

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the phenomenon of Green Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) engaging Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in India, and highlights their significance in shaping a multi-dimensional reforms impetus from within the sustainable development domain. In the exposition of the PPP ideology in literature, there have been indications that process studies are needed to bring out additional dimensions regarding such hybrid arrangements and initiatives. This study treads on such a path as it attempts to expand the PPP frontiers into SME environmental action area and delineates some of these identified varieties. The extension of PPP framework into SME domain and the study of environmental response dynamics therein, further facilitates a wider exploration of a key ideological perspective that buttresses PPP initiatives – i.e. their content and impact predicated on the idea of reforms.

The SMEs while serving as growth engines and indicators of entrepreneurship and economic vitality include a vast spectrum of manufacturing enterprises that are seen as key contributors to a larger quantum of industrial pollution (often ranging from 50-70% in specific national contexts). A range of initiatives from public sphere and increasingly from private sphere are being designed and implemented to seek transformational outcomes in SMEs towards improving their environmental management behavior and response (individually at firm level, as groups and as clusters, or in supply chains). Such initiatives present both successful and failed campaigns and this study inherently seeks insights on the varieties of such green PPPs, the policy and program design issues, and structural and

functional aspects to understand the behavioral patterns in the engaged public and private entities. The researcher especially looks at the institutional side of the gPPP-SME equation (located in and from a public entity), while directly engaged in selected programs and projects as an action researcher and participant observer, and makes critical observations through institutional lenses regarding the processes involved in a set of differentiated projects serving essentially as case building exercises. These cases bring project specific and policy specific perspectives besides governance insights from national and international green PPPs-SMEs realms. The first case is on Waste Minimisation Circle Project, towards facilitating Waste Minimization initiatives in SMEs and seeking a multiplier effect for a WM movement, by design of a nested green PPP – SME framework and involving SME consultants as strategic partners. The second case is on the Eco-Products International Fair 2011 towards promotion of eco-products and green growth theme, where an international green PPP arrangement is developed amongst institutions and an apex chamber of commerce, with the case highlighting complex structural and functional features and conflicts and key learning's on institutional reforms dynamics. The third case is on the international environmental governance approach towards establishing National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPCs) to undertake cleaner production facilitation in industry as explored in the context of NCPC India, where legitimacy renewals and revitalization efforts in the midst of institutional problems at the host organisation is reflected upon. This case presents the constraints to and potential from such institutionalized arrangements, including scope of green PPPs-SMEs that are possible to establish for wider national implications.

The broader questions towards presenting observations regarding the case studies are: How institutionalization, legitimization and scripting of the Green PPPs towards addressing SMEs are achieved? What are the possible inferences that can be drawn from the factors identified to explain the dimensions of strength and soundness for evaluating such PPPs ?

How are the PPPs governed or, and how do the perceived incentives, risks, benchmarks and regulations affect governance properties of the gPPPs-SMEs ? The propositional elements in the study have involved attention to identifying multi-level effects or influential impacts of alternative partnership scenarios within the complex realm of public-public, public-private and private-private interactive and inter-linking processes in and from the cases, which also afforded identifying critical role of meso - level institutions and middle management personnel in the systems. The cases lead to insights regarding varieties of inter-organisational and intra-organisational relationships and of strategic stances and initiatives of actors involved, with related implications to programs and projects and the entities themselves. The key findings highlight the significance of advisory Green PPPs-SMEs and their transformative roles that can help SMEs evolve. It shows how SMEs (manufacturing and consulting) strengthen institutional legitimacies reflexively and accordingly also strengthen practice of institutional will through suitably guided agents or institutional championship oriented actors. This happens through the two-way empowerment process that could transmit reforms impetus in multiple directions.