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VEWSLETT





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1. GOVERNMENT TO BOOST QUALITY STANDARDS OF 1.5 MILLION SMES

The government is working on a plan to boost the quality standards of 1.5 million small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which will support the Make in India campaign. Speaking at a conclave organised by the Quality Council of India (QCI), Amitabh Kant, Secretary, DIPP, said the Zero Defect, Zero Effect (ZED) movement being initiated by the QCI will change the manufacturing landscape of the country, transforming the MSME sector completely.

QCI chief Adil Zainulbhai said the council was working on programmes to improve the standard of goods and services of the MSME sector. "In the next five years, we hope to help 1.5 million SMEs in improving the quality of their products," he said, adding the QCI would seek the help of global institutions in achieving this goal.

On the ease of doing business, Kant said the Commerce and Industry Ministry will integrate all the Central and state government services to the e-Biz platform. The e-Biz portal provides one-stop clearance platform for investment proposals.

"We have created an e-Biz platform where we are integrating (Central and state services). Fourteen services of Government of India have been integrated. But over the period of time, we will integrate all the state and Central government services so that there is one paper and one point of payment to make India an easy and simple place to do business", Kant said. Kant also called for boosting manufacturing sector of the country in order to create jobs and boost economic growth.

(The Tribune, August 1st, 2015)

2. SMALL COMPANIES HAVE TO THINK DIGITAL

Despite all the focus on Digital India, a massive 36% small and medium businesses (SMBs) in India are still offline with just about 10% of them near an "Advanced Digital" adoption stage. However, a report by Deloitte and Google, suggests an increase in revenue for companies adopting social media, cloud computing and mobile tools resulting in substantial increase in revenue. The report is based on a study of over 500 SMBs spread across various sectors, but primarily in the B2B space and located in urban India.

The 10% "digitally advanced" firms can expect an annual revenue growth of 19% and are 4.5 times more likely to be offering new products, expanding their businesses and becoming job creators with 84% of them looking to hire. For the study, Deloitte divided digital engagement among SMBs into four stages: Offline, with no internet connectivity or devices; Basic, with intermittent access to the web and social media; Intermediate, with e-commerce platforms or websites to connect with customers and client; and finally the Advanced, with companies that have moved on to cloud platforms, mobile tools, etc to better coordinate their businesses.

Interestingly, in contrast to the growth of digitally advanced SMBs, Deloitte and Google found that firms that operate totally offline were seeing revenues falls 8% annually, while those with just basic digital presence had zero growth. Those at Intermediate levels were seeing 14% annual revenue growth.

"There's a low adoption curve for digital in India. In such a scenario, I feel that a right policy framework can help change this. Digital adoption can help many businesses make a jump start," said Prakash C Prabhakar, director, Deloitte in India. "The government has to step in and give the right push like fiscal incentives to help digital adoption," he added.

Prabhakar pointed out that cultural perceptions with regard to technology are another roadblock in the adoption of new digital tools. He says often business needs drives digital adoption and infrastructure was a crucial factor here. "Reliability of mobile transactions is still a concern. This is an infrastructure problem that needs to be solved by the government to boost digital adoption," he added.

The study also looked at how some SMBs have been utilising cloud storage and found that across a variety of uses from databases and storage to marketing and external communications, the dependence on cloud services was between 33 to 21%. While the maximum cloud usage was for databases and storage, their usage was under 30% for functions like accounting, internal communication, management workflow and customer relationships. In short, the study shows that many SMBs are slow to adopt cloud management tools.

"SMBs that have turned to cloud and mobile tools have seen solid growth," pointed out Mohit Pande, India country manager for 'Google for Work'—the search giant's own tools offer a host of features like Gmail for work, Android, Google Docs, Google Cloud and the like. Google for Work costs around R150 per month per user to an SMB, but it comes with limited storage of 30 GB.



Unlimited storages cost more at \$10 per month per user. He highlighted the story of SpoonJoy, a Bangalore startup that delivers lunches, which grew faster thanks to use of Google Apps. On the other hand, 50-year-old manufacturing company EMCO saw 30% growth after adopting digital tools. Creating a ground for larger adoption of digital tools among SMBs is crucial as they hold the potential to create 50 million jobs in the non-agricultural sector, says the study, which will help significantly in India's dream of 8% growth.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Digital India initiative is likely to plug the gaps in infrastructure which has traditionally been the biggest impediment for the adoption of web tools in India. Projects like Bharat Net, a rural broadband connectivity project using optical fibre, solar-powered Wi-Fi system and 100 Gbps optical fibre cable (OFC) link, could gradually start making it easier for smaller companies to adopt new technology and to start depending on its for critical functions. But as the Deloitte-Google study shows, SMBs can no longer wait for things to improve before becoming part of the digital bandwagon.

(Financial Express, August 3rd, 2015)

3. PAYTM AIMS TO BRING A MILLION SMALL MERCHANTS ONLINE

Digital payments company Paytm, founded by Vijay Shekhar Sharma, is handholding small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to come online. It hopes to expand the network of merchants on its e-commerce marketplace from the existing 60,000 to 100,000 by the end of this year and, eventually, to a million.

Through its GoBig platform, the Alibaba-backed firm is not only providing tech tools such as content writers, web marketers and photographers but has also created a directory of service providers that extend loans to SMEs along with finance and accounting firms.

Paytm has 300 employees who are tasked with helping SMEs sell online, but the company can only scale up to a certain limit through this way, said Renu Satti, vice-president (business). "If Paytm has to bring a million merchants on is platform, we need to provide them with a complete ecosystem," she added. Though Paytm, which forayed into e-commerce only recently, competes with the likes of Flipkart and Snapdeal, the company has publicly stated that its focus is more on unstructured or unorganised trade.

