

Under-Informed Policy Interventions and Long-Run Damage to Industrialization (An Analysis of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhyaan)

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic came as a major shock to the economies around the world. To buy some time in order to plan, execute and implement measures to prevent and face the pandemic around 50 nations across globe implemented lockdown. India announced the spring lockdown in March 2020. Given the agile healthcare system, huge population and under-development the nation had to extend the lockdown. One of the worst hit sectors because of the lockdown were the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMEs). The sector looked forward for economic incentives and packages from the government. In June 2020 the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhyaan' (self-sufficient India campaign) was launched. The paper using the Annual Survey of Industries data examines in detail how the package was not sufficient to meet the needs and expectations of the MSMEs sector. The paper establishes that the MSMEs sector is the face of industrialization process in India. We argue that the package failed to address the actual problems in the sector and instead came up with the policies that may well deteriorate the sector further and harm the overall industrialization process. The major policy recommendation established by the research is strong and honest leadership relying on quadruple-loop learning model.

Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic has been a major shock to the global economic process. Right from the time first case of Covid-19 was registered in China, economic instability both at macro and micro level was registered. There has been a global decline in consumption, disruption of supply chains and interruption in production (Fernandes, 2020). The pandemic has come to hit different global economies with various intensities depending on a number of factors like GDP of the country, nature of government and socio-economic factors. The impact of the pandemic propelled crisis has been felt differently across nations based on the level of development and the policy responses. Nations that responded with strong and informed policies dealt comparatively well with the situation as compared to the nations with delayed and weak policies. Around 50 countries across the globe implemented either partial or complete lockdown (Kashyap & Raghuvanshi, 2020). Lockdown as a strategy to control pandemic is a short-term measure used to buy some time in order to plan and execute the proposed solutions in a binding manner. The economic costs of lockdown are huge that no nation especially the developing nations can't afford. The consequences of a lockdown can propel an economic depression

India has been hit badly with the Covid-19 pandemic which is currently under its second wave. The economic impact of the pandemic is negatively pronounced and the whole economy has suffered immensely since the spring lockdown of 2020 that was rolled for months at a stretch. The fall in the national GDP is worst recorded till date after 1951. Table.1 below shows the decline in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country from 2015-16 to 2019-20. Though the whole economy has been suffering due to the pandemic, the focus of the current research is the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMEs) characterized as the lifeline of Indian industrialization.

The current research is based on a three-year panel study of the Annual Survey of Industries data from 2016 through 2018, in line with the latest data availability focusing on the MSMEs sector in India. Since, the sector provides employment to 11 crore Indians and is scattered throughout the country a sudden uncertain shock in the face of the Covid-19 has affected a big segment of the population associated with the sector. The unexpected circumstances lead to the nationwide spring lockdown in March 2020. The MSMEs sector had to close down followed by a decrease in demand and disruption of the supply chain. The sector has been in a lot of distress since then. In June 2020 the government of India launched the much-awaited industrial economic package of Rs.20 lakh crore under the name, “Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhyaan” (self-sufficient India campaign) with a definition change for the MSMEs. While the MSMEs sector had pinned a lot of hopes from the government in cushioning from the pandemic shock, the package didn’t serve the expectations well. The study analyzes the package in detail and points out the rhetoric prerogatives and ambiguities in the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhyaan in light of facts, figures and empirics.

Table 1
Change in Growth Rate at 2011-12
Prices

Year	GDP	GVA	GNI
2019-20	4.18	3.89	4.17
2018-19	6.12	6.04	6.14
2017-18	7.04	6.59	7.12
2016-17	8.26	7.97	8.27
2015-16	8.0	8.03	7.99
Source; Statisticks Times, (2021)			

The Msmes Sector In India

The empirically identified main drivers of economic growth in the developing world are the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMEs henceforth). Given the problems of underdevelopment, backwardness, poverty and resource bottlenecks, large scale industrialization is not possible in the developing world. As a consequence, the vital process of industrialization must be decentralized and entrepreneurship based (Singh, 2019). The MSMEs usually have a single ownership making decision processes easy. There is flexibility in processing and execution. The efficiency of the sector has increased over time as there has been learning by doing process going on (Singh et al., 2017). In order to continue being in business the MSMEs sector has to keep on competing and enhancing the performance.

