

“Local Heroes, Global Players: Msme Expansion In The International Arena” (With Special reference to Select MSMEs in East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh)

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ABSTRACT:

MSME are essential to a region's economic growth, especially in developing nations like India. MSMEs are looking more and more for chances in the global market to increase their market reach and competitiveness as a result of globalization and technological improvements. The study focused on understanding the dynamics of MSME expansion in the international market, with a special emphasis on East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. The research aims to analyze the factors influencing MSMEs' decision to internationalize, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies employed for successful international expansion. The process of globalization, characterized by increased interconnectedness and integration of economies, provided MSMEs with unprecedented opportunities for expansion and growth. A descriptive study involving 250 workers in the research region was conducted. The sample respondents were chosen using the convenient sampling approach. To learn more about the respondents' profiles, a well-organized interview schedule was created. SPSS has been used to analyze the primary data. Furthermore, the study investigates the role of government policies, infrastructural support, and institutional frameworks in facilitating MSMEs' internationalization efforts in the region. Policymakers, industry stakeholders, and MSMEs themselves should find great value in the research's conclusions as they develop policies and support systems that will help them promote international development and economic success on a local and national scale.

Keywords: Global Players, MSME, Capacity building, Quality standards, Customer-centric approach, Power of digitalization and Working capital

INTRODUCTION:

MSMEs are the largest employers in India, providing livelihoods to millions of people, especially in rural and semi-urban areas where employment opportunities are limited. According to official estimates, MSMEs employ over 110 million people, accounting for more than 40% of India's total workforce [7]. This overview aims to delve into the dynamics, challenges, opportunities, and strategies associated with MSME expansion in the international market, with a focus on the trends observed over the past decade. The labor-intensive nature of MSMEs makes them critical drivers of employment generation, particularly for skilled and unskilled workers, women, and youth. According to government data, MSMEs contribute around 30% of India's GDP and account for over 45% of industrial output. These enterprises operate across diverse sectors, including manufacturing, services, agriculture, and trade, thereby diversifying the economy and reducing dependence on a few industries. MSMEs play a crucial role in India's export sector, contributing to foreign exchange earnings and enhancing the country's competitiveness in global markets [11]. Despite their relatively small size, MSMEs account for nearly 50% of India's total exports, showcasing their significance in driving export-led growth. MSMEs are hotbeds of innovation and entrepreneurship, fostering creativity, experimentation, and risk-taking among entrepreneurs [12]. These enterprises often innovate in product design, process optimization, and business models, driving productivity gains and competitiveness. MSMEs also play a crucial role in nurturing entrepreneurship by providing opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. Government initiatives such as the Startup India program aim to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among MSMEs by providing funding, mentorship, and incubation support.

EVOLUTION OF MSMEs IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT:

MSMEs have undergone a remarkable evolution in the global context, transitioning from local enterprises to significant players in the international arena. This evolution has been driven by various factors, including globalization, technological advancements, changes in trade policies, and the digital revolution. Understanding the historical development and current status of MSMEs on the global stage provides valuable insights into their role in the modern economy and their potential for future growth and expansion. The extraction of MSMEs can be traced back to the early stages of industrialization when small-scale enterprises played a crucial role in meeting local demand for goods and services. These enterprises often operated within a limited geographical area, catering to the needs of their immediate community. With the advent of industrialization and urbanization, MSMEs began to proliferate, contributing to the growth of local economies and providing employment opportunities for millions of people. MSMEs were essential to the global economic growth of nations all during the 20th century. However, it was not until the latter half of the century that MSMEs began to expand beyond their domestic boundaries and venture into international markets.

FACTORS DRIVING INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION:

Several key factors have contributed to the internationalization of MSMEs in recent decades. Globalization, marked by the liberalization of trade policies and the removal of barriers to cross-border trade, has created a more conducive environment for MSMEs to access international markets. The expenses and complications of doing business internationally have decreased for MSMEs because of technological advancements, especially in the areas of communication and transportation, which have also made it simpler for them to interact with partners and clients worldwide. In addition, shifting consumer tastes and the emergence of digital platforms have given MSMEs new ways to connect with customers across the world and take on bigger businesses. The emergence of e-commerce platforms and online marketplaces has leveled the playing field, allowing MSMEs to market and sell their products and services to customers anywhere in the world. Additionally, the fragmentation of production processes and the rise of global value chains (GVCs) have enabled MSMEs to participate in international trade and collaborate with partners across borders.