Satti said since the company aims to become a true marketplace by connecting buyers and sellers through its platform, Paytm will not own any warehouses in the future but will rope in warehouse firms as partners, which can help merchants with logistics. Similar is its strategy on courier or delivery companies. "We want to play the role of a facilitator at each level," said Satti.

Ant Financial Services, part of the Jack Ma-owned Alibaba Group, has a 25 per cent stake in Paytm. The company is modelling its many ventures on the businesses of Alibaba in China. Its e-commerce foray is a reflection of Alibaba-owned TaoBao, an e-commerce site in China. Alibaba first invested in Paytm in February and there is speculation of more investment. According to a recent report in The Times of India, Alibaba will increase its stake in Paytm from 25 per cent to 40 per cent. "However, it will be capped at 40 per cent, since the company doesn't want to become a subsidiary of Alibaba in India," Paytm founder was quoted as saying in the report.

In another report last month, Sharma said the company's gross merchandise value (GMV) increased from Rs 2,500 crore in 2014 to around Rs 9,500 crore and hoped to touch Rs 10,000 crore by the end of July. According to Sharma, the mobile marketplace will push Paytm's total transaction value to \$4 billion by the end of 2015. Half of this will come from mobile commerce, while the rest will come from its existing e-commerce wallet business.

On the other hand, according to various media reports, Snapdeal touched an annualised GMV of roughly \$2 billion in March and is hoping to increase it to between \$8 billion and \$10 billion by March. Flipkart, the oldest player in the market, has set a target of generating a GMV of \$8 billion by December.

Despite it being a relatively newer player, what works in Paytm's favour is the fact that it doesn't charge merchants a commission on their sales, making money instead on fees charged when they transfer money earned out of the site. On the flip side, the platform might suffer in comparison due to the fact that its logistics are not directly under its control. Satti argued that Paytm is different since it believes in being a "true marketplace" and the self-support it is offering through the GoBig platform will go a long way in building India's online commerce.

A vast majority of the SMEs do not know where and how to get their items photographed or even how to get soft loans for their businesses, they can just look up the directory and find the right partners, she said.

"There are eight to nine million small businesses in India, even if we manage to get a million online, it will be big," she added.

(Business Standard, August 3rd, 2015)





4. PERMIT FDI IN E-RETAILING: MANUFACTURING ASSOCIATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

Three associations from textiles, MSME and gems and jewelery sector have asked the government to permit foreign direct investment (FDI) in e-retailing.

Textile Association of India, All India MSME Association and Gem and Jewelery Trade Council in a written representation to Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman have asked to review the policy of opening the business-to-consumer (B2C) ecommerce sector to FDI.

"Opening the B2C model will enable manufacturers to sell directly to ecommerce companies who can then use their own inventory and supply chain to sell it directly to the consumers," Textile Association of India (TAI) said in a statement.

Currently, 100 per cent FDI is permitted for B2B ecommerce but it is prohibited in B2C. Ecommerce is emerging as a strong channel driving consumption and growth in the country, it said adding that the platform has enabled manufacturers to access wider distribution and marketing channels at much lesser prices.

"They are now able to access a wider national and even global market at the click of a button. This will also give the manufacturers access to a reliable and faster supply chain for the delivery of their products," the statement said.

TAI National President Arvind Sinha said that the government should open ecommerce to FDI to enable growth of manufacturing.

"The ecommerce platform has enabled many small jewellery designers and manufacturers to scale quickly; and over the next few years, the online jewellery space is estimated to grow by 60-70 per cent annually," Gem and Jewellery Trade Council of India President Shantibhai Patel said.

(Diligentia Services, August 4th, 2015)

5. RBI URGES BANKS TO IMPROVE MSME LENDING

Urging the banks to boost lending to small businesses, the Reserve Bank of India said the MSME segment was a safer bet than large corporations. The apex also said that it has received seven applications for setting up the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) and has started the due diligence process.

"Everyone should be equally conscious of the fact that there will always be limitations in lending to the individual... So look any which way, the most potential segment for the credit growth to come, in our condition, is MSME sector," Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor S S Mundra said.

Mundra said the gross NPA number for loans to MSME segment might be bigger as compared to loans to large corporates, but cases of restructuring are far too smaller, which results in a lower overall stress.

"If you look at the total percentage of stress, I think the MSME sector is much better than the large corporates," Mundra said. With fears on asset quality of banks continuing and a concern that the newly introduced "5/25" scheme for refinancing being used to mask the stress, Mundra said the central bank is looking at accounts refinanced by banks under the 5/25 rule. (New Indian Express, August 7th, 2015)

6. CITY GARNERS RS 237 CRORE MSME INVESTMENT PACTS IN 1ST SITTING

If Rs 15,000 crore might be a bit long off target for MSME investments in the lead up to and during the Global Investors Meet 2015, Chennai district alone has clocked in Rs 237.27 crore in one sitting. Small investors numbering 103 from the city signed MoUs with the government to set up small businesses in the State.

Signed in one mammoth sitting in the presence of two state ministers - B Valarmathi, Minister for Social Welfare and Nutritious Noon Meal Program and Gokula Indira, Minister for Handlooms and Textiles, along with Chennai Mayor Saidai Duraisamy, they inked the deals. The total investment spans 17 sectors.

The MoUs are part of the government's ambitious effort to clock in substantial MSME investment during the Global Investment Meet to be held on September 9 and 10 this year.

The target allotted for Chennai city out of the Rs 15,000 crore overall target is Rs 1250 crore, said Chennai district collector E Sundaravalli.

(New Indian Express, August 9th, 2015)





7. SMEs RAISED RS 44 CRORE THROUGH IPOS DURING APRIL-JUNE PERIOD

As many as nine small and medium enterprises (SMEs) got listed on capital markets with public issues worth Rs 44 crore in the first quarter of fiscal 2015-16, with eight IPOs launched in June itself, according to latest Sebi figures.