The number of registered MSMEs at the end of 2020 in India stood at 25.13 lakh units (IBEF, 2021). MSMEs in India have been the major drivers of socio-economic growth. Given the fact that India lives in

its rural areas, MSMEs have disseminated the process of industrialization at the micro level by making rural, semi-urban and peri-urban regions fit for the growth and development of MSMEs. 51% MSMEs are located in the urban areas while 49% have a rural location (Gol; 2020). The major problems faced by Indian economy including unemployment, poverty and lack of technology is been taken care by the MSMEs sector. Though production and trade at national and international levels, MSMEs sector contributes 29% GDP of India. The sector provides employment to 11 crore Indians across the nation at a very low capital cost, adding the feasibility of the sector. Based on the 73rd round of NSSO (2016-17), the annual report of MSMEs Gol (2020) confirms that the MSMEs sector over time has been successful in steady convergence of equitable distribution of national income and wealth. 96% of the MSMEs have a proprietary type of ownership making decision making an easy and speedy. Of these units, 80% are owned by men and 20% are owned by women. Though still reflecting a vast gender inequality, there has been a steady improvement over time. The micro units especially have contributed greatly towards the neutralization of patriarchy in the Indian society which characteristically is a traditional society. While 21% micro units mostly start-ups have women ownership, only 3% medium units are owned by them, reflecting the potential of women empowerment in India by self-sufficiency and economic powers.

Given the population, demographic dividend and level of development, MSMEs in India are labor intensive. There however are a number of problems faced by the sector that has hindered its growth prospectus. The sector has to be constantly evolving in order to complete with the global products. The threat of becoming technologically obsolete has always loomed over the head of the sector. Many a number of times, units have become technologically obsolete yet the entrepreneurs have kept the production process going by strategies like learning by doing, coping strategies and localized innovations (Radjou et al., 2012). MSMEs highly depend on credit for their growth process and the overall credit availability in the country is very low (Athaide & Pradhan, 2020). MSMEs in India have lagged behind in maintaining the product standards to make their outputs globally competitive. Attainment of this characteristic demands a wide government intervention and proper industrial counseling. Another problem faced by the sector in India is the lack of skilled people in the sector leading to compromised levels of efficiency.

Amongst the MSMEs sector, the micro enterprises are the most important and widely spread sub-sector in developing nations with large population and lack of ample employment opportunities. People with innovative business ideas in such nations can turn concepts into reality viz. the micro enterprises (Anderson & Boocock, 2002). The micro enterprises face different business experiences and challenges. There are a number of conflicting objectives that these firms are supposed to pursue. Major two issues faced by these enterprises are the limited resources and limited technology. Altogether micro enterprises perceive a great level of uncertainty. Given the fragility and importance of the micro enterprises there is a bigger role for the government to play in safeguarding and ensuring growth of these units.

Considering these facts, the Government of India has always focused on the MSMEs sector. Industrial policies at the central and state levels have been specifically aiming at upholding the growth and development of MSMEs. Statistics clearly reflect the fact that the government has been contributing to a

great extend in the growth and development of this sector, the Covid-19 pandemic put a lot of pressure on the government and in a hysterical manner some steps and policy changes were taken that may lead to a decline in the overall growth prospectus of the MSMEs sector.

Given the problems of poverty and unemployment, the micro sector in India has the potential to address the problem at a national level targeting the grass-root economic agents (Coad et al., 2008). Collecting empirical evidence from nations like Singapore, Taiwan and Korea among others can be validated that the micro sector has ushered an age of economic prosperity and growth (Ghosh et al., 1998; Kim & Lee, 1998; Siu, 2002). It can be concluded from such sources that Micro sector has the potential to transform the Indian economy provided right policy choices are made, appropriate research and development is carried and factually motivated cost-benefit analysis is carried out. Micro firms tend to perform better in the labor-intensive sector which is a promising opportunity for a populous country like India.

Simultaneously other positive features of micro units, i.e. informal communication and strong social-networking can also be harnessed well, which happens to be a traditional society already having strong social-networking at various levels. Behavioral characteristics like motivated management also add to the feasibility of micro sector in India.

