cryptocurrency trading. While many organizations have ceased their operations, some businesses and investors have chosen to oppose the RBI notification by lodging petitions with the High Court and the Supreme Court on the grounds that it is arbitrary and illegal. Also, some have requested the Supreme Court to rule on the legitimacy of cryptos. Whereas the Indian regulatory structure for digital currencies is still unclear, several businesses experienced significant losses as a result of the RBI circular's passage. The move by the RBI is nonetheless consistent with the government's stance on digital currencies, which is that they are not legal cash, according to a news release sent out by the minister of finance on December 29, 2017. The government promotes Indian firms simply to ensure that India's tragedy becomes another advantage by eliminating any chance of ever legalizing the exchange consisting of cryptocurrencies.

The extraordinary technological improvements of the past ten years include e-cash and other currency, it is true. Blockchain decentralization secured interactions through trademark use. However, the usage of digital currencies is not allowed, which creates difficulties in organizing these trades. The government should, however, try to strike a balance, in my opinion. The government and RBI must research and comprehend how the VC functions. Cryptocurrencies won't disappear, and RBI should understand that. Notwithstanding RBI's warnings about the hazards involved, it is evident that there aren't enough RBI controls and government-side policies⁹ in place. Moreover, RBI fell short of defending such a significant move with compelling arguments. The government or the RBI must establish clear legal frameworks or recommendations that will aid in lowering the risks highlighted by the RBI and refrain from taking actions like the hasty withdrawal of banking privileges. The RBI obviously does not grasp how virtual currencies are more identifiable than financial transactions.

⁹Reserve Bank of India. (2017). Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies. Retrieved from https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=42051

It is currently unable to predict the result due to the level of uncertainty that exists all around. A hand of amity is extended to cryptocurrency users by the deputy governor of the RBI, BP Kanungo, who said that the organization will think about adopting digital fiat currency right now. Those who wish that virtual currencies might soon replace conventional ones may find this helpful. Despite the uncertain future of cryptocurrency's legitimate use in India, which is currently the case, the technology still has a long way to go in this digital age.