In comparison, six SMEs had launched their initial public offerings (IPO) and raised a total of Rs 63 crore through these issues during the April-June 2014-15 period, according to Sebi data.

As per the latest figures of the regulator for June, eight SMEs came out with public issues in the month, raising a total of Rs 39 crore from investors.

Comparatively, stock exchanges saw IPOs from three SMEs worth Rs 24 crore, in the same month, last year.

Ambition Mica, Junction Fabrics and Apparels, Mishka Exim, VMV Holidays, Jiya Eco-Products, M D Inducto Cast, Majestic Research Services & Solutions, Gala Print City -- were the eight companies that launched their initial share sale in June 2015. While one SME had hit the capital markets with an IPOworth Rs 5 crore in May, no issue was launched in April.

BSE and the National Stock Exchange (NSE) had launched SME platforms in March 2012, becoming the only two bourses to offer such a segment in the country.

BSE has 99 companies listed on its SME platform, with a total market capitalisation of Rs 7,709.15 crore, as on date. The stock exchange is expecting about 100 IPO issues on its SME segment during the current fiscal.

NSE has six firms trading on its platform for SMEs.

The platforms provide opportunity to SME entrepreneurs to raise equity capital for growth and expansion. It also provides immense opportunity for investors to identify and invest in good SMEs at early stage. (Business Standard, August 11th, 2015)

8. ALIBABA, SIDBI TO TAKE SMES GLOBAL

Alibaba, the world's most valued e-commerce platform, is in advanced talks with Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) to help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) get a global market place. Alibaba, which listed on the US stock exchange last year and is expanding aggressively outside China, will ensure that digital plays a transformative role in India much as it has done in other parts of the world.

K Shivaji, chairman and managing director, Sidbi, said, "Discussions are on with Alibaba and there are a couple of options before us. We are deliberating so that MSMEs can have a global market place. Even last week we had discussions with them." Finding avenues to sell their products in a fiercely competitive global marketplace has been one of the toughest tasks for SMEs in India. E-commerce will help them compete with their bigger peers through a more efficient distribution system, experts said.

Sidbi, the principal financial institution for promotion, financing and development of the MSME sector, already has a tie-up with Snapdeal, one of the country's largest online marketplaces. The memorandum of understanding with Snapdeal will help Sidbi join the e-commerce company's Capital Assist initiative, which was launched last year. This offers Snapdeal sellers customised financing options based on their business category and requirements. Banks have been lending to MSMEs while calibrating the corporate credit growth. As of June 30, 2015, the total outstanding credit to the sector was Rs 3.74 lakh crore, about 4.8% higher than the year before. Total bank credit during this period was Rs 61.75 lakh crore, according to the Reserve Bank of India data.

Sidbi also has a scheme called Mudra credit, where loans up to Rs 10 lakh are given to entrepreneurs without a collateral. But finding a market place is something that the sector has been struggling, and the tie-up and promotions with e-commerce partners like Alibaba are expected to open up new revenue stream for the MSMEs.

"Bankers and financial institutions have called for a refinance package for MSMEs, which contribute 17% to the GDP and form 50% of the employment. Out of the four crore MSMEs in India, about 10% close down every year for want of bank loans, unwillingness of the promoters to invest in latest technology and inability to respond to the needs of the market. E-commerce platform is sometimes the only answer for SMEs, which find it difficult to get the right price for their produce," a senior banker said.

(DNA India, August 17th, 2015)





9. FINANCE MINISTER ARUN JAITLEY LAUNCHES TWO FUNDS BY SIDBI

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley launched two funds by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), a fund of funds with total corpus of Rs 12,000 crore. The funds are Rs 2,000-crore India Aspiration Fund (IAF) and SIDBI Make In India Loan For Enterprises (SMILE) scheme with an investment size of Rs 10,000 crore.

"India is witnessing a start-up revolution and to harness the potential of India's innovators and entrepreneurs a vibrant financial ecosystem is essential. The IAF is intended to play a vital role in this financial ecosystem," Jaitley said.

"The fund is expected to catalyse tens of thousands of crores of equity investment in start-ups and MSMEs. The insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has also agreed to be a partner and co-investor in the fund," he added.

"Various important initiatives taken by the government was sanguine that Make in India initiative with a conducive financial ecosystem will make India a manufacturing hub very soon," the minister added.

"Fund amounting to Rs 20,000 crore has been sanctioned by the MUDRA Bank and we are targeting to take it to Rs 1 trillion," Jaitley said.

The idea behind the launch of SMILE scheme is to provide soft loans in the nature of quasi-equity and term loans on relatively soft terms to MSMEs to meet the required debt-equity ratio norm as also for pursuing opportunities of growth by existing MSMEs.

The focus will be on identified 25 sectors under 'Make in India' programme with emphasis on financing smaller enterprises with the MSME sector.

The Rs 10,000-crore SMILE scheme, which has built-in higher concessional terms for the enterprises promoted by scheduled caste (SC)/Scheduled tribes persons with Disabilities (PwD) and women, is expected to benefit around 13,000 enterprises with employment of nearly 2 lakh persons.

SIDBI will be providing 15 per cent of the total corpus which will be mobilised by the start-ups through various resources under IAF or fund of funds.

"We have already made a commitment of financing Rs 752 crore to the start-ups which will be further mobilising Rs 8,620 crore under IAF and we are expecting to provide Rs 2,000 crore under the scheme which was likely to mobilize fund to the tune of Rs 20,000 crore in future," SIDBI chairman and managing director Kshatrapati Shivaji said.