Singh et al. (2016) while interviewing entrepreneurs in India, clearly discover that the needs and requirements of the MSMEs are different at each stage and keep on evolving. Micro units constitute the maximum number of MSMEs in India (). Therefore, the attention of the government and policy should be focally on the micro enterprises. The requirements of micro entrepreneurs are different from those of the medium and large entrepreneurs. The spring shutdown of March 2020 in India harmed a number of formal and informal micro enterprises to the extent that many had to go out of business. While in the developed world and many other developing nations, there was an immediate government relief and support policy provided by the government successfully, India lagged behind to cushion its MSMEs in general and micro enterprises in particular.

Data And Methodology

The current research is a panel study of the registered MSMEs in India from 2016-18, as per the latest data availability. The data has been taken from the Annual Survey of Industries. It is collected and disseminated by Ministry of Statistics and Plan Implementation, New Delhi. Other sources of data used for this study includes broad statistics from IBEF (2021) and Statitics Times (2021). The main findings of the research are based on descriptive statistics derived from the panel data. To confirm the labor intensiveness of the MSME firms, Stochastic frontier model is build using the Battese & Coelli (1988) model. To measure the efficiency level of the firms, post-estimation is carried out and the technical efficiency predicted. The overall technical efficiency level is predicted for the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises in light of the old and revised definitions.

The stochastic frontier model is based on the theoretic axiom that an(y) economic agent can't exceed beyond the optimal frontier, i.e. a producer given the existing resources can't exceed beyond the

production frontier. The Battese and Coelli (1988) is a time invariant measure of inefficiency. Cobb-Douglas production function is used for the present analysis. The model for calculating the stochastic frontier is given in equation I, below;

$$\ln y_{it} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \ln K_{it} + \beta_3 \ln L_{it} + \beta_4 \ln I_{it} + V_{it} + U_{it} \quad \text{I}$$

Where,

\ln is the natural logarithm, to the base of e . $\ln y_{it}$ is the gross value of output produced by the i^{th} firm in the t^{th} time period in log terms. β 's are coefficients to be estimated. $\ln K_{it}$ is the log of the capital used by the firms in the production of output. $\ln L_{it}$ denotes the labor used for the production process and measured as the log of total wages given by the firm to all employees. $\ln I_{it}$ is the sum total of raw materials used in the production process. It is the purchase value of total inputs brought by the firm. V_{it} is normal error term. It is assumed to be independently and identically distributed with mean 0 and variance σ^2 , and has a normal distribution. U_{it} is the error term reflecting technical inefficiency of the firm. U_{it} is a non-negative random variable, independently distributed. It has mean μ_{it} and variance σ^2 .

Technical efficiency of the firms is derived by running a post-estimation on the frontier results. The technical efficiency of a firm ranges from 0 to 1. Firms having technical inefficiency score close or equivalent to one are highly inefficient firms and the firms with a value closer to 1 are the frontier firms.

Results And Discussion

The overall industrialization in India is dominated by the MSMEs sector as reflected by Figure.1 and Table.3. There are only 31% firms from the total sample falling outside the MSMEs category considering the old definition and 39% while counting using the June 2020 definition (see Table 4 for definitions). Given the importance of the MSMEs sector, the government of India has been continually launching new schemes to make the sector grow with vibrancy and efficiency. Table.2 enumerates the major schemes in place currently for the overall growth and development of the MSMEs sector. The latter part of the table counts the main schemes that majorly focus on the micro sector. Table.5 in detail enumerates the number of registered Micro, Small and Medium enterprises in India. It can be clearly seen that there are more than 22 lakh micro enterprises across India, highlighting the fact that Micro units are the most important sub-sector as far Indian industrialization process is concerned. As stated by Hadjimanolis (2000), the accessible way to entrepreneurship for the people in poor regions of the world is through the grass-root level micro enterprises. The fact is empirically validated by Table.6 which shows that micro units dominate in number the MSMEs sector.

