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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) IN GUJARAT, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are vital for contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment, exports, balanced development and being nursery of entrepreneurs in India. During past years the production of MSMEs has grown at a higher rate compared to overall production of industry in India. Hence the relative importance of MSMEs for revival of growth in Indian economy is considerably high. In an increasingly globalised economy, it is therefore, imperative that MSMEs focus on sustainable business practices, leading to their sustainable development.

Design/methodology/approach: The present paper is an attempt to study sustainability issues for example, environmental and energy efficiency concerns among MSMEs in selected industrial cluster of Gujarat in India. The study will be done in Vitthal Udyognagar, Anand, industrial cluster of Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC). It constitutes of more than 1000 firms, constituting of 85% light engineering and fabrication firms, 5% firms are chemical and paints, and other firms. The paper will study how these MSMEs are affected by opening of the economy and are changing themselves to face competition. Thus this paper will focus on the way MSMEs are adapting to changing economic environment and contributing to sustainable economic development.

Conclusions: The study of MSMEs in industrial area of Vitthal Udyognagar reveals that most of the firms are slow in adopting sustainable business practices in the area. Only in a limited manner they are adopting sustainable related measures. However there are only a few firms which have started initiating steps related to sustainability in the industrial area under study. Thus, it can be concluded that MSMEs are adopting Sustainability issues in an impressive manner but only by few selective firms only. Hence they are yet to adopt all variety of measures and facets of sustainability in selected areas. Although it is evident that globalisation is affecting MSMEs, but many of them are doing reasonably well in managing their growth and profitability.

Keywords: Micro Small and Medium Enterprises; MSMEs; sustainable development; industrial development in Gujarat.

INTRODUCTION

India is an economy with large number of enterprises with low levels of capital investment. These enterprises account for considerable output and employment, despite the fact that they are less efficient and do not necessarily adhere to various international quality and governance standards. Despite various challenges and drawbacks Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector has emerged as a highly vibrant and dynamic sector of the Indian economy. Government was providing a lot of protection and incentives to small enterprises during pre-liberalisation era; Government had reserved many of the products for exclusive production in Small Scale industries. The idea was to protect and promote small entrepreneurs, who are likely to use labour intensive methods using low capital, locally available resources, creating jobs in small towns and rural areas, preventing migration to large cities and industrial regions, contributing to balanced development, etc., thereby achieving many such objectives in the economy.

However, liberalised policy changes during mid-1980s and New Economic policy of liberalisation in 1991, in India, this protection has been gradually withdrawn by Government of India. Thus, at present in 2015, only a handful of products are exclusively reserved for production in micro and small units in India. However, the Government of India enacted a new law to cater to the needs of this sector, namely Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMED) Act, 2006. It redefined capital investment and number of employee criterion for manufacturing and services sector units. In early 2008 the Ministry of MSME reduced the number of items reserved for small scale industry to 35 only.

Despite these changes in business environment, resulting in increased competition, MSMEs continue to play a crucial role by way of contributing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), providing employment to local population, contributing to sizable exports from country. Besides, fostering balanced development and entrepreneurial qualities; use locally available resources and provide other benefits economy at comparatively lower capital cost. It also helps in industrialisation of rural and backward areas, equitable distribution income and wealth and provides employment in rural and backward areas thereby, reducing regional imbalances.

In an era when India is on a threshold of furthering its promise of emerging as one of economic powers in the world, it is important that MSMEs become responsible corporate citizens. It is important therefore for MSMEs to operate through focusing on nine principles of sustainability (Furman, 2009) in the form of Ethics, Governance, Transparency, Business Relationships, Financial Return, Community Involvement, Values of Products and Services, Employment Practices and Protection of the Environment.

Thus, present paper provides a brief of growth and contribution of MSMEs in India and Gujarat. It also study how MSMEs are adapting to globalisation and extent of sustainable practices undertaken by them. For this, MSMEs located in Vitthal Udyognagar, Anand have been contacted to illicit required information and draw relevant conclusions. Further, recommendations will be made with regard to sustainability related issues concerning MSMEs.

For this study convenient sampling was adopted to choose respondent MSMEs. Only engineering enterprises, existence for more than 10 years were considered. The MSMEs located in Vitthal Udyognagar, Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC), Anand in engineering sector therefore constituted universe for the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A brief review of existing literature has been undertaken and presented below.