"Normally we provide loan under the scheme under 2:1 debt-equity ratio. LIC has agreed to be a partner and co-investor in the fund," he added.

"We will be providing funds under the scheme to sectors like IT, biotechnology and digital technology," Shivaji added. (DNA India, August 18th, 2015)

10. BANDHAN BANK'S RURAL FOCUS TO AID POVERTY REDUCTION, SAYS FM ARUN JAITLEY

A new bank — Bandhan Bank — was born with a robust network of 501 branches and 1.43 crore accounts across 24 states, vowing to have a unique focus on the rural India and MSMEs and holding the promise to give a big fillip to financial inclusion. Launching the first full-fledged bank to start operations in the country in over a decade, finance Minister Arun Jaitley said it would fund lakhs of small and medium entrepreneurs, help create jobs and act as a response to agrarian poverty.

The launch of Bandhan Bank comes close on the heels of the RBI giving payment banks licences to eleven entities, in what is perceived to give a boost to digital banking and help in the furtherance of financial inclusion.

Over 71% of Bandhan's branches will be in rural India, including at least 35% in unbanked areas. Bandhan Bank is the first instance in India of a micro-finance entity transforming into a universal bank (it got the RBI licence in June). Kolkataheadquartered Bandhan is also the first bank to open in eastern India post-Independence.

"No bank has started with such a huge number of branches and accounts," Chandra Shekhar Ghosh, founder, MD and CEO, Bandhan Bank, said. He indicated that the new bank would initially stay away from lending to corporates.

It plans to have 632 branches and 250 ATMs in 27 states by the end of this financial year. State-wise, West Bengal has the maximum number of branches at present at 220, followed by Bihar 67, Assam 60, Maharashtra 21, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura 20 each, and Jharkhand 15. Customer base stands at 75 lakhs now with around Rs 10,500 crore loan book.

The RBI licensing norms stipulates that a new bank must have at least Rs 500 crore capital. Against this, Bandhan has started with Rs 2,570 crore capital, which will soon be ramped up to close to Rs 3,052 crore.

The savings bank account interest rate has been fixed at 4.25% for balance up to Rs 1 lakh and 5% for balance above Rs 1 lakh. For term deposits, the maximum interest rate has been fixed at 8.5% for 1-3 years, with an additional 0.5% for senior citizens. The bank's base rate for the time being would be 12%.



Terming the launch of the new bank a "landmark initiative", Jaitley said: "A great institution is being born in West Bengal. Bandhan will now create millions of small and medium entrepreneurs with small credits. It is of a great significance. Large entrepreneurs are not able to generate large number of employments, while small entrepreneurs create 11-12 crore jobs."

"Generally, banks take money (deposits) from rural and semi-urban areas and lend it to big borrowers. But we will take money from rural and semi-urban areas and give it to the same regions," said Ghosh, who had founded Bandhan as a microfinance institution 14 years ago.

The bank would focus more on deposit mobilisation as it would help reduce cost of funds. "Now our cost of funds depends on bank borrowing. Going ahead, we will have access to more deposits and our cost of funds will also decrease. I promise you (customers) that we will keep on passing the benefits with reduction of our cost of funds," Ghosh said. In the first day of its banking operations, Bandhan received about Rs 80 crore in deposits.

Ghosh sought "some flexibility" from the RBI as the newly-launched bank would continue to focus on rural and semi-urban areas. RBI deputy governor HR Khan, who was also present at the occasion, said the regulatory issues would be considered 'sympathetically'. "We have the challenge of funding the unfunded and here comes the Bandhan Bank. I am sure that the bank will open new horizon in the India's banking space," Khan added.

For deposits, the bank will initially depend on its existing microfinance customers across the country. Of the total customers, 30% are in metro and urban areas. The bank is planning to use its time-tested, hand-held point-of-sale devices for taking deposits from the doorstep of its customers, who can also withdraw money from their account. (Financial Express, August 24th, 2015)

11. ADDRESS ISSUE OF RETAIL NPAS TOO: BCG REPORT

There is an uptick in retail non-performing assets (NPAs) and this merits the attention of banks with great urgency, according to a BCG report released on the occasion of the annual FICCI-IBA Banking Conclave. While retail NPAs in gross terms came down from 3.2 per cent in 2011 to 1.5 per cent in 2014, they edged up to 1.6 per cent in 2015.

The report said a lot has been written about the growth in NPAs in Indian banking and the focus has been on the corporate and MSME segments, where for a range of reasons, the NPAs have gone up dramatically.

In 2015, the banking sector's NPAs in the corporate and MSME segments rose to 5.2 per cent (from 4.6 per cent in 2014) and 7.4 per cent (5.4 per cent), respectively. In the agriculture segment, it rose from 4 per cent to 5.2 per cent.

"Retail business has been an oasis of quality for the last few years, where NPA levels had been coming down continuously for all types of players in the industry. However, the trend seems to be reversing.

"Across all types of players, we notice an uptick in retail NPAs," said the report.

The BCG report also observed that banks have beefed up bad debt management over the past few years, but that has been mostly for commercial credit.

The capabilities required to contain bad debt in retail are substantially different from commercial credit.

"The number of accounts is large, the amounts are small, rapid action is very critical, and steps have to be institutionalised," said the report.

Doubtful accounts must be pursued well in advance with analytics and predictive modelling, it added. (Business Line, August 24th, 2015)

12. INDUSTRIAL PROFILE OF 652 DISTRICTS READY, SAYS MSME MINISTER

Union Minister for MSME Kalraj Mishra said his ministry has prepared the industrial profile of 652 districts under the skill mapping project. These details, stored in a CD, would help new entrepreneurs select the best location according to their business needs. "The profile carries details like number of training institutes and engineering colleges in each district, availability of various raw materials and types of existing industries in that district. Entrepreneurs can contact us to get the data," the minister said.