Table 2
Schemes for MSMEs in India

Scheme	
Major Scheme for MSMEs	Prime Minister Employment Generation Program and Other Credit Support Schemes
	Development of Khadi, Village and Coir Industries
	Technology Up-gradation and Quality Certification
	Marketing Promotion Schemes
	Entrepreneurship and skill Development Program
	Infrastructure Development Program
	Scheme of Information, Education and Communication
Major Schemes for Micro Enterprises	Credit Guarantee Trust Fund for Micro & Small Enterprises (CGT SME)
	Scheme for formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises
	Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)
	Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS)
	Procurement and Marketing Support Scheme (P&MS)
	Technology Up-gradation and Quality Certification
Source; MSMEs (2021)	

Table 3
Absolute Number of MSMEs in India

2020	Absolute Number of Units
Micro	2206000
Small	295000
Medium	10,981

Source; IBEF, (2021)

When the spring lockdown of 2020 was extended for months at a stretch, the unforeseen economic shock hit the Indian Economy in an unexpected way. Table.1 above clearly highlights the economic shock and downturn faced by the Indian Economy with drastically falling GDP. The Government of India proclaimed that it was going to announce a major package for the secondary sector in general and the MSMEs sector in particular. In May 2020, the finance minister of India, Nirmala Sitharaman announced the 20-lakh crore stimulus package for the secondary sector focusing specifically on the MSMEs. One of the major

announcements that came with it was the change in definition of the MSMEs as summed up in Table.4. The flexibility of change, edit and omit is one of the most important feature of Indian constitution system. The change however is always time specific. There was a demand for updating the definition however, changed definition during pandemic may not have been an appropriate one. Although government claimed the definition to be pro MSMEs, it turns out that the definition is not supportive of the sector as we argue in this paper. The turnover component of the definition is in synchronization with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework (Jebaraj, 2020). On the scheme's parameter, the definition comes to be of least help to the MSMEs, especially the micro enterprise.

Of these, 3 lakh crore was assigned as collateral free loan for the MSMEs to deal with the pandemic induced crisis (Jebaraj, 2020). 20,000 crore sub-ordinate debt has been announced for the MSMEs declared as NPA during the pandemic. This came as the first blow to the expectations of the enterprises in the country. Entrepreneurs and other industrial stakeholders were looking forward for relief packages and not loans. Empirical research like Vandenberg et al. (2016) highlights the credit constraint problems faced by the Micro and Small enterprises in developing nations. Thampy (2010) in detail explains the limited credit options available with the micro enterprises in India. The capital market in highly inaccessible to the micro units and these units face the information asymmetry problems. Banks being the major source of credit, charge a high rate of interest making the micro units unable to repay the loans without possible chances of default. A statement issued by the government of India and well documented in newspaper and other official records confirms that by the end of 2020, a collateral free loan of Rs.45,000 crore was given to the MSMEs sector (Soni, 2020). The moratorium of such loans usually is 12 months and may last a tenor of 04 or more years.

Given the uncertain nature of the Covid-19 pandemic with reoccurring waves and least success with vaccination research, stability couldn't be predicted. In such circumstances, offering (collateral free) loans was the last thing informed policy could have done. The problems of adverse selection and moral hazard were created by this policy. The desperate entrepreneurs in order to keep their units running, simultaneously facing the problem of information asymmetry jumped into availing the collateral free loans inviting long term problems for their enterprises. Instead of cushioning the units with relief packages the central government offered loans (both special package and usual) pushing the micro units into high chances of defaulting and bad loans threatening the whole sector across the nation. The second wave of Covid-19 pandemic has been worst felt in India as compared to the first wave. More people have been affected in all the possible manners including physical, psychological and financial. The moratorium period is about to end and the firms have not been in a position to operate on their optimal capacity hinting to the inability of being able to pay the loan back on time.

