



Introduction

1.0. Background

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)¹ are undoubtedly a significant global presence. People need them because they speak the common man's language. And it is the 'common man' who ultimately shape history. Through his strenuous initiatives and experiments. Often he fails, but ultimately wins - and that is what history tells us.

Bringing to the limelight the unknown, and documenting it, is the scientist'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 his research findings. The societal implications of his field come out only when his work is communicated.

Science and technology are the basic building blocks of the world's achievements today. However, dwindling media coverage of science and technology also places more responsibility on the part of scientists and the professionals for reaching the public directly. Coverage of science and technology occupies only a few percentage of overall news coverage, according to the 'State of the News Media-2008 Report' of the Project for Excellence in Journalism. The Report says that the newspapers and the network T.V. news devote only 2 per cent of their coverage to science and technology and 7% for health and medicine. These percentages are far lower than for government,

foreign affairs, elections, politics, crime and economics and business (Meredith, 2010). In India, 'economics and business' for much of the mainstream media means simply "stock market" and "banking". It is against this background that the subject of MSMEs is being discussed. And who discusses them and what is being discussed? These are questions that need much more clarifications especially in a context where at least three-fourth of the world's population experience significant pressures in their day- to- day economic life under the present economic crisis.

The central aim of this book is to position it as a tool of communication in the arena of MSMEs. Such positioning is visualised against the global economic slowdown, wherein the role and potential of MSMEs is being widely discussed.

The world today is in a great learning process. Technology has led a small section of the world population into an alley of conspicuous consumption. The consumption mania of the 1980s, especially in countries like the USA, which destroyed our balance with nature and ruined people's lives, is fast getting eroded. US household consumption declined sharply in the late-2008, marking the departure from the trend of a steady increase since the 1980s (IMF, 2010). The era of 'collaborative consumption' has come, and that is likely to be the dominant paradigm in the coming years. Rapid changes such as these have

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