THE PROSPECTS OF MSMEs SECTOR EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH:

The prospects of the (MSMEs) sector in East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, are characterized by a combination of opportunities and challenges, influenced by factors such as geographical location, infrastructure, government policies, market demand, and technological advancements. This district, situated in the southeastern part of Andhra Pradesh, is known for its diverse economic activities, including agriculture, aquaculture, manufacturing, and services. Understanding the prospects of the MSME sector in East Godavari District requires an analysis of these factors and their implications for the growth and development.

1. **Geographical Location and Natural Resources:** East Godavari District is blessed with abundant natural resources, including fertile land, water bodies, and a favorable climate, which support a thriving agricultural and aquaculture industry. The district is known for its rice cultivation, coconut plantations, and aquaculture activities, contributing significantly to the local economy. MSMEs in sectors such as food processing, agro-based industries, and fisheries have immense potential for growth and expansion, leveraging the district's rich agricultural resources.
2. **Infrastructure Development:** Infrastructure plays a fundamental role in facilitating the growth of MSMEs by providing essential services such as transportation, communication, and utilities. While East Godavari District has made significant strides in infrastructure development in recent years, including road connectivity, power supply, and telecommunications, there is still room for improvement. Enhancing infrastructure facilities, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, can help MSMEs access markets more efficiently, reduce transportation costs, and improve connectivity with suppliers and customers.
3. **Government Policies and Support:** The government plays a pivotal role in creating an enabling environment for MSMEs through supportive policies, incentives, and programs. In India, various central and state government schemes aim to promote MSME development, including access to finance, technology upgradation, marketing assistance, and skill development. In Andhra Pradesh, initiatives such as the Industrial Promotion Policy, 2020-23, and the MSME Policy aim to attract investment, promote entrepreneurship, and facilitate the growth of small and medium enterprises in the state. By leveraging these policies and support mechanisms, MSMEs in East Godavari District can overcome challenges and seize opportunities for growth.
4. **Market Demand:** In East Godavari District, there is a growing demand for value-added agricultural products, processed foods, handicrafts, and traditional textiles, both in domestic and international markets. MSMEs that cater to niche markets, focus on product differentiation, and emphasize quality and sustainability are likely to succeed in meeting the diverse needs of consumers. Moreover, with the rise of e-commerce platforms and digital marketing,

MSMEs have the opportunity to reach a broader customer base and expand their market presence beyond geographical boundaries.

5. **Technological Advancements and Innovation:** Technological advancements have transformed the way MSMEs operate, offering new opportunities for efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness. In East Godavari District, MSMEs can leverage technologies such as automation, digitalization, and internet-based applications to streamline processes, improve product quality, and enhance customer engagement. For example, adopting modern farming techniques, such as precision agriculture and drip irrigation, can help agricultural MSMEs increase yields, reduce resource consumption, and mitigate environmental impact. Similarly, embracing digital platforms for marketing, sales, and distribution can enable MSMEs to reach global audiences and compete with larger enterprises.
6. **Challenges and Roadblocks:** MSMEs in East Godavari District encounter a number of obstacles that prevent them from growing and becoming sustainable, despite the positive outlook. These difficulties include the lack of trained labour, regulatory hurdles, poor infrastructure, competitiveness from bigger firms, and restricted access to financing.. MSMEs, particularly those in rural and remote areas, often struggle to access formal credit facilities due to stringent collateral requirements and high interest rates. Moreover, bureaucratic hurdles and complex regulatory compliance procedures pose additional barriers to business expansion and investment.

IMPORTANCE OF MSMEs IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY:

MSMEs are vital to the global economy because they provide jobs, stimulate economic development, and foster innovation. Over 50% of all workers worldwide are employed by MSMEs, which make up over 90% of all firms globally, according to the International Finance Corporation (IFC). MSMEs sustain local communities and provide millions of people with a means of living in developing nations. They are often the main forces behind economic growth in these regions. MSMEs are also critical for advancing technology and encouraging entrepreneurship because of their reputation for innovation and flexibility in the face of shifting market circumstances. Many of the world's leading companies, including tech giants like Google, Apple, and Amazon, started as small enterprises and grew into global powerhouses through innovation and strategic expansion.