(Finance Express, August 28th, 2015)





13. INDIA PITCHES RATING UPGRADE TO S&P ON STRONG MACROS

Backed by strong macro fundamentals, the Finance Ministry pitched for a rating upgrade with global agency Standard & Poor's (S&P). Currently, India has a rating of 'BBB -' with a stable outlook.

Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian made a presentation to the team from the rating agency, comprising Paul Gruenwald, Managing Director & Chief Economist (Asia Pacific), and Kryan Curry Director (Sovereign & International Ratings).

According to sources, during the presentation, the agency was told that inflation, the fiscal deficit, and current account deficit (CAD) are under control.

"India has strong medium-term growth potential and therefore is exceptionally placed globally and reforms are persistent, cumulative, and creating an impact. Growth in the current fiscal will be better than fiscal 2015," the CEA said in the presentation.

Subramanian talked about restoration of macro stability besides room for further monetary easing. He expressed optimism that the cumulative effect of reforms and better monsoon are reasons for growth, which should be around 8 per cent this fiscal year.

The agency asked the Indian team how the country would deal with China and other external market turbulence. It also appeared to be worried about the slowdown in exports, and the external debt situation.

However, Subramanian, according to sources, said though China's growth was higher, India's potential growth rate is much higher than China's.

He also said that the government is committed to bring down the fiscal deficit to 3 per cent in next two years. At the same time, with oil prices coming down along with gold imports, the CAD is estimated to be lower than the 1.3 per cent recorded at the end of fiscal 2015. Besides, this deficit will be comfortably financed by reserves.

In a separate presentation, Financial Services Secretary Hasmukh Adhia (who has been appointed as Revenue Secretary now), highlighted three major steps in governance reforms and better accountability.

According to the sources cited earlier, the S&P team asked whether there are targets for lending to the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) sector and whether the government plans to set up a holding company for stressed assets. The government responded that there was no need for a separate company as Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) already existed.

It also noted that banks had enough credit for lending. Adhia also highlighted the government's capital infusion plan in public sector banks.

(Business Line, August 31st, 2015)

14. TAMIL NADU TO SOON UNVEIL POLICY FOR SMALL, TINY INDUSTRIES

The Tamil Nadu government will announce a new policy to encourage medium, small and tiny industries, Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa announced in the Assembly. Tamil Nadu is among the leaders in the MSME sector with over 11 lakh units having a cumulative investment of over ₹67,000 crore and employing over 60 lakh people. The government will soon announce the new policy that will encourage the medium, small and tiny industries and make the State the Asian hub for this sector.

Jayalalithaa also said with a well-established base in the MSME sector, a multinational study will be conducted to enhance the global competitiveness of this sector.

The Chief Minister also announced a ₹ 100-crore, multi-storeyed industrial building will be constructed in Guindy industrial estate, in Chennai, to provide space for MSME and tiny industries.

This will help to address the space constraint in the industrial estate which was started in 1958.

(Business Line, August 31st, 2015)





15. TWITTER LAUNCHES SELF-SERVICE ADVERTISING PLATFORM IN INDIA

Micro-blogging site Twitter has launched a self-service advertising platform for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) in India, the social networking service announced.

Twitter has expanded the platform reach of Twitter ads globally from 33 countries to over 200 countries and territories.

"Now, SMBs from India to Iceland can more effectively reach their target audiences on Twitter in 15 languages. In addition, Twitter also announced the total active advertisers, including SMBs to be approximately 100,000," the company said in a statement

"Small and medium-sized businesses face the most challenges and are least resourced to promote the good work they do.

"With the expansion of the Twitter self-service ads platform, we are excited to give SMBs level the playing field with digital advertising to increase their sales," Emily Huo, SMB lead for Asia Pacific at Twitter said in the statement.

There are 51 million SMBs in India, according to market research firm Zinnov. Start-ups registered in India are projected to go up to a whopping 11,500 by 2020, independent consultancy KPMG reports.

"Anyone with a small business, from tech start-ups to retail, and even mom and pop shops, can now use our platform to target and engage in real-time with more than 316 million active Twitter users worldwide and increase sales," the statement added.

(Financial Express, September 3rd, 2015)

16. SMEs RAISE RS 113 CR THROUGH IPOS DURING APRIL-JULY

As many as 14 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) got listed on capital markets with public issues worth Rs 113 crore in the first four months of the current fiscal.

In comparison, nine SMEs had launched their initial public offerings (IPO) and raised a total of Rs 90 crore during the April-July period of the previous fiscal.

According to the data available with <u>Sebi</u>, five SMEs came out with public issues in July, raising a total of Rs 44 crore, while eight SMEs hit the capital markets in June to mop-up Rs 39 crore.

Further, one SME had hit the capital markets with an IPO worth Rs 5 crore in May, while no issue was launched in April.

These companies are from sectors like trading, steel, manufacturing, textile and <u>finance</u> and are <u>spread</u> across the country, according to a report by Knowledge and News Network, a media platform that focuses on micro and SMEs.

<u>BSE</u> and <u>the National</u> Stock Exchange (NSE) had launched SME platforms in March 2012, becoming the only two bourses to offer such a segment in the country.

BSE (formerly known as Bombay Stock Exchange) has about 104 companies listed on its SME platform, with a total market capitalisation of over Rs 7,700 crore. This platform has helped the listed SMEs to raise nearly Rs 756 crore.

The stock exchange is expecting about 100 IPO issues on its SME segment during the current fiscal.

The NSE has 18 firms trading on its SME platform. The platforms provide opportunity to SME entrepreneurs to raise equity capital for growth and expansion. It also provides immense opportunity for investors to identify and <u>invest</u> in good SMEs at an early stage.

