

## **Prospects and challenges of Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSEs): A Study on Shashemene City, Ethiopia.**

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### **Abstract**

*Although there is little doubt that MSEs play a vital role in development of an underdeveloped economy, yet this sector is facing multifarious problems relating to raw materials, power, land, marketing, transport, technical facilities and finance etc. This research examine the prospects and challenges of 76 sample micro and small scale enterprises out of 474 MSEs operated in Shashemene city, ethiopia and have given recommendations for the problems identified. Data have been gathered on key determinants of MSEs problems as constraints of financing, marketing, managerial and environmental related problems from both primary and secondary data sources. The data collected have been analyzed through manual and computerized system and those data that collected from questionnaire has been analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques which include tables, frequency distribution and percentages. This paper attempts to find out the major constraints faced by the MSEs operated in Shashemene city selected from five sectors of service, trade, construction, manufacturing and agriculture, based on primary questionnaire survey and rank the factor constraints according to their level of severity. It identified eight major constraints in which competition with large industrial units, failure to analyze financial statements, lack of record keeping and documentation, high cost of raw materials and fixed assets are main. Finally the government and other parties involved in the promotion of the development of MSEs may use the study as additional information to address the problems in the promotion of MSEs.*

**Keywords:** Constraint, construction, Factors, manufacturing and MSE, Sectors,

### **Background of the study**

From a worldwide perspective, it has been recognized that micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in economic development, as they have been the primary sources of job/employment creation and output growth, not only in less developed countries (LDCs) but also in developed countries. Piper's (1997) dissertation, for instance, states that 12 million or about 63.2% of total labor force in the United States (US) work in 350,000 firms employing less than 500 employees, which considered as MSMEs. According to Aharoni (1994), MSMEs make up more than 99% of all business entities

and employ more than 80% of total workforce in the country. These enterprises, often called the foundation enterprises, are the core of the US industrial base (Piper, 1997). MSMEs are also important in many European countries. In the Netherlands, for example, these enterprises account for 95% or more of total business establishments (Bijmolt and Zwart, 1994). As in the US, also in other industrialized countries such as Japan, Australia, Germany, French and Canada, MSMEs and particularly small and medium enterprises, are an important engine of economic growth and technological progress (Thornburg, 1993).

Despite MSEs large contribution in countries development and economic growth, their growth and development in developing countries were mainly inhibited by access of finance, poor managerial skills, and lack of training opportunities and high cost of inputs (Cook and Nixson, 2000).

The MSEs have very limited access to financial services from formal financial institutions to meet their working and investment needs (Kessy and Temu 2009). However, the generation of self-employment in the MSEs requires investment in working capital, at low levels of income, the accumulation of such capital may be difficult. Under such circumstances, loans can help the poor to accumulate capital and investment in employment generating activities (Hossain 1988). According to Grade (1984), loans enable the individual's member or enterprises to enjoy the benefit of economies of scale and new technology.

A vibrant private sector that builds on the combined linkages between MSEs and large enterprises supported by good governance and an enabling business environment have been considered as the backbone and engine of a healthy economy and society. Especially in developing economies, it is regarded as a precondition for generating employment, enhancing productivity, maintaining competitiveness, contributing to entrepreneurship development and reducing poverty (ADB 1999; Aus AID 2000; EBRD 2004;).

Micro and Small Enterprise Development Program in Ethiopia meaningfully has been given due attention by government since 2004/2005. Of course, in 1996/97 National Micro and Small Enterprise Strategy was developed by the government. Until 2004/2005, the national strategy was implemented by Federal MSEs Development Agency organized only at national level. Because of this, it was very difficult to make the strategy practical specially in delivering business development service for MSE operators. Thus, by considering the critical role of the sector and the constraints faced by MSEs operators since 2004/2005, the government of Ethiopia decided to establish MSEs coordinating body at regional level even sub branch offices at zone/district level (Konjit, 2012).

## **Statement of the Problem**

MSEs are facing several problems in financing, regulatory aspects and access to non-financial inputs. There is nothing wrong with a situation in which inexperienced entrepreneurs are not getting institutional credit (Little, 1987). In the same study, Little shows that the relative decline of small-scale enterprises in most developing countries has been accelerated by the industrialization policies adopted in these countries. Protection, regulatory constraint, investment incentives, credit control, and the promotion of industry in the public sector have all discriminated against the small enterprises. The common idea that the cost of capital is very high for small enterprises is overly simple (Little, 1987). A research of World Bank suggests the existence of financial constraint because formal

banks do not lend to the smallest firms in most countries. It has also severe impact on the smallest firms (Levy, 1993).