International status

Mohammed et al. (2012) observed a strong rationale for innovative practices in MSMEs sector contributing to GDP. This study concluded that performance of MSMEs in Nigeria is likely to improve as they increase the way with which they mirror large companies by taking advantage of opportunities provided by government for their growth. In addition, MSMEs have proven to be more likely to report their entrance into new markets, increased market share and providing improved flexibility of production and service of innovation.

Kiraka et al. (2013) study sought to examine that the growth and innovation in MSMEs in Kenya by assessing the performance of the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) on these dimensions. The most common form of innovation was found in change or addition of new products in the post-loan period. Innovations in terms of services, markets and sources of raw materials were however less common among women owned enterprises. Further, socio-economic profiles of women borrowers of the WEF loans were generally identical across geographical regions and borrowing streams (CWES, FI) and age groups. The study found very little evidence of significant differences in growth and innovation among enterprises across these distinctions.

Gorzeń-Mitka (2013) study aimed to identify risk identification tools in Polish MSMEs. The study showed that the risk identification techniques are previous experience, documentation review and brainstorming. Researcher suggested that the MSMEs have a problem with this issue. It may be the result of a poor knowledge about it, usefulness or possibilities of use.

Pandya (2013) stressed that sustainability has become important for businesses. According to study it offers genuine competitive advantage to private organisations and green credentials to others. The consequences of not considering sustainability as part of strategy and operations in any SME have been discussed. It also outlines various potential benefits of adopting sustainability measures for SMEs.

Lee (2009) studied the process of adoption of green management in small and medium-sized enterprises. The researcher found that SMEs can make themselves greener by making strategic and organisational changes. For greener management, the factors of organisational structure, innovation capability, human resources, cost savings and competitive advantage can influence organisational change.

Abdeen (2007) study analysed the potential for quality, cost and energy efficient integrated systems in the stationary and portable power market in response to the critical need for a cleaner energy technology. Similarly, anticipated patterns of future energy use and consequent environmental impacts as well as issues relating to renewable energies, environment and sustainable development are examined from both current and future perspectives. It concluded that energy use reductions can be achieved by minimising the energy demand, by rational energy use, by recovering heat and the use of more green energies.

Enno (2006) studied why some of the SMEs are slow while other are fast in adopting the sustainable environmental measures. The researcher found that improving the working conditions is the most important reason why these fast-going SMEs invest in environmental measures, as

this probably improves their employees' motivation and performance. This explanation connects 'planet' and 'people' with each other, and does not exclude 'profit', which completes the traditional sustainability circle. The study concludes that the attitude of SMEs to sustainability should be investigated in a different way than has been done so far. The environment should (also) be incorporated as an indirect factor and not just as a direct factor.

National status

Bharadi (2014) studied rural development and sustainability of micro, small and medium enterprises in India. The research concluded that SME sector is a nursery of entrepreneurship, often driven by individual creativity and innovation. It is the most neglected and unorganised sector of the Indian rural economy.

Joshi and Kurulkar (2004) emphasised sustainable industrial development and stated that the nature of chemical and chemical products group industries in the region is highly polluting. The paper critically discusses the role of various stakeholders as of now and its socio-economic and environmental consequences for the region and for the economy of Gujarat. Based on the conclusions the policy implications for greening of these industrial estates and the 'Golden Corridor' are being suggested.

Rana and Dhruves (2013) attempted that the empirically assess which factors are most critical in the ERP implementation process from the perspective of the Indian MSMEs. Researchers found that the critical problems of implementation of ERP systems, which can induce the suggestions of improvement strategies for the industries as well. It is believed that if organisations take suitable improvement actions the effectiveness and quality of service of ERP systems can be raised. The study provided that the partial support for the explanation of failure while implementing Enterprise Information System.

Sonia and Rajeev (2014) revealed that small industries have play a crucial role for adequately export, promotion, resources utilisation, employment and investment in Punjab state and its contribute to improving in GDP ratio of a country. It was the increasing GDP depend upon the development, productivity and performance of small – scale sector. The researcher founded that it was bright picture ahead in the future but have low rate of employment opportunity and suggests to the government and policies makers will being accordingly to push up growth in small – scale sector.