(Economic Times, September 8th, 2015)

17. OVER RS 21,000 CRORE DISBURSED UNDER MUDRA YOJANA

Expressing confidence that Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana would rejuvenate small and medium scale units in the country, Union Minister for Law D V Sadananda Gowda today said a total of Rs 21,586 crore has been disbursed under it so far benefiting over 3.3 million people.

Addressing a state level convention of BJP leaders here, he said major significance of the scheme was one could avail a loan upto Rs 10 lakh without collateral security.

(Business Standard, September 17th, 2015)





18. INDIA, CAMBODIA SIGN TWO MoUs

Vice-President Hamid Ansari signed two Memorandums of Understanding — on tourism, and on the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Initiative — with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen following a session of delegation-level talks.

The Mekong-Ganga MoU related to five 'quick impact projects', one of which was a \$50,000-grant to Cambodia for the upgradation of an Entrepreneurship Development Centre. The other four projects included two in healthcare, especially to do with malaria, one on agriculture and one on women's empowerment. The tourism MoU was aimed at boosting tourist movement between the two countries.

Following the meeting with Mr. Hun Sen, Mr. Ansari also addressed Cambodia's Council of Ministers, the first such address by a high-level foreign dignitary. "There is good scope for sharing experiences for mutual benefit between our two countries. Agriculture and agro processing sector, mining, oil and gas, and small and medium enterprises offer opportunities for trade and investment by Indian business houses," he said in his speech.

Mr. Ansari also mentioned a Special Purpose Vehicle with regard to the CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) countries, a decision initially announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his Budget. "As part of our initiatives, the government has recently set up a Special Purpose Vehicle to attract Indian investments to Cambodia and other CLMV countries. We hope to launch this new initiative soon and I am confident that in the near future, more Indian companies will explore the investment opportunities," Mr. Ansari said.

The Vice-President attended a ceremonial welcome by Mr. Hun Sen at the historic Peace Palace, prior to which he laid wreaths at the Independence Monument and the Royal Memorial. On Thursday, Mr Ansari will visit the famous Angkor Wat temple at Siem Reap in Cambodia and then travel to Vientiane, the capital of Laos.

(The Hindu, September 17th, 2015)

19. SAMSUNG, MSME MINISTRY TO OPEN 10 TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

In an effort to realise the Prime Minister's 'Make in India' programme, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) has tied up with Korean firm Samsung to set up 10 technical schools across the country to provide hands-on industry training.

Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Kalraj Mishra inaugurated one such technical school at the MSME campus at Guindy, Chennai.

MSME-Samsung technical schools have been established at 10 places in the country, including Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

"Through this joint venture, we shall be able to impart training to 10,000 people every year. Post-training, they will be able to get employment in Samsung or other manufacturing companies. This will also enable them to set up their own service centres for repairing and maintenance of electric and electronic appliances," said the Union Minister.

In the recent past, the Ministry has signed MoU with Samsung Electronics to set up MSME- Samsung Digital Academy. Under this, training would be provided to develop mobile apps based on Tizen Software.

More than 15 lakh students get technical training in India every year, but the number of persons getting employment was less. The Centre has, therefore, laid emphasis on the policy of 'Job for every skilled person'.

"In 2014-15, the technology centres and other training institutes functioning under the Ministry of MSME imparted training to six lakh persons," Mr. Mishra said.

Jehwa Lee, Vice-President, Samsung India Electronics, said, "India is a key growth market for global consumer electronics manufacturing which lends itself to enormous employment opportunity."

The Minister also said the government was working on possible ways to revive and rehabilitate some of the sick MSMEs. (The Hindu, September 18th, 2015)



20. MSMEs TO GET ONE PAGE e-REGISTRATION

To ease the registration process of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the government would soon notify a simple online registration system, MSME secretary Anup K Pujari said.

The "one page" registration system "will be called Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum," he said on the sidelines of a MSME summit organised by FICCI. The notification is awaiting the approval of the law ministry.

Under this platform the establishments will have to self-certify details of their existence, bank account, business activity, and employment and ownership. This one page form will replace the cumbersome Enterprise Memorandum (EM) I and EM II forms, that exists now.

(Hindustan Times, September 19th, 2015)

21. LENDING TO MSMES MAKES STRONG BUSINESS SENSE: RAGHURAM RAJAN

RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan said lending to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) entrepreneurs particularly in the e-commerce space makes a strong business sense for the banks given the changing dynamics of the economy.

"Lending to MSME entrepreneurs, especially in e-commerce space makes a strong business case for the banks given the changing dynamics in the economy, such as, demographic patterns; urbanisation trends; increasing disposable income and dependence on technology platforms; growth in Internet user base and availability of easy payment options," Rajan said.

With continuous handholding of MSME entrepreneurs, bankers can help them sell their products on e-commerce space and reach a huge market space without having brick and mortal presence, he said.

Financing of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across the world has become very significant in recent years, he said, while addressing MSME entrepreneurs, who are also suppliers for e-commerce like Amazon, Snapdeal and FlipKart.

Speaking at the meeting RBI Regional Director Deepak Singhal emphasised the need for clarity in terms of regulating this new and fast growing sector in view of rapidly changing business models and technology advancement. (Economic Times, September 22nd, 2015)

22. MUDRA YOJANA TO GET A PUSH FROM PM MODI

MUDRA Yojana, implemented early this year to help small business units, will soon get a leg-up from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is scheduled to launch a mega credit campaign to promote the initiative. He will launch the state-level campaign in Dumka, Jharkhand, on October 2.