The need for the study of prospects and challenges of Micro and small scale enterprises operating in shashemene city is, to give the Government and other parties involved in the promotion of the development of MSEs additional information to address the problems in the development of MSEs and to give recommendation for the problems identified.

## Research Questions

The study tries to answer the following questions

1. What are the factors that affect the development of MSEs located in Shashemene city?
2. To what extent financial constraints are affecting MSEs operations located in Shashemene city?
3. What are the main initiating factors by the entrepreneurs to invest in MSEs in Shashemene city?

## Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study is to assess the prospects and challenges of micro and small scale enterprises operating in Shashemene city. The specific of this research are:

1. To identify problems of micro and small scale enterprises (MSEs) operating in shashemene city.
2. To understand how the financial constraints are affecting the generation and quality of employment in micro and small scale enterprises operating in shashemene city.
3. To assess the important initiating factors to invest in MSEs by the promoters in shashemene city.

## Review of literature

**Definition of MSEs:** - There are no standard definitions of MSEs and that their definitions vary from country to country depending largely on the size of the economy, the levels of development, culture and population size of a country involved. The term 'MSE' is widely used to describe small businesses in the private sector. Regulators and financial institutions across the world use parameters such as:-Employee strength, annual sales, value of fixed assets, and loan size proxies to define the sector in the context of finance. Generally there are two types of definitions -operational definitions, which are largely used for working purposes and theoretical definitions, which are generally, employed to characterize the sector. The European Commission defines MSEs using a combination of employee numbers, annual turnover or balance sheet total and ownership (Hillary, 2000).

## Approaches to the Study of Problems of MSEs

Different studies have employed different approaches to study the problems of MSEs. According to Lall (2000: 9–12), MSEs in general tend to face three sets of competitive challenges. These are related with their size, distortions in markets and government policy interventions.

Ivy (1997) grouped problems of MSEs into five - finance, government, marketing, equipment and infrastructure, and labor, and finally found that finance was the most crucial problem. Poor banking services, with high interest rates, high cost of premises and tax, difficulty in obtaining loans for start-ups all were cited but stringent loan repayment

terms was mentioned as jeopardizing the viability of MSEs. Ivy also found government bureaucracy and perceived corruption as major problems.

Bari, & Ali & Haque (2005) examined the key constraints faced by the MSEs sector in Pakistan, including lack of access to credit, excessive government regulation, an arbitrary and exploitative tax administration system, a weak technological base and the lack of business support services. It also provides a set of concrete strategic recommendations to address such constraints in order to promote MSEs growth for greater income generation and employment creation.

Endalkachew (2008) in the study of Underlying Causes of Micro and Small Business Failures in Addis Ketema sub city explain that business land and premises, that many owners of MSEs, run their businesses in Addis Ketema sub city in rented premises and high rental charges have impeded the success of many businesses as some charges are higher than the capacity to pay. Owners complained that, expansion of the city in general and the sub city in particular has led to increased demand for business premises, which means that some micro and small businesses have been pushed away from the busy area of the sub city to the periphery.

### **Data Sources**

In the process of completing this study the researcher has collected relevant information from both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained through informal observations, unstructured interviews from the top officials of TVET College and Shashemene MSEs Development Bureau and questionnaires distributed to different sectors of MSEs operating in Shashemene city. To make the study fruitful secondary data also collected from different sources like websites, research reports and other relevant literatures.