Table 4
Definition(s) of MSMEs

		Micro	Small	Medium
Old Criteria	Investment in Plant and Machinery	Less than Rs.25 Lakh	Greater than Rs.25 Lakh Less than Rs.50000000	Greater than Rs.5 Crore Less than Rs.10 Crore
	New Criteria	Investment in Plant and Machinery	Less than Rs.2500000 Greater than Rs.2500000, Less than Rs.50000000	Greater than Rs.5 Crore Less than Rs.10 Crore
	Turnover	Less than or equal to Rs. 5 Crore	Greater than Rs.5 Crore Less than 50 Crore	Greater than Rs.50 Crore and Less than or Equal to Rs.25 Crore
Source; MSMEs (2021-a)				

Table.6 gives the data description for the current research. The pre-2020 MSMEs definition has been arrived at by taking the value of 'plant and machinery' from the ASI data and categorizing the firms on the basis of their investment in the gross fixed capital. At par with the MSMEs (2021-a) definition of MSMEs given in Table.4, the units have been classified as Micro, Small, Medium and Other units. Other units are the large enterprises that have an investment level of more than 10 crore in 'plant and machinery'. While classifying the firms under the changed definition of MSMEs, the revised amount has been considered for investment in 'plant and machinery' and the value for turnover is taken as ex-factory value of output as enumerated in the ASI data.

Table 5
Firms under Study; from ASI Panel Data

		Micro	Small	Medium	Others	Total
MSMEs pre 2020	Percentage	47.7	16.08	5.4	30.82	100
	Number of Firms	95,356	32,144	10,787	61,616	199,903
MSMEs post 2020	Percentage	24.57	23.04	13.74	38.65	100
	Number of Firms	49,121	46,053	27,459	77,270	199,903
Source; Author's Compilation from ASI Data						

Though provision of loan was not a viable option for the micro entrepreneurs in general, it could be a useful channel to meet the needs of pandemic crisis if it was specified for the contingency units like medical supplies, domestic necessities and other basic items that have been facing supply constraints. But the eligibility criteria put forth by the finance ministry to avail this benefit was a turnover of more than

a hundred crore, expiring on 30th October 2020. Given the amount of turnover required for availing this loan, no MSME qualifies. As a result, no collateral loan came as an aid to the large corporations who can use the same to avail long run benefits excluding the sector in crisis that demanded immediate relief and impetus.

The government of India intends to infuse Rs.50,000 crore in equity for the MSMEs, one of the main targets being listing of MSMEs on the stock exchanges (Tantri, 2020). Of this amount only Rs.10,000 crore is provided by the government of India, rest Rs.40,000 crore is planned to be raised from the market. Given the fact that exposing the MSMEs sector to loans can lead the sector into a vicious circle of debt trap, equity infusion seems to be a long run plan of upholding the growth of MSMEs with more productive investment and declining debt ratios. However studies like Oura (2008) clearly emphasize upon the fact and figures about the backwardness of the Indian financial system. The information asymmetry problems linger in the sector and especially in the micro units that are spread equally across the rural and urban breadths of the country. With the dual problems of constrained financial system and information asymmetry, this plan is perceived not to yield any commendable success proximately.

Table 6
MSME Firms under Study

		Micro	Small	Medium	Total
MSMEs pre 2020	Percentage	68.96	23.24	7.8	100
	Number of Firms	95,356	32,144	10,787	138,287
MSMEs post 2020					
	Percentage	47.3	44.34	8.36	100
	Number of Firms	49,121	46,053	8,682	103,856
Source; Author's Compilation from ASI Data					

Table.6 presents the MSMEs studied under the panel. Till June 2020, 69% MSMEs were categorized as the micro units, however afterwards only 47% firms' fall under this category. The schemes mentioned in Table.2 have an edge towards the micro unit. Micro units get more subsidies and other rebates. After the definition change, 22% units have been moved to small sector raising their cost of production and taking away the incentives. This move over the course of time will hamper the growth of the MSMEs in general and the medium sector in particular. The negative impact of the definition change is greater because the firms have been facing a second phase of lockdown in 2021. The businesses across the country have been shut. The domestic demand has been decreasing ever since the spring lockdown of 2020 and the demand from the global market is dim too. The loans offered to the firms pose more risk to their existence than the chances of ending the financial distress.

