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Strategies to revive MSME post Covid-19: Wrt Jamnagar Brass Parts Industry

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ABSTRACT

The concept of Industrial Cluster Development has been more of a theoretical discussion rather than a business strategy in India. However, this has proved to be a very successful approach in countries like China & Italy where it helped accelerate the manufacturing sector and promoted more MSMEs. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity to rejuvenate and restructure the Businesses in the MSME sector which has been affected severely by a series of events. This paper focuses on the Jamnagar Industrial Cluster for Brass Parts and studies how regional economics is driven by collective innovation, agglomeration, and competitive participation which in turn develops the industrial district economy. The study is also on the merits of the SME-CDP scheme and its optimistic implementation on the national level. If adopted, the model has the potential to drive exports of region-specific products and also participate in a broader Supply Chain on a global platform.

Keywords: MSME, Covid-19, Brass parts

I. INTRODUCTION

23rd of March 2020 marked the day of nationwide lockdown. The day when everything came to an abrupt halt. It was the beginning of a two-month continuous lockdown which no one had ever expected or dreamt off. There was period of recession during 2008 and 2011 as well but the kind of setback which the world is experiencing because of corona pandemic is incomparable. An impediment is being created for every business sector which has slowed down the growth pace. It has resulted not only in the financial crisis but beyond it as global supply chain faced major disruptions, manufacturing units witnessed complete pause and pictures of workers migrating from metro cities to their homes flashed across T.V channels, basic necessities resumed their importance and the significance of savings was realized by each and every one of us.

The world is still witnessing lock down and the economic activities have not been fully resumed. The unemployment rate as projected by United Nations Organization & International Labor Organization is quite disturbing. What can be observed is that there will be global recession in the coming year and every country will take time to bounce back on the path of progress.

The global trade was struggling since 2017 to gain momentum because of weak international trade, subdued investments, uncertainties posed by geo-political environment, US-China trade war, protectionism policy applied by countries, lack of consensus during WTO Doha round and lack of mutual agreement between G-7 & G-20 countries. As per the World bank report world economic growth was expected to increase up to 2.7% in 2017 from a slow rate of 2.3% during 2016. Further for the emerging and developing economies, growth is projected to step up to 4.2% in 2017 from 3.4% in 2016. But the pandemic proved to be a major speed braker for the growth acceleration without sparing a single economy. The contemporary International trade is a labyrinth of global interconnection of production, logistics, supply chain and services which are severely affected. And India is no exception as it stands on the eve of welcoming 2021 forced to face the bleak future.

Amid the pandemic and decelerating growth, India has set an ambitious goal of becoming self-reliant in terms of manufacturing and satisfying domestic consumption and also become a leading global exporter. Initiatives like **Aatmanirbhar Bharat & Make in India for World** is a step towards making huge place for India in the Global Supply Chain.

The pandemic has influenced the manufacturing, India's trade and further declined the growth also being responsible for larger section of people left unemployed due to lockdown. India is basically a domestic goods consumption society but for majority of employment opportunities it depends mainly on International Trade. Indian exports are responsible for creating not only employment opportunities but also earning foreign exchange for stability. And the role of Imports is looking after the domestic production to keep the wheels of growth in motion.

In this paper, it has been discussed as to how India can become an export hub by identifying, developing & incentivizing its own regional businesses and thus forming clusters which would eventually accelerate the productivity of a regional business to an extent where economies of scale is initiated.

II. OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. To develop post-covid-19 strategies to revive & restructure the business model of MSMEs.
2. To study the effectiveness and merits of Effective Cluster Development Model
3. To study the Brass Parts Industry cluster of Jamnagar city in Gujarat, India
4. To identify the potential of this model in terms of generating profitable annual turnover, employment and increased exports in regional economics.

The study uses extensive secondary data for the compilation of data and analysis part. Reports have been collected from the RBI annual report, MSME annual reports, GIDC reports and news articles.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the literature reviews has been conducted using secondary data available on the website of Ministry of MSME, RBI, GIDC – Gujarat State and Jamnagar Factory Owners Association.