### **Method of Data Collection**

For this study the primary information have been collected from structured questionnaires distributed to MSEs owners operating in Shashemene city. The research questionnaires were originally prepared in English. It was carefully articulated to ensure clarity, to avoid bias and to get reliable information. When developing a questionnaire the researcher used the respondents' natural and familiar language to make a questionnaire simple and interesting. The questionnaires were translated to Amharic and Afan Oromo language. So that language should not be a barrier to the respondents to spell out what they have in mind. The translated version of the questionnaire was carefully cross checked with the initial English version and was similar in content and structure. This was done to avoid error during data entry. Before applying it, the questionnaire was tested for its validity through pilot survey. Top officials of TVET College, Shashemene MSEs Development Bureau and some respondents were involved in pilot testing. The questionnaire was refined and finalized after incorporating the inputs of the pilot survey. Pre-test survey respondents were not included in the main survey to avoid bias on responses. Continuous supervision was made to reduce errors during data collection and to correct possible errors.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

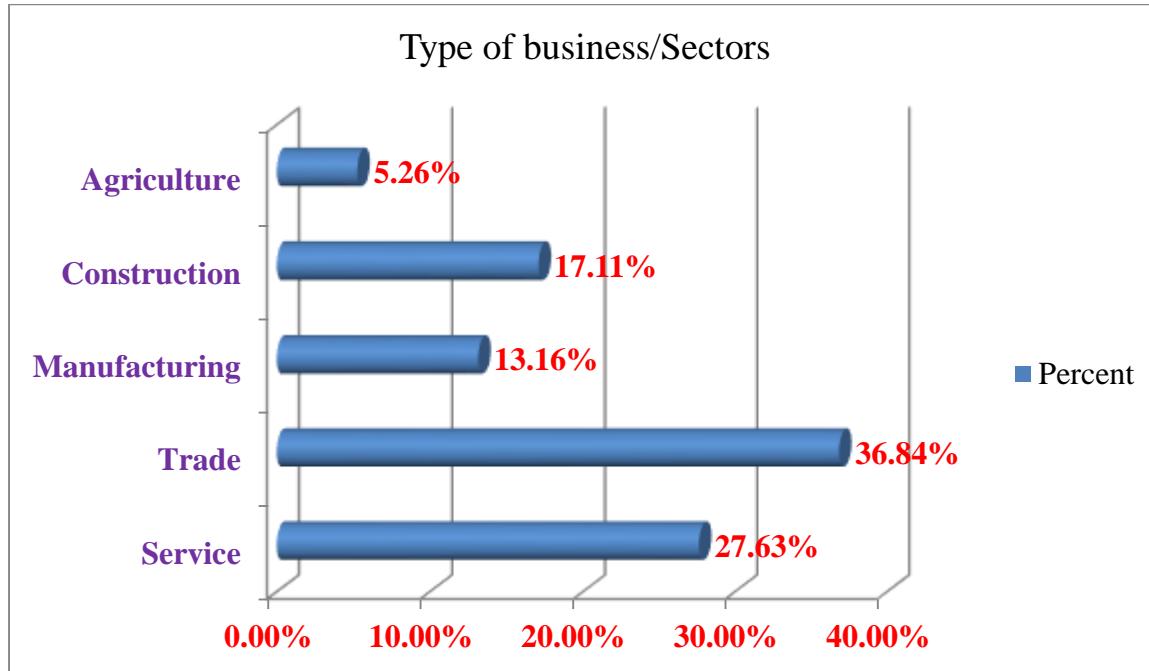
The coded data of the research questions were inserted into computer and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Studies. Finally, quantitative and simple descriptive

statistical techniques which include tables, frequency distribution, percent, and cross tabulation were used to find out the results.

#### **Data Analysis and Discussion:**

The analysis is based on the information obtained from 76 MSEs Sectors operating in Shashemene city and secondary sources. Out of the 83 questionnaires distributed to MSEs owners operating in the city, 91% were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