One of the major fundamental problems of the Indian economy, vast unemployed population has been steadily taken care by the MSMEs sector. The result of the stochastic frontier function is shown in Table.7. From the results of the frontier it can be seen that the coefficient of the log of labor is 0.45, validating the fact that industrialization process in India is highly labor based. Quite contrary to the importance of labor in the process of industrialization, Rao (1944) highlights the labor problems in the country that after so many decades have a stark continuity. He highlights the major problems of the labor force in India as the lack of skills, informality of jobs, un-unionized groups, malnutrition, indebtedness and superstition. Labor research from the current times empirically agrees on all of these problems (Goldar & Aggarwal, 2012; Gulati et al., 2012; Zaghera, 1998). People from all over the country migrate to the different places nationally in the hope of finding a (better) job. As a consequence, India has a large migrant population mainly responsible for participation in all sorts of industrial activities. Majority of them barely make a subsistence wage (Deshingkar & Akter, 2009). As the pandemic crisis hit and panic gripped the country with the announcement of the lockdown migrant workers were in no position to face the uncertainty (Khanna, 2020). The economic package was expected to have some relief package for the laborers but nothing was served. Given the inability to buy food, these workers had to head home. The main drivers of MSMEs in India are hit with the issue of food security and no policy implementation has been put in place to help them. Damage to laborers is long run damage to the industrialization process of India.

Table 7
Stochastic Frontier Results

Log of Output		
Frontier	Coefficient	P Value
Log of Capital	0.08 (0.00)	0.00
Log of Labor	0.45 (0.00)	0.00
Log of Other Inputs	0.22 (0.00)	0.00
_cons	6.12 (0.03)	0.00
U sigma	7.76 (2.29)	
V sigma	1.49 (0.00)	
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000		

Using the post-estimation method after calculating the stochastic frontier, the technical efficiency of the firms is measured. The average technical efficiency of MSMEs in India is 66%. The efficiency of the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises based on the earlier and revised definitions is presented in Table.8. It can be seen that the efficiency level of the micro enterprises shows a dip of 04% already. The data on which this efficiency is calculated is the pre-Covid-19 data and reflects no uncertainty shocks. There is a decline in the efficiency of the micro units because the units that were performing better got re-classified into small enterprises. There would have been a much decline in the overall efficiency of the MSMEs in general and the micro units in particular after the spring lockdown of 2020. The enterprises that got re-classified as small units have lost business ever since and at the same time are no longer eligible for the protection schemes covering the micro units. As a result, the definition change and other segments of the economic package, 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhyaan' hasn't contributed positively and significantly to the cause of growth and development of MSMEs in India.

Table 8
Technical Efficiency of MSMEs

	MICRO	SMALL	MEDIUM
OLD	0.65	0.65	0.66
NEW	0.61	0.66	0.67

Source; Author's compilation from ASI data

Conclusion And Policy Recommendations

The study examined the MSMEs sector in India in light of the pandemic crisis. The study finds out that the MSMEs sector is the face of industrialization in India and the micro enterprises are the accessible channels for the potential and innovative entrepreneurs to participate in the secondary sector. In light of the unexpected economic shock, the MSMEs sector has been greatly hit given the fact that many units in the sector are marginal firms. The sector after the spring lockdown of 2020 was anticipating a strong government policy intervention to cushion the firms against the negative impact of the shock. The industrial package was announced in June 2020 under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhyaan. On a close scrutiny the paper finds that the package didn't meet the expectations and the needs of the MSMEs sector. Among other things there was the definition change of the MSMEs that falls in synchronization with the GST framework doesn't help the units to cope up with the financial distress they are going through. The paper concludes that Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhyaan can't be taken as a successful policy intervention and as such some policy recommendations are suggested.

Learning from the global success stories like South Korea, India as a nation needs to work on improving the quality and quantity of its policy. The policy formulation needs to be more informed based on proper research and divorced from political motives. The quadruple loop learning model can be used very well (Lee et al., 2020). Following the axioms of this model, keeping a note of the past failures, especially in the industrial policy formulation and industrial packages comprehensive and continuously evolving policies need to be put in place. The key to overall success in dealing a crisis like pandemic is strong leadership. Countries like New Zealand and Israel manifested different types of strong leadership and the successful results are stark visible. Sharing of facts instead of propaganda keeps the masses prepared and leads to positive outcomes.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The study is based on secondary level government data so this section isn't applicable to current research.

Nil.

Consent for Publication

Each author of the manuscript is willing to publish it and it is with the mutual consent that the manuscript has been sent to this journal.