STATUS AND CONTRIBUTION OF MSMES

MSMEs in India

A strong and vibrant MSME sector has a great importance for overall health of the economy. The Economic Survey 2013–2014 of Government of India, mentions that the Twelfth Five year Plan covers various aspects of the MSME sector and its key recommendations fall under six broad verticals:

1. finance and credit
2. technology
3. infrastructure
4. marketing and procurement
5. skill development and training and
6. institutional structure.

This indicates seriousness in efforts of government to improve efficiency and quality of production in MSMEs in the country.

MSMEs account for over 90% of the total number of industrial enterprises. They are the biggest employment generator after agriculture and provided employment to more than 31.25 million people in 2006–2007. There are 12.5 million MSMEs in India contributing to around 50% of the country's industrial production. Major export from MSMEs include readymade garments, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, processed foods, leather products and marine products. The items de-reserved broadly include food and allied items, wood, wood product, paper and paper products, plastic product, organic chemicals, drug, drug intermediates, other chemicals, chemical products, glass, ceramics, mechanical engineering and electrical machines, appliances and apparatus (Narasimhan, 2008).

The MSMEs in India contribute 8% to its GDP, creating 100 million jobs through the 46 million units from the rural and the urban areas across of the Country. They also contribute to 90% of the total Industrial output and 45% of the Manufacturing output of India and come out with 6000+ products across the spectrum. MSMEs are credited in contributing to 36% of the total value of exports from the country and the sector has recorded a constant year on year growth of over 10% thereby making this sector as the backbone of country's economy till March 2014 (CII, MSME Conclave, 2014).

Manufacturing enterprises constitute 31.8% of the MSME sector and service enterprises account for the remaining 68.2%. About 55.3% of these enterprises are located in rural areas. The MSME sector showed consistent growth of more than 11% every year till 2010–2011, whereas in 2011–2012 the growth rate was 19% and in 2012–2013 about 14% (Economic Survey 2013–2014). Thus, despite slowdown in the Indian economy, the MSME sector is clocking robust growth rates.

In order to boost MSME sector many initiatives are taken by government such as

1. Technology Centre Systems Programme
2. India Inclusive Innovation Fund
3. Credit Linked Capital Subsidy
4. Credit Guarantee Scheme
5. Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme
6. MSE – Cluster Development Programme and
7. Scheme for Extension of non-tax benefits to MSMEs for three years.

The government policy also mandates that every central ministry/department/public sector undertaking shall set a minimum annual procurement target of 20% of total product and service purchases from MSEs from financial year 2012–2013 onwards, for a three year period (Economic Survey 2013–2014). The government is aware of the fact that rejuvenating small businesses in formal as well as informal sectors is crucial for generating employment opportunities for millions of job seekers in the country. The MSME sector has potential to provide jobs to a large number of youth in the country, allowing nation to reap benefits of demographic dividend. Adopting sustainable business practices by MSMEs will go a long way in sustaining their success and contribution to manufacturing in Indian economy.

MSMEs in Gujarat

Gujarat has registered an impressive industrial development since its formation as a separate state in 1960. The industrial sector at present comprises of over 1200 large industries and over 400,000 MSMEs. Various Annual Surveys of Industries by Central Statistical Organization (CSO) reinforced

the position of Gujarat as one of the most industrially developed state in India in respect of its ranking in industrial investment and in terms of value of production and value addition in industrial sector.

Over a period of time, Gujarat has diversified its industrial base substantially. In the year 1960–1961, textiles and auxiliaries were the major contributors to the industrial economy of the State. In the span of over 52 years, by 2012, the industrial spectrum has been completely transformed and now 13 major industry groups together account for 83% of factories, 94% of fixed capital investment, 93% of value of output and 93% of value addition in the state's industrial economy. During recent years, refined petroleum products industry has emerged as one of the largest industrial groups having 37% share in production, followed by chemicals having 14% share. Other important groups are basic metals (8%), food products (7.14%), textiles (5%), machinery and equipment (3.36%), non-metallic mineral-based products (2.8%), plastic and rubber products (1.81%), fabricated metal products (2.74%).

The industries in Gujarat produce a wide variety of products. The products which have substantial contribution to national production include: Soda Ash having 94% share, Salt (80%), Processed Diamond (80%), Polyester Filament Yarn (63%), Caustic Soda (42%), Phosphatic Fertilisers (37%), Sponge iron (35%), Textile Fabrics (34%), Refined Petroleum Products (33%), Nitrogenous Fertilisers (19.5%), Cement (10%) and so on. A large number of MSMEs contribute to output of these products.