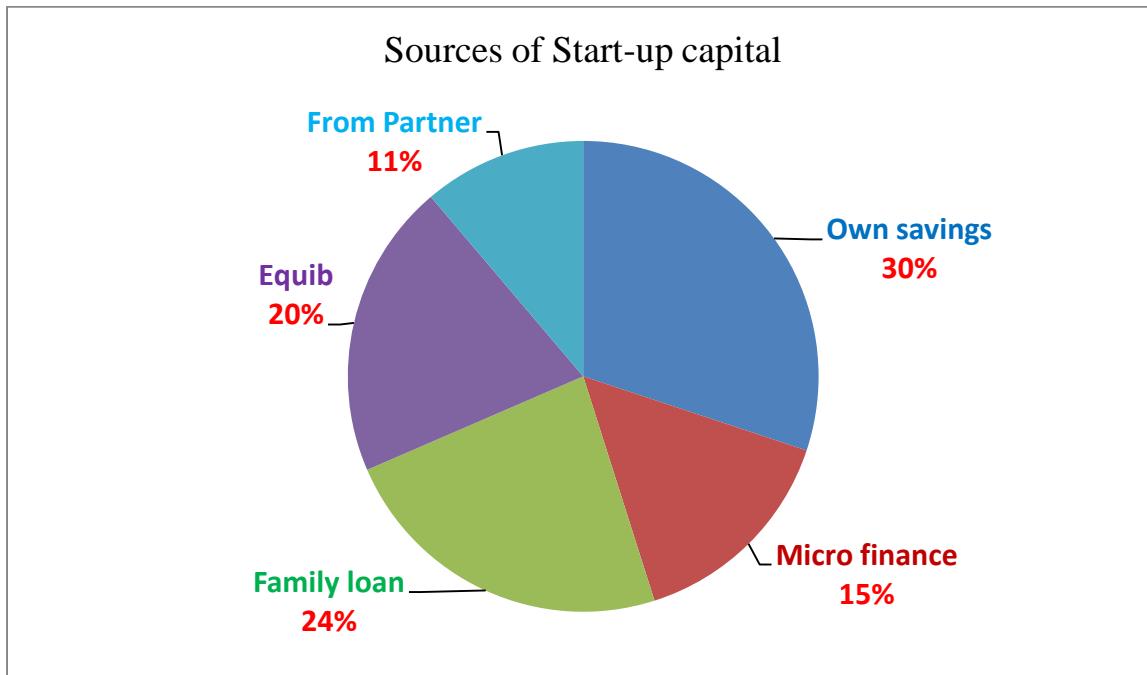
Figure 1 Type of the business/sectors



Source: Survey results, 2015

Figure 1 show that, the sample enterprises were operating in different sectors of the economy. Most of them 36.84% and 27.63% of ample respondents were from the trade and service sectors respectively while 13.16% were operating in the manufacturing sector. Construction sector consist 17.11% and 45.26% of ample respondents were from agriculture.

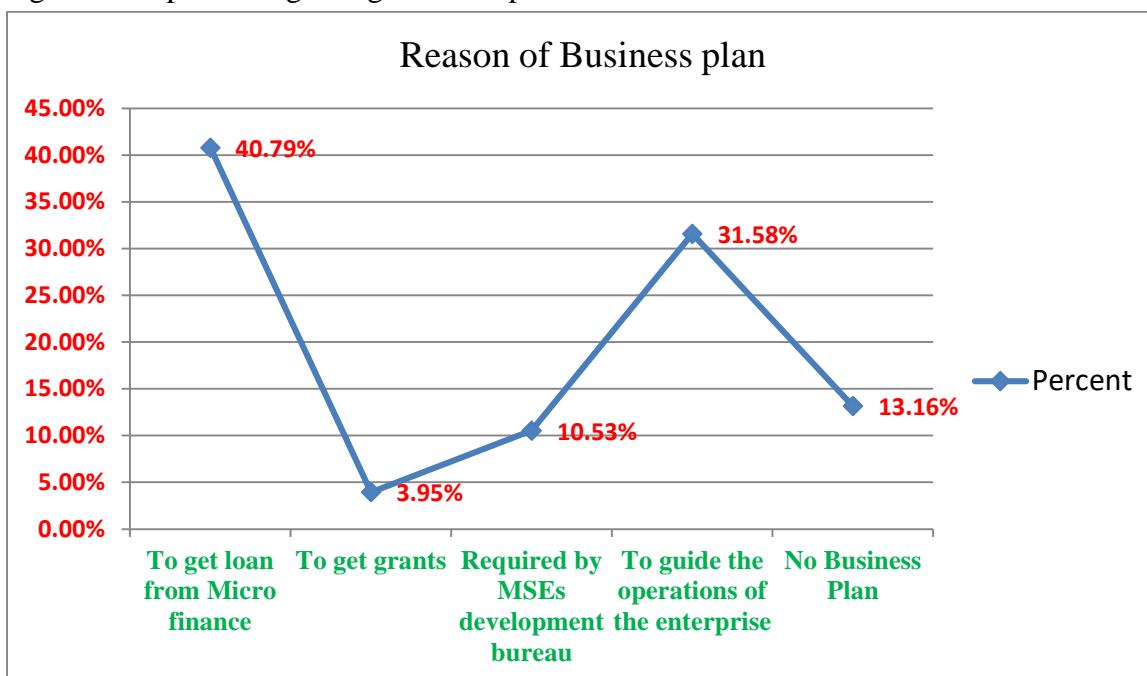
Figure 2 Responses regarding start-up capital