Availability of Data and Materials

For the purpose of the current study we have constructed a panel data set from the ASI data. The same can be accessed via the link below;

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G167fbnln8MutNvcFV8SzyZhzommrPD1/view?usp=sharing>

Competing Interests

There are no competing interests between the authors. The manuscript is a result of mutually consented research work.

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Authors' Contributions

This initial draft of the manuscript was distributed among the authors. On completion each author edited and critically evaluated the manuscript. Then the holistic revision was done on those lines.

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Figures

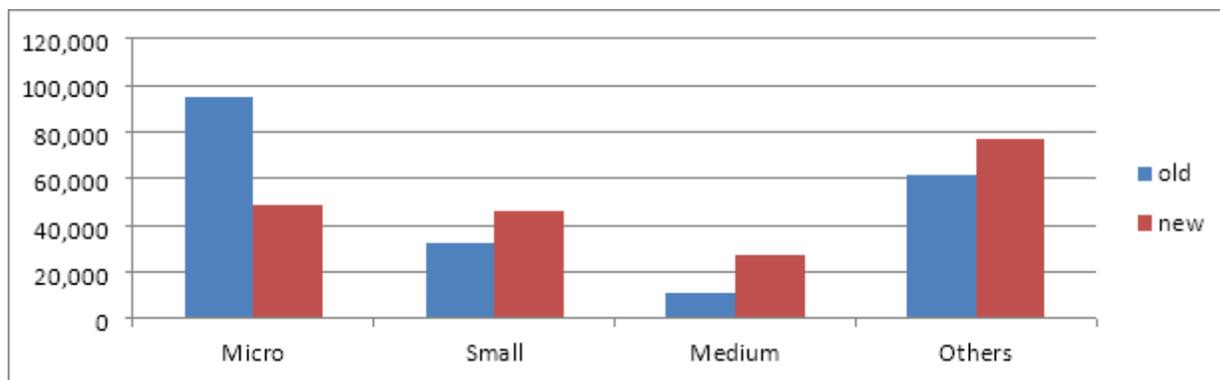


Figure 1

Total Firms in the Sample

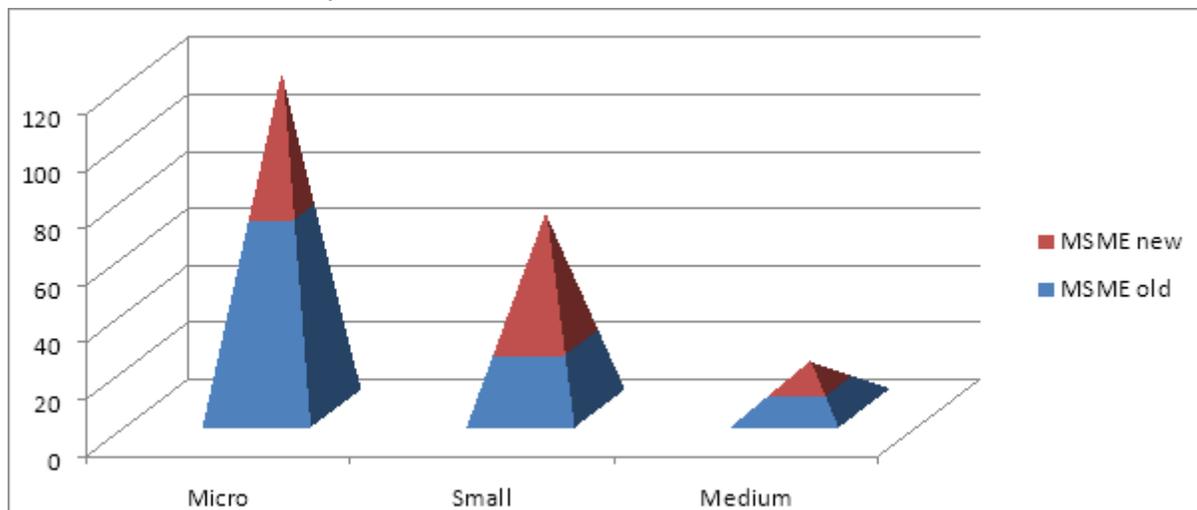


Figure 2

Change in Sectorial Composition MSMEs