



Reporting on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises: An Introduction

1.0 Background

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)(micro, small and medium enterprises, as it is called in India) are undoubtedly a significant global presence. People need them because they speak the common man's language; and it is the common man that ultimately shapes history. The word 'ultimate' is crucial. History is shaped by the strenuous initiatives and experiments of the 'common man'. They may fail initially, but ultimately they win - and that is what history teaches us.

Reporting, which means documenting developments, and bringing to the limelight the unknown, is often the researcher's job. But from the society's point of view, the scientist's job, even with the best of justice he has done to his work, just begins there. He cannot just remain complacent with such research findings. The societal implication of his exercise comes out only when the results of his research is communicated.

In India, 'economics and business' for much of the mainstream media, means "stock market" and "banking". It is against this background that the subject of MSMEs deserves to be discussed in dedicated communication forums. And who discusses them? There are questions that demand more clarity especially in a context where at least three-fourth of the world population experience significant pressures in their day- to- day physical and economic life. The central aim of this research volume is to position itself as a communication tool in the context of MSMEs against the backdrop of global economic slowdown, wherein the whole world discusses the role and potential of MSMEs.

The world today is in an accelerated learning process. The rapid changes in the global economy, as we see them today, have far-reaching implications on the

prospects of MSMEs, and that of the common man. In the present era of the Internet, there is no dearth of information, but knowledge as a powerful instrument of development, is far behind.

Knowledge systems have a crucial role today. Knowledge and its concentration have proved the success stories of many of the advanced countries of today. However, it is important that knowledge be translated from the abstract to the concrete level. Gone are the days of considering SMEs as a panacea for the ills of a developing economy. SMEs are important today, for a different and specific reason. Understanding this specifics is important from the point of view of evolving appropriate development programmes and for their meaningful implementation.

India's understanding of its MSME role has changed significantly over time. Today, it can contribute significantly to shape a growing economy into increased perfection. MSMEs today need to be understood in terms of what they are, and what they can. Such knowledge also needs to be communicated for two reasons: (1) to trigger MSMEs into action; and (2) to establish their due role in India's march towards lighter growth rates.

2.0. Reporting MSME Developments

Reporting on the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector is quite an innovative experience in the developing world. This new trend owes much to the initiatives of a specialized platform within the Institute of Small Enterprises and Development, the ISED-Small Enterprises Observatory. 'India MSME Report' series, which forms part of the Institute's path-breaking experiment, the 'India MSME Communication Programme (IMCP)', has come of age. The Report has been widely quoted as an authoritative source

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