Source: Survey results, 2015

The figure 2 show that, the respondents sources of Start-up capital shows, 23(30.1%) from Own savings, 11(15%) from micro finance, 18(23.4%) from family loan, 15 (20.3%) from "Equib" and 9(11.2%) from Partner .This shows that the main source of start-up capital for MSEs operating in Shashemene city is from own savings. But other traditional source like "Equib" plays the greatest role in establishment of MSEs.

Figure 3 Responses regarding business plan



Source: Survey results, 2015

The figure 3 show that, the study shows that 40.79 percent of them replied that they prepare business plan to get loan from Micro finance, 31.58 percent to guide the operations of the enterprise, 10.52 percent required by MSEs development bureau, 3.95 percent to get grants and the rest 13.16 percent did not prepare business plan. This show that majority of the respondents prepare business plan other than to guide the operations of the enterprise, therefore Shashemene MSEs development bureau and other stake holders should give attention to fill the skill gap of reason of business plan preparation to MSEs owners that affect the development of enterprises.

In table 2 the researcher has identified the principal components based on their critical constraint value. In the initial solution, the first account for most critical constraint value and the second will account for next highest amount of critical constraint value. In this phase of analysis, the survey data and Critical Problems are used to rank the “binding” constraints that currently inhibit MSEs sectors-level investment and growth. Binding constraints are defined as constraints that obtained and average score of 3.5 and above (Syed and Mohammad 2009). So the researcher has got 8 major constraints among 28 that are major binding constraints. We can look at the summary table below.

Table 2 summary of Constraint Factors

S/n	Constraint Factor	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Scale
1	Competition with large industrial units	61.84% (47)	2.63% (2)	1.32% (1)	7.89% (6)	26.32% (20)	<b>3.66</b>
2	Failure to analyze financial statements	51.31% (39)	13.16% (10)	2.63% (2)	13.16% (10)	19.74% (15)	<b>3.63</b>
3	Lack of record keeping and documentation	50% (38)	2.63% (2)	5.26% (4)	39.48% (30)	2.63% (2)	<b>3.58</b>
4	High cost of raw materials and fixed assets	28.95% (22)	30.26% (23)	11.84% (9)	25% (19)	3.95% (3)	<b>3.55</b>
5	Poor location/business site is a hurdle	23.68% (18)	34.21% (26)	15.79% (12)	25.00% (19)	1.32% (1)	<b>3.54</b>
6	Rapid technological changes not easily adopted.	51.32% (39)	3.95% (3)	5.26% (4)	25% (19)	14.47% (11)	<b>3.53</b>
7	Lack of market linkages is a major issue	46.05% (35)	9.21% (7)	6.58% (5)	26.32% (20)	11.84% (9)	<b>3.51</b>
8	Lack of clear division of activities and duties	42.11% (32)	7.89% (6)	10.53% (8)	36.84% (28)	2.63% (2)	<b>3.5</b>

Source: Survey results, 2015

### Cross tabulation

In this phase of analysis, the researcher used cross tabulation to indicate sectors which are highly affected by identified major constraining. Each sector has its own unique and critical constraints. With this assumption cross tabulation was made in this regard and the result is presented below. The mean scale was calculated by dividing, the sum of the products of each scale with the relative frequency, to the total number of respondents (Number of respondents were 21, 28, 10, 13 and 4 from service, trade, construction, manufacturing and agriculture sectors respectively). The mean scale has a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5.