The MSMEs are back bone of industrial activity in India. Gujarat has been providing high priority to this sector since initial years of industrial development. Before MSMED Act 2006 came into being, there were 312,752 SSI units registered generating 1,489,216 number of employment in Gujarat. A total of 2.62 lakh MSME enterprises were registered during October 2006 to March 2014. Thus the total number of MSMEs stood at 5.75 lakh as on end of March 2014 providing employment to 36.56 lakh people. In the Vibrant Gujarat 2011 Summit organised for attracting investment in the state of Gujarat, saw over 54% Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) being signed by SMEs. On the other hand, during Vibrant Gujarat investor summit of 2013, a total of 72.72% of MoUs was signed by SMEs. Looking to prospects of growth and development of MSMEs it is imperative to ensure their sustainability in Gujarat as well as in India to take care of interests of all stakeholders.

Sustainability of MSMEs

The MSMEs in Gujarat are present in a variety of industries and have experienced varying degree of success. Development of MSMEs is crucial for inclusive and balanced growth. MSME is less researched area due to lack of data, especially in Gujarat. Hence, sustainability related issues, among MSMEs assumes great relevance for industrial development in Gujarat and India.

Sustainability has been interpreted and defined by various experts in a variety of words. The Brundtland Commission (1987) defines sustainability as “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”. Marc Epstein (2008) has described in ‘Making Sustainability Work’ how sustainability in corporate can be achieved through harnessing processes and not by consuming. Hogevoid and Svensson (2012) described sustainability of Business as “the total effort of a company-including its demand and supply chain networks-to reduce the impact on the earth's life and eco system”.

The Economic Survey, 2013–2014 of Government of India mentions Sustainable development as an imperative for achieving intergenerational equity and as a public good has a large global dimension. It mentions that India has accommodated sustainability concerns in its development

path but is constrained in its efforts as many needs are competing for a small amount of resources. It mentions that the goals of economic and social development must be defined in terms of sustainability in all countries and the present and future consumption balance within nations has to be seen in relation to historical patterns of consumption. Appropriate legislations have been passed in India to undertake sustainable production like conservation of forests and ecosystems, waste management and pollution control. The recently launched 'Swachh Bharat Mission' is also for ensuring hygiene, waste management and sanitation across nation. Joshi and Kurulkar (2004) have emphasised role of various other stakeholders in 'greening the golden corridor' and transforming industrial estates of Ankleshwar and Vapi GIDCs to become sustainable.

However, in terms of corporate sustainability, Epstein (2008) mentions nine principles of sustainability to be complied with and adhered to by a corporate. These are

1. *Ethics*: the company establishes, promotes, monitors and maintains ethical standards and practices in dealings with all of the company stakeholders
2. *Governance*: the company manages all its resources conscientiously and effectively, recognising the fiduciary duty of corporate boards and managers to focus on the interests of all company stakeholders
3. *Transparency*: the company provides timely disclosure of information about its products, services and activities
4. *Business Relationships*: company engages in fair trading practices with suppliers, distributors and partners
5. *Financial Return*: company compensates providers of capital with a competitive return on investment and the protection of company assets
6. *Community involvement/Economic Development*: company fosters a mutually beneficial relationship between the corporation and community in which it is sensitive to the culture, context and the needs of the community
7. *Values of Production and Services*: the company respects the needs, desires and rights of its customers and strive to provide the highest levels of product and service values
8. *Employment Practices*: the company engages in human resource management practices that promote personal and professional employee development, diversity and empowerment and
9. *Protection of Environment*: company strives to protect and restore the environment and promote sustainable development with products, processes, service and other activities.

Thus, it is clear that in order to pursue sustainability a corporate needs to take care of interests of all the stakeholders. In fact it requires a complete change of the way a corporate thinks and acts, it is a complete change of its culture which is required to bring about sustainability in overall operations of a corporate. It is obvious that once a corporate becomes sustainable, it is likely to lead to accrual of large number of benefits for itself. Hitchcock and Willard (2009) mentions a few of them, which are

1. Reduction in energy use, waste and costs that is, fewer trips to landfill sites are required, thereby saving fuel and cutting costs.
2. Differentiate yourself that is, undertake to stand out of the crowd, it may be price premium or by value premium. It is likely that consumers prefer and like environmentally friendly or green producer.
3. Sidestep future regulations; if the corporate can envisage and expect forthcoming regulations, are able to get ahead of competitors. Such corporate can also play a role in formulations of green policies by the government, and can enjoy competitive advantage over competitors. In a globalised economy such practices and image of a corporate can play a useful role in its future success.