RESEARCH PROBLEM:

A Distinct set of difficulties and complexity arises as (MSMEs) expand into the global market, especially in areas like East Godavari District. In this environment, one of the main problems MSMEs confront is the absence of sufficient infrastructure and resources to support their attempts to expand internationally. A lack of cash, technology, and trained labour are major obstacles that many MSMEs in East Godavari District may face in order to successfully compete on the global market. Additionally, navigating the complexities of global markets, including regulatory compliance, cultural differences, and market dynamics, poses significant hurdles for MSMEs operating in this region. Furthermore, there may be a lack of awareness and expertise among MSMEs regarding international trade practices and strategies, inhibiting their ability to seize opportunities in overseas markets. Addressing these challenges is crucial for unlocking the full potential of MSMEs in East Godavari District and enabling them to thrive in the global economy.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The study focused on understanding the dynamics of MSME expansion in the international market, with a special emphasis on East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. The research aims to analyze the factors influencing MSMEs' decision to internationalize, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies employed for successful international expansion. Furthermore, the study investigates the role of government policies, infrastructural support, and institutional frameworks in facilitating MSMEs' internationalization efforts in the region. The study aims to study MSME expansion in the international Arena.

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

A descriptive study involving 250 personnel in the research region was conducted. The sample respondents were chosen using the convenient sampling approach. To learn more about the respondents' profiles, a well-organized interview schedule was created. SPSS has been used to analyse the primary data.

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY:

In recent years, the globalization of markets, advancements in technology, and changes in trade policies have provided unprecedented opportunities for MSMEs to expand beyond their domestic boundaries and enter the international arena.

Table 1: Factors Influencing Global expansion on key factors for success of MSME

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank
Capacity building	3.28	1.340	3.27
Quality standards	3.18	1.250	3.06
Customer-centric approach	4.29	1.118	4.73
Power of digitalization	3.71	0.786	3.75
Working capital	3.42	0.852	3.36
Technology and manufacturing practices	3.06	1.064	3.83
Market awareness	3.54	1.114	3.37

The above table shows that Customer-centric approach (4.73) was ranked first by the respondents as a important factor influencing Global expansion on key factors for success of MSME followed by Technology and manufacturing practices (3.83) and Market awareness (3.37) as a second and third rank respectively. A customer-centric approach plays a pivotal role in facilitating the expansion of (MSMEs) into the international arena. By prioritizing the needs, preferences, and feedback of customers, MSMEs can tailor their products or services to suit diverse markets globally. Understanding the unique demands of international customers enables MSMEs to develop targeted marketing strategies, refine their offerings, and build strong brand loyalty. Moreover, a customer-centric approach fosters trust and credibility, which are essential for penetrating new markets and competing effectively on a global scale. By consistently delivering value and exceptional customer experiences, MSMEs can establish a strong foothold in international markets, driving growth, and sustainable expansion over time. In essence, placing customers at the center of their operations empowers MSMEs to navigate the complexities of global business landscapes and seize opportunities for success. Technology and modern manufacturing practices wield significant influence over the expansion trajectory of (MSMEs) on the global stage. Embracing advanced technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence, and data analytics streamlines production processes, enhances operational efficiency, and boosts productivity. These advancements not only enable MSMEs to meet the evolving demands of international markets but also facilitate the customization and personalization of products to cater to diverse consumer preferences worldwide. Furthermore, adopting lean manufacturing principles and sustainable practices not only reduces costs but also aligns with the growing emphasis on environmental responsibility, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs in the global marketplace. By leveraging technology and modern manufacturing techniques, MSMEs can optimize resource utilization, minimize waste, and accelerate time-to-market, ultimately driving expansion opportunities and bolstering their position on the international stage. Moreover, these innovations empower MSMEs to adapt swiftly to changing market dynamics, anticipate customer needs, and stay ahead of the competition, laying a solid foundation for sustained growth and success in the global arena.