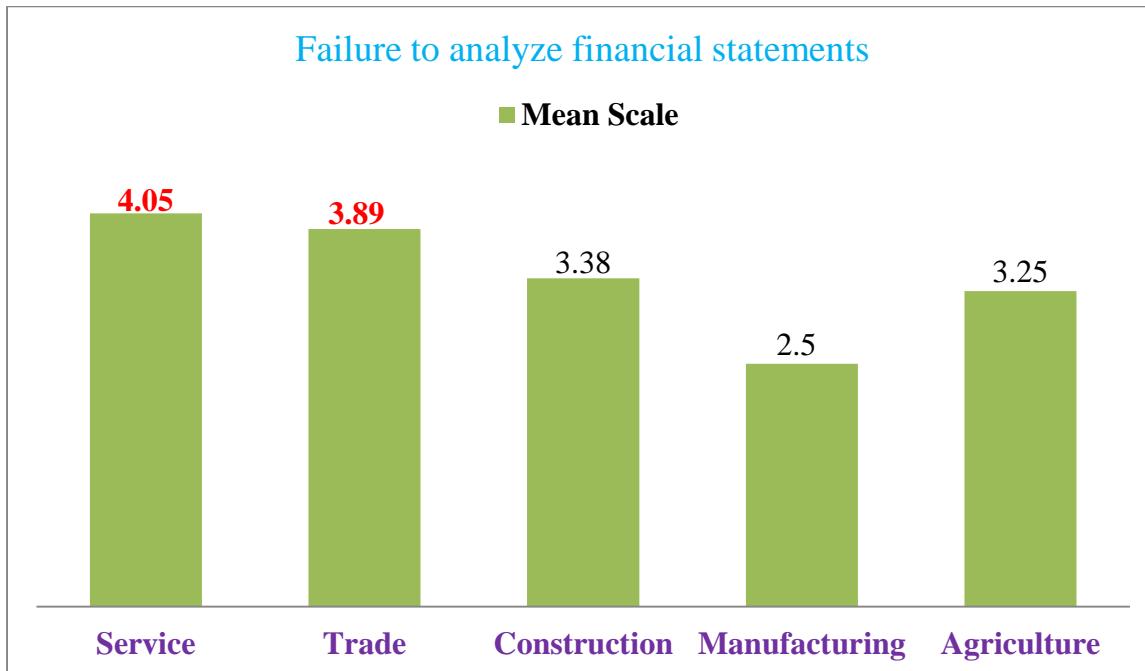
Table 3 Responses regarding competition with large industrial units

Competition with large industrial units							
Sector	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Mean Scale
Service	12	0	1	2	6	21	3.48
Trade	18	0	0	3	7	28	<b>3.68</b>
Construction	7	0	0	1	5	13	3.23
Manufacturing	6	2	0	0	2	10	<b>4.00</b>
Agriculture	4	0	0	0	0	4	<b>5.00</b>
Total	47	2	1	6	20	76	<b>3.66</b>

Source: Survey results, 2015

The table 3 shows that, sectors which are highly affected by constraint of competition with large industrial unit have indicated that, Trade mean value 3.68; manufacturing mean value 4.00 and agriculture mean value 5.00 have got the binding constraints. Whereas, service mean value, 3.48 and constructions mean value 3.23 were not in the binding constraints. Accordingly, it can be concluded that competition with large industrial units was a major constraint for all sectors except for construction and service sectors.