In a bid to promote the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY), launched in April, the department of financial services will organise mega campaigns across all districts beginning September 25 to October 2. During the campaign the government aims at disbursing 25 lakh Shishu loans and the department has set a target of 25 Shishu loans per bank branch. The PMMY provides loans between Rs 50,000-10 lakh to small entrepreneurs. The Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency Ltd (MUDRA) focuses on the 5.75 crore self-employed who use funds of Rs 11 lakh crore and provide jobs to 12 crore people.

So far, as per the government data, against a target of Rs 1,22,118 crore for fiscal 2015-16, Rs 22,572 crore has been disbursed as on September 15 to 33.90 lakh borrowers. The loans are available under the categories of Shishu, Kishor and Tarun to signify the stage of growth and funding needs of the beneficiary micro unit or entrepreneur. Under Shishu loan, Rs 3,940 crore have been disbursed to 26.90 lakh borrowers, Kishor loan Rs 11,742 crore to 5.99 lakh borrowers and Tarun loan worth Rs 6,889 crore to one 1 lakh borrowers. Shishu category covers loans up to Rs 50,000 while Kishor covers above Rs 50,000 and up to Rs 5 lakh. Tarun category provides loans of above Rs 5 lakh and up to Rs 10 lakh. In lending, priority has to be given to SCs/STs enterprises.

(Indian Express, September 24th, 2015)



23. NSIC TO OFFER SKILL TRAINING TO WAR WIDOWS

The National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) is working on a plan to ensure a better future for war widows through skill development training. Besides, it's in talks with the Indian Army to explore the possibility of offering skill training to ex-servicemen, NSIC CMD Ravindra Nath said. "We are thinking of training war widows on how to give them a better place in society so that they can have a better future tomorrow," he said. (The Pioneer, September 27th, 2015)

24. SINGAPORE SMES SHOULD VENTURE INTO INDIAN MARKET, SAYS OFFICIAL

Singapore's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) should move out of their 'comfort zone' and go regional, especially enter the Indian market, a top Singapore-India chamber official has said.

Speaking at a forum over the weekend, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) Chairman R Theyvandran asked the SMEs to venture into India as the time is right with a stable economy.

"India is now on a great drive to attract many industries," Theyvandran told some 200 businessmen at the "India-Singapore Trade: Challenges & Opportunities."

He said: "It is really a challenge to go into India but, as in every venture, there will always be these challenges." He asked the SMEs to form partnerships with Indian enterprises who understand local cultures and practices. There is also a need to overcome the challenges instead of getting defeated by them. They vandran cited an example of how his educational business, the Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS), has found a local partner in India, after several years of search to set up a university there.

Take the risk but take small steps to be part of the massive infrastructure and economic development in India, he said. One of his preferred choice for investments is Andhra Pradesh, which plans to build a new capital city-based on Singapore master plan. He pointed out a report by The Boston Group, which called on Singapore SMEs to go regional and move out of the 'comfort zone'.

Smaller firms in Singapore are missing out on the huge prospects in Asia. Noting that Singapore companies were not as ambitious in expansion as their regional counterparts, the report called for a mindset shift and move out of the 'comfort zone' to tap the region's full potential.

(The Pioneer, September 29th, 2015)

25. INCUBATION CENTRES IN RAJASTHAN TO PROMOTE NEW COMPANIES

In a major initiative, Rajasthan government will set up 50 incubation centres for the promotion of startup. Incubation centres will be set up under Rajasthan Startup Policy 2015, which was approved in the meeting of state cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje. New policies for MSME sector and Biotechnology have also been approved during the cabinet meeting.

The three policies hold immense importance especially in wake of Resurgent Rajasthan Partnership Summit scheduled to be held in month of November.

State government will soon constitute a committee which will identify the 500 most promising startup companies in Rajasthan. Through these 50 incubation centres the startup companies will be given all possible assistance by state government for their holistic growth.

"in order to materialized and promote the ideas of youth and new entrepreneurs, we have constituted Rajasthan Startup Policy 2015. Under this policy we will establish 50 incubation centres to promote and support the startup companies in Rajasthan," said Arun Chaturvedi, social justice minister.

Mr. Chaturvedi informed that Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje has also approved a scheme for the revival of sick micro and small units in Rajasthan.

(Deccan Herald, September 30th, 2015)





MSME Growth Through Rural Industrialization- Key to Poverty Alleviation

By: Dr. H. P. Kumar

Large-scale rural unemployment is one of the main characteristics of most of the underdeveloped and developing countries. Generally, these economies suffer from the problem of rural population, which is mainly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Large part of this population can be substantially utilized in nonfarm activities without affecting the agricultural output. This will enhance the economic development, which is not possible without the productive use of rural population.

The linking factor between economic development and poverty alleviation in any economy is the extent of employment generation. As the greater proportion of the rural people in India is below the poverty line, any intervention geared towards poverty alleviation must focus on the rural areas. The urban areas have better employment opportunities and the poverty in those areas is not as serious as in the rural areas, therefore, it is very important that effective measures be taken for appropriate interventions for rural poverty alleviation. In this context it is important to promote and create a supportive environment for the all round growth of MSME Sector particularly through Rural Industrialization.

Labour being the most abundant resource of the rural areas, any programme for rural employment generation must maximize the productive use of labour. Also the experiences of many advanced countries demonstrate that MSME Sector is an engine of growth. Thus, taking into account the above issues and the extent of poverty prevailing in rural India, creation of employment opportunities through rural industrialization for the faster growth rate of rural areas is essential.

The role of MSMEs in rural economy is very obvious. Indian rural economy is suffering from mass poverty, which is a consequence of unemployment and the resultant disparities of income and wealth. Rural Industries are labour-intensive by their very nature. These industries provide the maximum employment per unit of capital invested; the labour-capital ratio in these industries is higher than that of large-scale industries. A corollary of higher employment potential of rural industries is the higher output capacity per unit of capital. Just as a labour-surplus economy tries to maximize the employment potentiality of available capital resources, it also tends to maximize the output potentiality of available capital resources. Rural Industries with a higher output generating capacity per unit of capital offer a very useful technique of growth to the developing agrarian economies.