Table 2: Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

No of respondent	250
Kendall's W	0.008
Chi-Square	6.519
difference	6
Sig.	0.178

The calculated value (6.519) for the df 6 is not significant. The p value is 0.178 which is not significant at 5% level. The result shows that the ranks given for the various factors are not significantly varying. Market awareness plays a pivotal role in shaping the expansion journey of (MSMEs) into international territories. Understanding the intricacies of different markets, including cultural nuances, consumer behavior, regulatory frameworks, and competitive landscapes, is essential for successful expansion strategies. Through comprehensive market research and analysis.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS:

MSMEs may pinpoint unexplored prospects, minimize risks, and customize their products and services to cater to the unique requirements and inclinations of heterogeneous consumer groups located in different countries. Moreover, heightened market awareness enables MSMEs to anticipate emerging trends, capitalize on market gaps, and position themselves strategically within target markets, thereby gaining a competitive edge. Additionally, staying attuned to market dynamics fosters agility and adaptability, empowering MSMEs to adjust their strategies in response to changing economic conditions, technological advancements, or geopolitical shifts. Ultimately, a keen understanding of global markets not only fuels the expansion efforts of MSMEs but also fosters sustainable growth, resilience, and long-term success in the international arena.

HYPOTHESIS:

Age can significantly influence the success of global expansion efforts for businesses, with several key factors coming into play. Firstly, the experience and maturity of a company can provide a strong foundation for navigating the complexities of international markets. Established firms often have robust systems, processes, and resources in place, which can facilitate smoother expansion and adaptation to new environments.

H₀: There is no association in the Factors Influencing Global expansion on key factors for success according to socio-economic characteristics of the respondent and key factors for success

The null hypothesis is tested with the help of non-parametric tests. The results are given below.

Table 3: Age and factors influencing Global expansion for success of MSME

Dimensions	Age	No. of respondent	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Sig.
Capacity building	Young	92	132.40	2.210	0.486
	Middle	84	119.83		
	Old	74	123.36		
	Total	250			
Quality standards	Young	92	134.83	1.058	0.382
	Middle	84	115.68		
	Old	74	125.05		
	Total	250			
Customer-centric approach	Young	92	127.09	2.069	0.533
	Middle	84	120.94		
	Old	74	128.70		
	Total	250			
Power of digitalization	Young	92	119.50	0.784	0.617
	Middle	84	133.45		
	Old	74	123.94		
	Total	250			
Working capital	Young	92	122.38	0.850	0.587
	Middle	84	124.44		
	Old	74	130.58		
	Total	250			
Technology and manufacturing practices	Young	92	131.55	0.149	0.854
	Middle	84	122.99		
	Old	74	136.99		
	Total	250			
Market awareness	Young	92	130.11	1.075	0.521
	Middle	84	109.78		
	Old	74	111.30		
	Total	250			

The table shows that young respondents prefer the Capacity building (132.40) and Quality standards (134.83). Technology and manufacturing practices (131.55) Market awareness (130.11) as a important factor influencing Global expansion for success of MSME, and the middle age respondents prefer Power of digitalization (133.45) and the old age group respondents opined that Customer-centric approach (128.70) Working capital (130.58) as influencing Global expansion for success of MSME. According to the Kruskal Wallis test, the Chi-Square values for each of the causes indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean rankings. The formulated theory is agreed upon.

DISCUSSION:

The leadership team's experience and expertise play a crucial role. Seasoned leaders are more likely to possess the insights and strategic acumen needed to make informed decisions regarding global expansion initiatives. They can draw upon past successes and failures to chart a course that maximizes the chances of success in new markets. Financial resources are essential for funding expansion efforts, including market research, infrastructure development, and marketing campaigns. Older companies may have accumulated greater capital reserves or access to funding sources compared to younger firms, providing them with a competitive advantage in pursuing global growth opportunities.