MSME are responsible for generating employment opportunities and are much sought out sector for generating revenue. MSMEs are regarded as a requirement for complete transformation of rural India by tapping the resources available locally (Sarabu 2019). (Mohanty 2018) has explored the link between total number of MSME units, employment generated & fixed asset market value. MSME have played an instrumental role in reducing the growth disparities at inter-regional level and also at the inter-urban level as labor migrate from village to metropolis in search of work (Boatang 2019). The assessment provided by (WTO 2020) about the factors which hindered the progress of MSME are disruption in demand and supply chain which was further augmented by pandemic causing lockdown. (ASSOCHAM 2020) disseminated the fact that restriction on mobility of people & goods adversely affected the workforce calibre & supply chain disruption.

MSME in India

There has been considerable contribution of MSME sector towards the development of the nation post-independence. RBI along with the Government had taken extensive measures on a regular basis to aid the MSME sector. The sector's contribution is 45% to manufacturing output, exports contribution up to 40% and 28% of the GDP parallelly providing employment opportunities to 111 million people, positioned at second place after agriculture. The sector is heterogeneous in nature and size, providing variety of goods and services through utilizing technology and other infrastructure available. At present the MSME is classified as per the investment in plant & machinery/equipment as per provision of section 7 of MSMED Act, 2006 as mentioned below:

Table: 1.1
MSME Classification

Manufacturing Sector	
Enterprise Category	Investment in plant & machinery
Micro Enterprise	Does not exceed 25 lakh rupees
Small Enterprise	More than 25 lakh rupees but does not exceed 5 crore rupees
Medium Enterprise	More than 5 crores but does not exceed 10 crore rupees
Service Sector	
Enterprise Category	Investment in equipment
Micro Enterprise	Does not exceed 10 lakh rupees
Small Enterprises	More than 10 lakh rupees but does not exceed 2 crore rupees
Medium Enterprises	More than two crore rupees but does not exceed 5 crore rupees

Source: https://msme.gov.in/sites/default/files/FINAL_MSME_ENGLISH_AR_2019-20.pdf

Growth Pattern of MSME in India

Post-independence India was battling with poverty, shattered economy, partition, unemployment etc. MSME was recognized as sector which could be an alternative growth engine apart from agriculture. Following table gives a glimpse of the MSME growth as per the MSME Annual report 2019

Chart 1.1

Source: Annual Reports of Ministry of MSME

The data provides an insight into the industrial growth from 2000-2006 which witnessed 5-8% per annum. 2015-16 can be seen as a slowdown pace for the sector.

MSME Exports Contribution

MSME exports witnessed growth of 4.19% in 2014-15 but declined to -5.85% during the year 2015-16. The same year a decline in total exports was also observed from -1.29% to -15.49%. A positive growth can be seen for the year 2016-17 & 2017-18 taking in the combination of MSME & Total export.

Chart 1.2

Source: RBI & Press Information Bureau/Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics. (DGCIS)

12 Key Announcements made by the Government:

To support and fund the programme undertaken for MSME on 2nd of November 2018, our honourable prime minister announced 12 key activities to further strengthen the sector.

1. Ease of accessible credit through 59-minute loan portal. Approval of loans upto Rs. 1 crore through the portal linked with GST portal to minimize the complexities.
2. GST registered MSME to have 2% interest subvention on fresh or incremental loans, accompanied with increase in interest rebate from 3% to 5% for exporters receiving loans for pre-shipment & post shipment period.
3. For Entrepreneurs to access credit, companies accomplishing turnovers of more than Rs. 500 crore should be compulsorily to be brought on the Trade Receivables e-Discounting System (TReDS).
4. Mandatory procurement of 25% to be made by Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSUs) units from MSEs.
5. Mandatory procurement of 3% to be made from Women Entrepreneurs by CPSUs.
6. Mandatory to be a part of Public Procurement Portal Government e-Marketplace (GeM) by CPSUs.
7. Establishment of 20 hubs & 100 spokes in the form of Tool Rooms for Technological Upgradation to be established across the country with a fund allotment of Rs. 6000 crore.
8. Pharma cluster to take shape with 70% financial aid from GoI.
9. Filing of only 1 annual return for 8 labor laws and 10 union regulations to simplify government procedures.

10. Computerized random allotment for visits to firms by inspectors for simplification of government procedures.
11. Environment Clearance & Consent to establish unit, under air pollution and water pollution laws, to be combined into a single consent. Self-Certification return to be accepted.
12. Promulgation of ordinance to enable entrepreneurs to correct minor violations under the companies act through simple process rather than court approach.