In past, many Government-sponsored schemes have been implemented for the growth of rural economy and to provide employment opportunities. Also, various types of special programmes have been designed from time to time to create additional employment opportunities. Some of these programmes are targeted to provide wage employment or self-employment to specific target groups such as the poor in urban and rural areas, Women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In addition to targeted employment programmes, there are other wage and self-employment programmes which do not target a particular group.





Need for support

In order to have greater impact of these programmes, there is a need to study and understand the gaps that prevent the effectiveness of the end results of these programmes and also to put forward an improved model for 'Rural Employment Creation' by providing an integrated support structure to enable the rural folk to set up MSME Enterprises.

The first and foremost requirement is to identify various 'Rural Technologies' which can be applied and installed with small investment and minimum infrastructure that is available in rural areas. After this an innovative model of an integrated support system should be established for generation of Rural Industries. The model which should hold the promise of achieving multi-faceted goal of sustainable economic development and generation of additional employment opportunities by way of promoting entrepreneurship and setting up of small rural industries. An integrated approach for creating self-employment opportunities would certainly help improving the economic condition of rural folks and reduce poverty levels in rural areas.

This integrated approach should encompass Training, Sourcing of Appropriate Technologies, Micro Finance and Marketing. This will not only provide complete hand holding support but also a self-sustaining system for poverty alleviation through rural empowerment. A large part of employment generated by such integrated model will be self-employment through setting up new small business entities by way of manufacturing, processing & service enterprises.

The outcome of this model should be seen as a 'New Urbanized Rural Population' thereby achieving the objective of multi-faceted sustainable economic development.

Use of low Cost Technologies

In brief, Rural Industrialization seems to be the possible solution to gainfully employ the underutilized rural population. Rural industrialization does not really mean commissioning of big industries. Need of the hour is to employ technologies which can be operated by one or two persons or a small group of people. Technologies which do not require high level of skills to operate upon, which do not need big power load or equipment which can be manually operated. This will gainfully employ unemployed unskilled, semiskilled or skilled youth.

In the end, I firmly believe that the solution to the problem of poverty, inequality and unemployment in rural India lies in a comprehensive programme of over-all rural development through Rural Industrialization which can be achieved through the promotion and creation of MSME units in Rural areas. Piecemeal efforts in providing consumption subsidy or will not succeed in making any appreciable dent on the problem. India's experience during the last six decades has amply borne out the judiciousness of this contention.



To Summarise:



For India's rural population in-situ urbanization by creating opportunities for self-employment through setting up more and more Rural Industries is the answer. This clearly marks the need to create an Integrated Support System for creation of Rural Micro and Small Enterprises (RMSEs), which should help to closing some of the gaps in this area and play a crucial role in alleviation of 'Rural Poverty' through self-employment. The model should create an integrated support structure which could facilitate creating new Rural MSME Entrepreneurs using local skills, neibourhood marketing, using local resources, sourcing of appropriate technologies, using local raw materials and availing Micro financing. This should not only be a complete hand holding support system but also a self-sustaining system for poverty alleviation for rural empowerment.

* The author is Ex-Chairman cum Managing Director, NSIC



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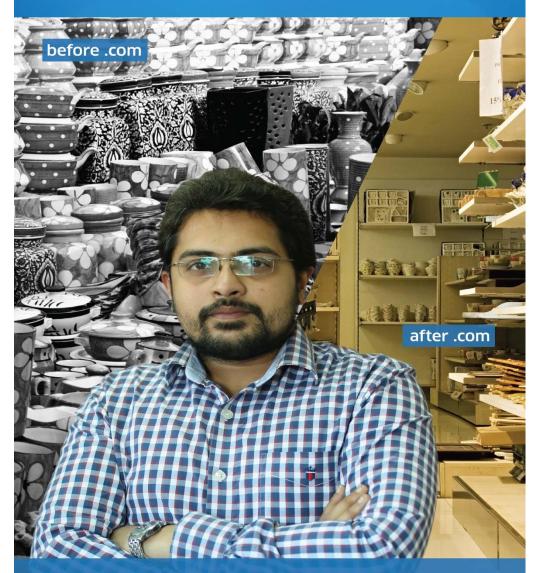
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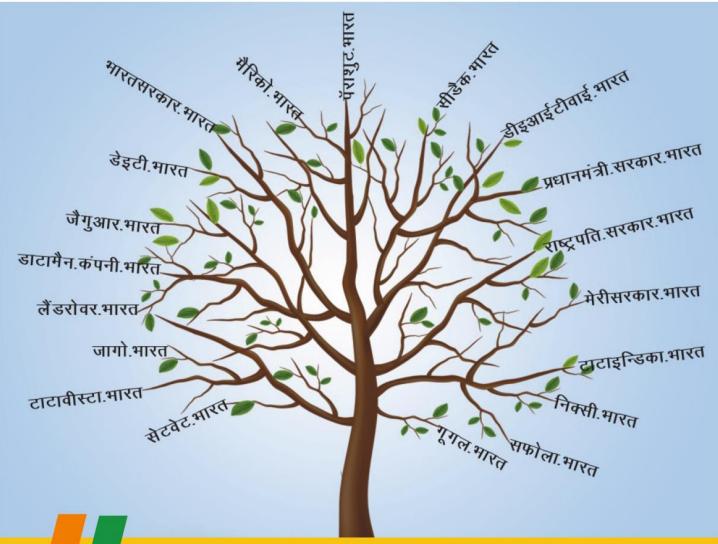
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