Moreover, established brands often benefit from a built-in reputation and customer base, which can facilitate market entry and acceptance in new regions. Brand recognition can help mitigate some of the challenges associated with establishing trust and credibility in unfamiliar markets, giving older companies a head start in the global expansion process. Networks and partnerships cultivated over time can be invaluable assets for companies looking to expand internationally. Established firms may have existing relationships with suppliers, distributors, or strategic allies that can provide valuable support and insights during the expansion journey. The power of digitalization has emerged as a transformative force in shaping the success of global expansion efforts for businesses, with several key factors driving its influence. Digital technologies have revolutionized communication and connectivity, enabling companies to reach international markets with unprecedented ease and efficiency. Through digital platforms and tools, businesses can engage with customers, partners, and stakeholders across the globe in real-time, breaking down traditional barriers of time and distance. Digitalization enhances market research and intelligence capabilities, allowing companies to gather and analyze vast amounts of data to understand consumer preferences, market trends, and competitive dynamics in target regions. Digital channels provide scalable and cost-effective avenues for marketing and distribution, enabling businesses to penetrate new markets rapidly and cost-efficiently. From e-commerce platforms to social media advertising, digital tools empower companies to reach potential customers worldwide, build brand awareness, and drive sales growth without the need for significant upfront investments in physical infrastructure. Moreover, digitalization enhances operational efficiency and agility, enabling companies to streamline processes, optimize supply chains, and respond quickly to market changes and customer demands. Cloud computing, automation, and data analytics empower businesses to adapt and scale their operations in real-time, minimizing risks and maximizing opportunities for success in global markets. The power of digitalization lies in its ability to foster innovation and disruption, opening up new possibilities for business models, products, and services on a global scale. The power of digitalization is a game-changer for businesses seeking to expand globally, providing unprecedented opportunities to connect, engage, innovate, and thrive in diverse markets around the world. By harnessing the capabilities of digital technologies, companies can unlock new pathways to success and establish themselves as leaders in the global economy.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Numerous parties stand to gain or lose from MSMEs' ascent to prominence on the global stage. The local and national economies may benefit from a well-executed foreign expansion. Regional innovation, job creation, and more income may all result from MSMEs expanding their horizons to international markets. The local community's socioeconomic status and level of life may then improve as a result. They may better weather economic storms and downturns by decreasing their reliance on home markets, making them less susceptible to swings in the local economy. The exposure to international competition fosters innovation and efficiency improvements, driving overall competitiveness and resilience in the long term. From a strategic perspective, international expansion enables MSMEs to access new technologies, best practices, and business networks that can enhance their capabilities and competitiveness. Collaborating with international partners, suppliers, and customers fosters knowledge exchange and cross-cultural learning, enriching the organizational culture and promoting global mindset among local entrepreneurs. There are also challenges and considerations that accompany international expansion for MSMEs in East Godavari District. These may include navigating trade regulations, customs procedures, language barriers, and cultural differences, as well as managing currency fluctuations and geopolitical risks. Additionally, ensuring the sustainability and responsible conduct of business operations in international markets is paramount, considering environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors.

CONCLUSION:

The prospects of the MSME sector in East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, are promising, driven by factors such as abundant natural resources, infrastructure development, supportive government policies, market demand, and technological advancements. By addressing challenges such as access to finance, infrastructure constraints, and regulatory barriers, MSMEs can capitalize on the opportunities available and contribute to economic growth, job creation, and inclusive development in the region. Collaboration between the government, industry stakeholders, financial institutions, and MSMEs is essential to create a good ecosystem for MSME growth and foster entrepreneurship and innovation in East Godavari District. The evolution of MSMEs in the global context reflects the changing dynamics of the modern economy and the increasing interconnectedness of markets worldwide. As MSMEs continue to expand their presence in international markets, they will play an increasingly important role in driving economic growth, promoting innovation, and fostering sustainable development on a global scale. Age alone is not determinative of success; it can influence various factors that contribute to a company's ability to expand globally. Businesses that take use of leadership, financial resources, networks, brand recognition, and expertise have a much better chance of succeeding in their pursuit of international expansion possibilities. Opportunities for MSMEs in East Godavari District

to expand internationally are bright, but they also need meticulous planning, allocation of resources, and strategic execution. Stakeholders can help (MSMEs) succeed on the global stage by resolving the problems and consequences of going global. This will lead to inclusive and long-term economic development in the area.

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