4. Create innovative new products and processes; productivity improvements and energy saving steps regularly make an organisation increasingly competitive.
5. Open new markets; being green and competitive allows a corporate to venture in a new market could be worthwhile in non-industrialised and developing country. Thus it enhances market reach and profitability for the corporate.

Hence, sustainable business practices involving all its stakeholders allow it to harness lot of benefits and success in the long run. Considering the fact that MSMEs contribute significantly to economic activity in Gujarat, an attempt has been made to study selected MSMEs from Vitthal Udyognagar industrial estate developed by GIDC, Anand with regard to sustainability of business practices as a result of changing global business environment. How MSMEs have changed themselves during last decade or so due to impact of globalisation and competitive changes in their business environment has been discussed in following paragraphs.

Sustainability in MSMEs in Selected Industrial Area (VUIA, Anand GIDC) of Gujarat

The industrial area of Vitthal Udyognagar, Anand, was established in beginning of 1950s with objectives

1. to provide most effective contribution to the cause of SMEs
2. to achieve social harmony and peace amongst entrepreneurs, workers and employees with collective prosperity through partnership of trust and
3. to attain and sustain acceptable levels of Health, Hygiene, Pollution standards and Environmental condition.

The industrial area has 992 registered enterprises out of 99% belong to MSME category. They employ approximately 25,000 persons according to VUIA member's directory of 2011. Out these 60% of enterprises belong to engineering sector, while 10% belong to Chemical and allied activities. Besides, there are firms belonging to Plastic industries (5%), Electrical (5%) and others are located in the selected industrial region.

The response from MSMEs was collected through pre structured questionnaire. Conclusions are presented as below:

1. A majority of respondents have been able to increase their turnover and profits during last ten years, but some are at the same level.
2. The respondents belonged to micro, small and medium, all the three categories.
3. Some of firms have started producing new products that is, diversified into new but related products.
4. The selected firms have been supplying their products to all types of firm including large sized firms.
5. Some of the firms have been supplying (exporting) their products to industrialised countries like Australia, USA, UK and others as well. For majority of firms the number of customer has increased and they are supplying their products to different states in India. Also the number of customers has increased.
6. Only some of the firms are employing from outside the state of Gujarat.
7. Imparting training (sending them out for training) to employees has been reported by few medium and small enterprises only, micro and small firms do not send their workers.
8. Most of the producers directly approach their customers and very few use other means like advertising through media, Internet and others.

9. Very few have collaborated with foreign producers, otherwise, micro and small firm have remained tied to local and regional markets.
10. In order to improve profitability, changes or modifications in process, etc., to improve efficiency are being adopted in form of regular maintenance, waste management and others.
11. Timely updating of machines, regular maintenance of machines following standards prescribed by electricity supply companies and other such modes are used by firms to save energy.
12. Ethical standards and practices relating to human relation practices are not used in a formal manner and are mostly informal HR practices are being used. Only some of the medium sized firms have formal HR practices in place.
13. Not all senior managers or Board members take steps to focus on interests of all company stakeholders.
14. All the respondents have been disclosing information to all the stakeholders.
15. In general firms follow fair trade practices (business relationships) with suppliers, distributors, partners etc., and illicit suggestions to improve performance.
16. Customers are provided after sales service, warranty and guarantee on the product and feedback to incorporate changes in business practices.
17. Not all the MSMEs have community involvement, however, many other are engaged in trade unions, educating children of employees, organising community activities and others.
18. For personal and professional development of employees health check-up, health insurance, sports activities, safety awareness programmes, providing gifts etc., are being practiced by many during festival times.
19. In order to save environment and conserve energy, solar lights, LED lights, tree plantation, reduction of waste, upgrading machinery, reduction in plastic use and others are being used by MSMEs.

Thus, it can be concluded that MSMEs are adapting to Sustainability issues in an impressive manner but selectively only. Hence they are yet to adopt all variety of measures and facets of sustainability in selected areas. Although it is evident that globalisation is affecting MSMEs, but many of them are doing reasonably well in managing their growth and profitability.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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