Covid-19 & Impact on MSME

MSME in India accounts for over 45% of the nation's outbound shipments. The sector also is responsible for the contribution of 25% to the country's GDP from service activities & about 33% coming from the manufacturing production. Also, to be noted is the fact that in India MSMEs create employment opportunities standing at the second India was already witnessing decline in international trade in the previous year i.e., 2019 as exports of gems and jewelry, seafood, garments etc. Because of the world wide partial or complete lockdown the whole supply chain faced the wrath as major exporting countries like US, Europe, China, South Korea, France, UK, Spain, Germany, Italy was brutally affected. Also because of the pandemic situation the disturbance in the supply chain has also been witnessed which have adversely impacted the manufacturing, trade, employment & growth of the sector.

Jamnagar Brass Industry: An Overview

'Chhota Kashi' is the other name given to Jamnagar city because of the presence of temples built around it. Jamnagar is also one of the major hub of Brass parts cluster housing ten thousand small scale units of brass items which are being manufactures on a daily basis. Jamnagar is responsible for 5000 units of brass manufacturers with an annual turnover totaling to around Rs 2,000 crore. The small manufacturers import approximately 95% of the scrap from America & Europe as a raw material and the rest of it comes from the local market.

Brass parts manufacturers supply semi-finished & finished products pan Indian and in international market such as Europe, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea, USA, UK, Australia, Taiwan, China, Gulf countries, Germany, Turkey etc.

Different types of brass manufacturers are located in industrial estate of Shankar Tekari, Patel colony, M.P.Shah Udhyognagar & Dared to produce semi-finished/finished goods such as:

- Building hardware is a group of hardware specifically used for protection, decoration and convenience in building. The brass products usually support fixtures like windows, doors, cabinets, door handles, door hinges, bolts, latches, numerals, letter plates, switch plates and door knockers. Builder hardware is commonly available in brass, steel, aluminum, stainless and iron.
- Sanitary Fitting parts are used in pipe and plumbing system to connect straight pipe or tubing sections, to adapt to different size or shapes & to regulate fluid flow etc and includes elbow, reducer, tee etc.
- Electrical Wiring Accessories includes wiring accessories, terminal blocks, conduct fittings, electrical parts, electrical switch parts & other components like cable glands, cable glands accessories, electrical parts, electrical terminal,

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Neutral links, terminal blocks, earth blocks, earth terminal blocks, HRC Fuse connectors.

- Automobile & Cycle tube valves, Industrial control valves
- Agricultural Implements like Tractor accessories
- Brass jeweler and Buttons like Necklace, Ear rings, Bracelet, Rings, Bangles
- Various other precision machine components as per customers specification
- Pen parts

The following figure indicates the classification of Brass part production units based on the type of products produced:

Figure 1.1

Source: http://sameeksha.org/pdf/clusterprofile/Brass_cluster_Jamnagar.pdf

Raw Material Required

Technically speaking brass is an alloy of Copper & Zinc. The ratio of these metal is 60:40 respectively. For quality brass product the ratio is maintained by the manufacturers unless the customer demand varies. Following sources are the providers of the raw material used by the industry for production:

- Old brass, copper & bronze utensils
- Scrap brass imported from USA, Europe, Guls countries & Singapore.
- Brass scrap obtained from ship breaking yard

The brass parts cluster has access to state-of-the-art technology, infrastructure and credit. Availability of skilled and semi-skilled manpower also is an added advantage for success of manufacturers. The brass parts business houses can avail the readymade factory shed as when the requirement is felt. Also, for manufacturing building material

and construction, the machines are imported from Germany which are technologically advanced and sophisticated.

Classification of units

The brass manufacturing units are classified based on three different operations performed by the producers which includes:

- Casting (Brass Foundry & Extrusion)
- Machining
- Electroplating

The following chart gives a complete outline of the activities that are performed in the cluster.

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The brass manufactures who were termed as pioneers started to manufacture screws, pins and bulb holders. As and when the demand increased others also followed the pattern. The following factors are considered mainly for the instrumental growth of brass industry:

- Available resources for raw material supply at reasonable prices are one of the major factors behind the cluster development. Slowly and gradually as the demand increased the local producers started to import brass scrap from Europe & UK.
- For any business to run smoothly skilled manpower is at the core which is conveniently available in Jamnagar. The workers are mainly migrants from the states of UP & Bihar and also parts of Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan. Agriculture is dependent on rain hence the farmers also learned the skills of brass activities.
- Production of customized machines and brass parts is what makes the Jamnagar cluster unique and successful from other parts of Gujarat. As per the demand of the individual client the designed can be modified, configured and made by local technicians providing flexibility in manufacturing process.
- Jamnagar is surrounded by Gulf of Kutch and has a long coastline as well as ports which is well-developed by Gujarat Maritime Board. The board developed Rozi Bander & Bedi Bander port for the transportation of raw material and finished goods. Moreover, the strategic location of Jamnagar further enhanced the international trade for brass, chemicals, fertilizers, textile & salt.
- Approximately more than 10000 varieties of brass parts are manufactured in Jamnagar as per the customer demand. The manufacturers are able to make wide range of products having different dimensions, configurations, tolerances etc. In some cases, even the machines are customized locally and are sold in the market.
- The texture of the soil also known as 'chikni mitti' has helped in making better quality of castings used for the process.
- There was enough potential in the domestic market for these parts manufactured in Jamnagar. During the early years, electrical pins, holders, cycle tube valves were marketed in Calcutta, Mumbai, Ludhiana and Delhi. It was the time when buyers from all over the country were eager to get brass parts from Jamnagar and they were ready to make book orders by making advance payments. Moreover, in the early 1960s, the bicycle manufacturers within the country reduced their import substantially and started procuring it from the domestic market.
- And last and the most important factor is the entrepreneurial qualities of the people of Gujarat which makes the region self-reliant. Other than Jamnagar in Saurashtra region, Morbi is known for Ceramic Cluster, Rajkot of diesel engine.

Brass Parts Industry & Covid 19

Two months of lockdown during the month of March & April 2020 has created complication for the producers who were already battling with introduction of GST and Demonetization earlier. Due to lock world-wide lock down the brass

manufactures are gripped in double curse of raw material imports disruption from countries like USA, Europe etc, without any demand in the market and China importing at 'less attractive' prices.

The worker started to migrate from Jamnagar to their home states. Also due to shortage in demand the port warehouses were full as the vendors didn't claim the raw material consignment due to lack of funds.

The paper here now focuses on the Industrial Cluster development in India to get a general overview and then has identified few clusters where the Jamnagar cluster success can be replicated.

Industrial Cluster Development

Industry agglomeration is a concept that has been discussed and evolved throughout generations of economic thinkers. The Classical Agglomeration Theory was first stated in Alfred Marshall's Principles of Economics which was first published in the year 1890. It referred to agglomeration as spatial concentration of people and economic activities. According to Marshall, the agglomeration is made up of three sets of localized economies which includes, pooled market of workers with specialized skills, availability of inputs & services and the necessary technological advancement.

This string was extended by Michael Porter in the year 1998 when he introduced his advanced cluster concept as a business strategy to increase productivity and competitiveness of the industry players. According to his theory, a cluster is an important link in terms of technology, skills, information, marketing & customer needs that cuts across firms & industries. This in turn helps firms become more productive & innovative and helps increase its competitiveness.

In addition, it states that clusters also include buyers and suppliers of raw materials, service providers and specialized infrastructures. It also includes regional resources and labor participation, governmental and private institutions that provides specialized training, education, information, research, and technical support.

Industrial Clustering is an important business strategy that helps strengthen regional economies in today's competitive environment. Regional Clusters belonging to one particular Industry could become a good source of jobs, income, export, growth & innovation. A successful Cluster Policy is the key to increase regional economic performance.

Clusters in India

According to United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), there are 400 modern Small-Scale Enterprises (SSE) and close to 2000 rural & artisan-based clusters in India. These clusters contribute to approximately 60% of India's manufactured exports. They are also estimated to have a significantly high employment generation capacity.

The Government of India (GoI) recognized the formation of cluster as a developmental strategy in a paper titled, "Report of the Working Group on Clustering & Aggregation for the 12th Five Year Plan" released by the DIPP, Ministry of

Commerce and Industry in October 2011. The report discusses in detail, the formation of clusters and the merits/demerits it encompasses.

In the year 2007, the GoI renamed its Small Industries Cluster Development Programme (SICDP) as Micro and Small Enterprises – Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP). This scheme aims to build up the capacity of production of SMEs through various measures such as building infrastructure, providing skill training, meeting up fund requirements and including participation of SHGs and various public/private players.

These schemes are well off on paper. However, it could not convert its own objectives from paper to physical delivery. Below mentioned are the few selected clusters that have high export potential and employment generation capability.