. Figure 4 Responses regarding failure to analyze financial statements

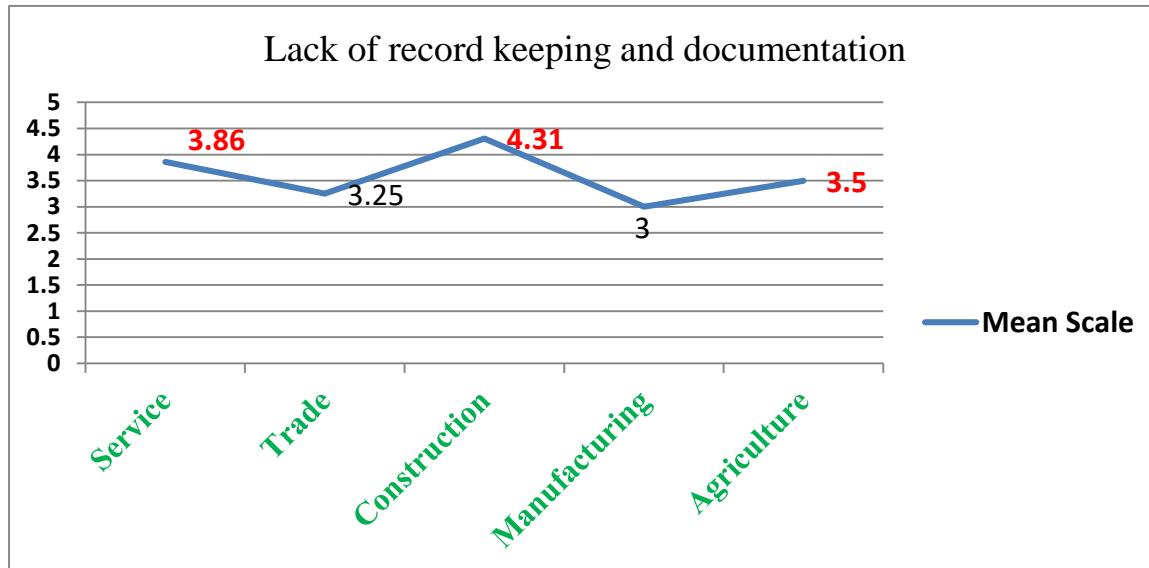


Source: Survey results, 2015

Figure 4 show that, sectors which are highly affected by constraint of failure to analyze financial statements have indicated that, trade mean value 3.89 and service mean value 4.05 have got the binding constraints. Whereas, manufacturing mean value 2.50,

agriculture mean value 3.25 and constructions mean value 3.38, were not in the binding constraints. Therefore, it can be concluded that failure to analyze financial statements was a major constraint for trade and service sectors

*Figure 5 Responses regarding lack of record keeping and documentation*



*Source: Survey results, 2015*

Figure 5 shows that, sectors which are highly affected by constraint of lack of record keeping and documentation have indicated that, service mean value 3.86, constructions mean value 4.31, and agriculture mean value, 3.50 have got the binding constraints. Whereas, trade mean value 3.25 and manufacturing mean value 3.00, were not in the binding constraints. Therefore, it is clear that lack of record keeping and documentation factors was a major constraint for all sectors except for trade and manufacturing sectors.

*Table 4 Responses regarding poor location/business site is a hurdle*

Sector	Poor location/business site is a hurdle						Mean Scale
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	
Service	3	10	4	4	0	21	3.57
Trade	9	10	4	5	0	28	3.82
Construction	3	6	0	4	0	13	3.62
Manufacturing	3	0	3	3	1	10	3.10
Agriculture	0	0	1	3	0	4	2.25
Total	18	26	12	19	1	76	3.54

*Source: Survey results, 2015*

The table 4 shows that, sectors which are highly affected by constraint of poor location/business site is a hurdle have indicated that, service mean value 3.57, trade mean value 3.82, and constructions mean value 3.62, have got the binding constraints. Whereas,

manufacturing mean value 3.10 and agriculture mean value 2.25, were not in the binding constraints. Therefore, it is clear that poor location/business site is a hurdle factors was a major constraint for all sectors except for manufacturing and agriculture sectors.

*Table 5 Responses regarding rapid technological changes not easily adopted*

<b>Rapid technological changes not easily adopted</b>							
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mean Scale</b>
Service	9	0	2	5	5	21	3.14
Trade	17	1	0	9	1	28	<b>3.86</b>
Construction	7	1	1	1	3	13	<b>3.62</b>
Manufacturing	6	1	0	3	0	10	<b>4.00</b>
Agriculture	0	0	1	1	2	4	1.75
Total	39	3	4	19	11	76	<b>3.53</b>

*Source: Survey results, 2015*

The table 5 shows that, sectors which are highly affected by constraint of rapid technological changes not easily adopted factors have indicated that, trade mean value 3.86, constructions mean value 3.62, and manufacturing mean value 4.00, have got the binding constraints. Whereas, service: mean value 3.14 and agriculture mean value 1.75, were not in the binding constraints. Therefore, it is clear that rapid technological changes not easily adopted factors was a major constraint for all sectors except for service and agriculture sectors.

*Table 6 Responses regarding lack of market linkage are a major issue*

<b>Lack of market linkages is a major issue</b>							
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mean Scale</b>
Service	12	2	3	3	1	21	<b>4.00</b>
Trade	12	2	1	7	6	28	3.25
Construction	5	1	1	6	0	13	3.38
Manufacturing	6	1	0	3	0	10	<b>4.00</b>
Agriculture	0	1	0	1	2	4	2.00
Total	35	7	5	20	9	76	<b>3.51</b>

*Source: Survey results, 2015*

The table 6 shows that, sectors which are highly affected by constraint of lack of market linkages is a major issue have indicated that, service mean value 4.00 and manufacturing mean value 4.00 have got the binding constraints. Whereas, trade mean value 3.25, constructions mean value 3.38 and agriculture mean value 2.00, were not in the binding constraints. Accordingly, it can be concluded that lack of market linkages is a major issue factors was a major constraint for service and manufacturing sectors.