Table: 1.2
Cluster Development Identification

City/District	Hyderabad	Durg, Raipur	Wazirpur Badli	Okhla, Mayapuri, Naraina, Wazirpur Badli, G.T. Karnal Road	Bellary
State/UT	Andhra Pradesh	Chhattisgarh	Delhi	Delhi	Karnataka
Product	Ceiling Fan	Castings & Metal Fabrication	Stainless Steel Utensils & Cutlery	Auto Components	Jeans Garments
Potential of Technology Upgradation	High	High	Medium	High	Medium
Export Potential	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
No. of units in the Cluster	100-500	100-500	500-1000	100-500	100-500
Employment	10,000-1Lakh	10,000-1Lakh	10,000-1Lakh	10,000-1Lakh	1000-10,000
Annual Turnover (in Rs. Crore)	Rs.100 Cr - Rs.1,000 Cr	> Rs.1,000 Cr	> Rs.1,000 Cr	> Rs.1,000 Cr	Rs.100 Cr - Rs.1,000 Cr

Source: The UNIDO Methodology (laghu-udyog.gov.in)

Table 1.3
Cluster Development Identification

City/District	Anant nag	Kottayam	Ernakulam	Shahdara, Gandhinagar, Okhla, Maidangari	Malegaon, Nashik
State/UT	J & K	Kerala	Kerala	Delhi	Maharashtra
Product	Crick et Bat	Rubber Products	Sea Food Processing	Hosiery	Powerloom
Potential of Technology Upgradation	Medium	High	High	Medium	High
Export Potential	High	High	High	High	Medium
No. of units in the Cluster	100-500	500-1000	500-1000	100-500	>10,000
Employment	10,000-1Lakh	10,000-1Lakh	1000-10,000	-	1000-10,000
Annual Turnover (in Rs. Crore)	<=Rs . 10 Cr	Rs.100 Cr - Rs.1,000 Cr	Rs.100 Cr - Rs.1,000 Cr	Rs.100 Cr - Rs.1,000 Cr	>Rs.1000 Cr

Source: The UNIDO Methodology (laghu-udyog.gov.in)

It can be observed in both the tables that, clusters having production units from 100-500 still have an average annual turnover ranging from Rs.100 Crores to Rs.1000 Crores. These clusters have a very high potential to export its products with medium technological upgradation. Therefore, assuming a sample space of 10 clusters from the above tables, it can be concluded that if more production units are established with proper facilitation centres along with systematic technological upgradation, then a cluster can be converted into a export hub followed by increase in employment and annual profit earnings.

Strategies to develop Industrial Clusters

This strategy aims at converting Micro Enterprises to medium & small enterprises. Hence, it is based on 4 broad pillars. These are:

Identify, Evaluate, Target & Deliver, Profit maximization.

➤ **Identify:**

- Identify key business of a region.
- Define Clusters of that particular region.

➤ **Evaluate:**

- Evaluate the cluster in terms of:
 - Production capacity
 - Number of production units
 - Technological upgradation required
 - Employment generation capacity

- Annual turnover
- Export potential

➤ **Target & Deliver:**

- Estimate the immediate requirements of resources, infrastructure & funds and provide the necessary to the cluster.
- Equip the Cluster with Facility Centers to speed up the supply chain movements.
- Identify clusters having high export potential and provide them with export incentives to boost their exports.
- Identify clusters having potential to capture domestic markets and encourage them to increase production.

➤ **Profit Maximization:**

- Adopt Public Private Partnership where a profit is mutually recognized.
- Focus more on profit maximization rather than social aspect.

IV. CONCLUSION

This pandemic is an opportunity to rethink, restructure & revitalize the old business models. Where the world is itself witnessing negative growth, India could capitalize this moment and plan its growth path accordingly.

The ambitious aim of becoming *Aatmanirbhar* i.e., self-reliant along with focus on improving Supply Chain through SCRI (Supply Chain Resilient Initiative) is the first step towards adopting a long-term business revival & improvement strategy.

Keeping these initiatives in Mind, a look on the domestic and small regional businesses and empowering them to an extent that they become a leading exporter within their own capacities would be an additional advantage to the growth of our economy.

The Jamnagar Brass Part Cluster is an example of how regional businesses through effective cluster development policy could convert itself into a profitable cash cow.

Hence, it is recommendable to adopt and implement a nationwide policy that identifies, evaluates, targets and maximizes the profit from a region by converting them into Industrial Clusters.

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