*Table 7 Responses regarding lack of clear division of activities and duties*

Lack of clear division of activities and duties							
Sector	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Mean Scale
Service	7	2	3	9	0	21	3.33
Trade	15	0	4	9	0	28	<b>3.75</b>
Construction	4	1	0	8	0	13	3.08
Manufacturing	3	2	1	2	2	10	3.20
Agriculture	3	1	0	0	0	4	<b>4.75</b>
Total	32	6	8	28	2	76	<b>3.50</b>

*Source: Survey results, 2015*

The table 7 shows that, sectors which are highly affected by constraint of lack of clear division of activities and duties have indicated that, trade mean value 3.75 and agriculture mean value 4.75, have got the binding constraints. Whereas, manufacturing mean value 3.20, constructions mean value 3.08 and service mean value 3.33, were not in the binding constraints. Therefore, it is clear that lack of clear division of activities and duties factors was a major constraint for agriculture and trade Sectors.

## Conclusions

The study identifies the major constraint factors towards the success of the MSEs by considering all sectors on the basis of the findings the following conclusions were made.

- Most respondent replied that the sources of Start-up capital fall under the two traditional sources, own savings and family loan. But other informal sources like “Equib” also play a great role in establishing MSEs. As compared to the formal sources like microfinance, MSEs in the city use informal sources. This shows that further studies should be conducted towards microfinance for MSEs. Most of MSEs owners prepare business plan but there was a skill gap on why write a business plan. This shows that Shashemene MSEs development bureau and other institutions should assist them to fill their skill gap on the importance of business plan.
- The study showed that financial constraints like lack of record keeping and documentation was a major constraint for service, agriculture and construction sectors. Failure to analyze financial statements was a major constraint for service and trade sectors. High cost of raw materials and fixed assets was the biggest

constraint for manufacturing, agriculture and construction sectors in the growth of MSEs.

- Marketing constraints were also considered by the respondents as impacting the performance of MSEs. These are:-Poor location/business site was a hurdle is the major critical problem for service, trade and construction sectors in which most of the respondents were agreed. And lack of market linkages was a major issue is another major constraint for service and manufacturing sectors.
- The study also observed the main environmental and managerial constraints as impacting the performance of MSEs. These were: - competition with large industrial units was the major critical problem for manufacturing, trade and agriculture sectors in which most of the respondents were agreed. A rapid technological change not easily adopted was another major constraint for trade, construction and manufacturing sectors. And lack of clear division of activities and duties was a major constraint for agriculture and trade sectors.

## **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings and conclusions reached, the following recommendations were forwarded.

1. To support MSEs in their efforts to expand businesses, fully equipped business incubator units should be established in key sectors. MSEs Development Bureau and other stakeholders should be facilitating market linkage for manufacturer, service provider, whole sale and retailer specifically.
2. Regulatory constraints related to accessing market and MSEs working premises indicate that policies should be consistent without surprises. Micro and Small firms in particular must be given an adequate moratorium' to let them adjust to new changes and that extra attention must be paid to safeguard MSEs against 'bureaucratic discretions'.
3. Lack of technically skilled workers, lack of physical input (Raw materials) and high equipment cost also shows lack of government and TVET Centers support to assist MSEs to compete in global arena. Furthermore, on-the-job training opportunities are critically important for the survival of MSEs.
4. The Ministry of Education must produce a curriculum that adequately prepares young graduates with social, entrepreneurial, industrial and commercial skills that are essential for successfully operating small and medium businesses. The educational system should give attention to skills-based training for enhancing self-employment in the MSEs sector.
5. Globalization has brought about both opportunities and threats to small businesses and enterprises currently operating in Shashemene. MSEs are quite incapable of competing with foreign businesses and enterprises in their present form as they are poorly equipped and under-resourced. The government must assist local MSEs in terms of capacity building, infrastructure and technology as a matter of urgency. Failure to do so may result in the elimination of the majority of local businesses and enterprises in the city.

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