

India's manufacturing under-performance: A new clue from 'multi-plants'

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Perhaps the biggest failure of India's development and an equally big puzzle is why India has under-performed in labour-intensive manufacturing whether measured in terms of output, exports or employment. For example, India's share of global apparel exports was 3 per cent in 2005 and almost two decades later, despite China's vacating its export space, it remained at 3 per cent.

Explanations abound on this under-performance. One often cited is that ones relate to plant size, in particular that Indian plants are kept too small by regulations, especially labour laws. In our latest research, we discover a new clue that speaks to this aspect of plant size but focusing not on why plants are small but why they are not large, very large.

One of the most intriguing and relatively undocumented developments of the last 20 years has been "multi-plants," whereby a single firm operates not one but multiple production facilities within a state. Last week's *Economist* magazine spotlighted Shakti Exports, India's largest garment exporter whose CEO Harish Ahluwala spoke of the compulsion to "split big investments across a number of factories."

The multi-plant phenomenon has expanded over the last two decades and today they account for a large share of non-managerial



employment and output of private manufacturing plants.

Focusing on labour-intensive industries and large plants (defined as those employing more than 200 workers), the share of multi-plants rose from 15 per cent in 2001 to 30 per cent of total plants in 2022, and from 17 per cent to 43 per cent of total non-manufacturing employment.

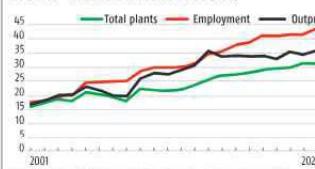
Why is the phenomenon of multi-plants significant? For three reasons: They change our understanding of firm size and its evolution; they are associated with lower productivity; and they shed light on how regulations and labour markets work.

The Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), one of the key sources of data on India's

manufacturing sector, is susceptible to misrepresenting the size of these firms. The ASI allows firms with multiple plants in a state (but not across states) to file joint returns if they have at least two plants, each with 100-plus employees. This leads to an overestimation of the size of plants, especially larger ones – which are often described as "right tall". As a result, official statistics often suggest that India's largest manufacturing plants are bigger than they actually are.

For instance, consider the employment profile of one of India's most successful exporting firms, and largest employers, Table I shows that in one state where it has a large presence, it has increased the number of plants from 11 to 58 between

Share of multi-plant enterprises in private, labour-intensive industries (in %)



Note: Sample restricted to firms employing more than 100 non-manufacturing employees because that is the minimum size of multi-plants

2005 and 2022 with average employment per plant remaining broadly the same (with small variation during the intervening years). The same is true for the maximum size of these plants. But if this is not accounted for, the ASI data would suggest that the

firm has one plant in the state that has increased its employment from 14,000 to 76,000 over the period and become Foxconn-like in size.

Indeed, accounting for multi-plants changes our understanding of the evolution of large firms over

time. For example, important research by Bertrand, Hsieh, and Tsivianidis suggests that large plants grow in size over the last two decades in part because changes in the law and implementation allowed for greater contractualisation of the labour force. In this view, contractualisation allowed firms to circumvent some of the burdens imposed by labour laws, especially critical for hiring and firing – which kick in above certain employment thresholds. And, it is true that the share of contract labour in total employment has increased from 22 per cent in 2001 to 41 per cent by 2022 (the latest year for which ASI data is available).

But here is the striking finding: Despite massive contractualisation and indeed despite the massive deregulation of trade and other policies that has taken place since 2000 (reduction in tariffs, elimination of smog controls, environmental reservations, etc.), we estimate (making some assumptions) that large plants have not become any larger. As Table 2 shows, regardless of whether we think of plant size in terms of the number of employees or as the employment share accounted for by large plants, they have not become larger and may even have become slightly smaller.

Consider now the costs of

multi-plants. We find that in labour-intensive industries, multi-plants are about 5 per cent less productive on average than single plants of equivalent employment size (after controlling for the sector and state of operation) with this wedge rising as the number of employees rises. This finding illustrates the benefits of scale. Five hundred workers are more productive if they are in one plant than if they are split into two plants of 250 workers each.

So, this pattern of large firms not becoming larger and remaining low productive is consistent with India's stagnating export performance in labour-intensive manufacturing (where perhaps scale matters substantially). Consider the comparison between Bangladesh and India in the apparel sector. While India initially had the upper hand, Bangladesh's market share in global apparel exports skyrocketed from 2.5 per cent to 8 per cent over two decades, while India's share stagnated at around 3 per cent.

A closer examination of plant size data offers a possible explanation. Correcting for mismeasurement, we find that in 2013 Bangladeshi apparel plants were consistently larger than their Indian counterparts across all metrics. For instance, the 95th percentile plant in Bangladesh was about 40 per

cent larger than a similar plant in India. This size advantage is critical, as larger plants in Bangladesh are far more efficient, exporting 95 per cent of their output compared to just 37 per cent for Indian plants. This significant size differential may be one of several reasons why Bangladesh outpaced India in the global apparel market – larger plants lead to greater efficiency and stronger export performance, providing Bangladesh with a competitive edge.

We have shown that the phenomenon of multi-plants sheds light on the sobering facts relating to firm size and multi-plants are also less efficient which affects India's manufacturing competitiveness. But they also profoundly affect our understanding of some aspects of India's regulatory regime, especially the debate about labour laws and plant size. We turn to this tomorrow.

Abhishek Anand is Visiting Professor, Madras Institute for Development Studies (MIDS); Arvind Subramanian is Senior Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics; and Naveen Thomas is Professor, OP Jindal Global University. This piece is based on their latest MIDS paper: https://www.mids.ac.in/assets/doc/WP_244.pdf.

Tomorrow: Part II

(Continue from previous page...)

- for tendering and settlement of shares under the revised mechanism is specified in the Annexure to the said circular.
- 5) BSE Limited, Mumbai ("BSE") will be the Stock Exchange for the purpose of tendering the Equity shares in the Open Offer.
- 6) The Acquirer will appoint a registered broker as a buying broker for the purpose of this Open Offer through whom purchases and settlements on account of the Offer shares tendered during the period of this Open Offer will be made.
- 7) All Public Shareholders who desire to tender their Equity Shares under this Offer would have to intimate their respective brokers ("Selling Broker") within the normal hours of the secondary market, during the functioning of the Secondary Market.
- 8) A Separate Acquisition Window will be provided by BSE to facilitate the placing of orders. The Selling Broker would be required to place an order / bid on behalf of the Public Shareholders who wish to tender Equity Shares in the Open Offer using the Acquisition Window of the BSE. Before placing the order, the Selling Broker will be required to log on to the BSE website and download the Application Form and the Application Form as listed in the document annexure to the Offer Document.
- 9) As per the provisions of section 40(1) of the SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015 and SEBI's press release dated 04/08/2018, bearing reference no. PR 49/2018, requests for transfer of securities shall not be processed unless the securities are held in dematerialized form with a depositary with effect from April 01, 2019. However, in accordance with the circular issued by SEBI bearing reference number SEBI/HQ/CDF/

CMDH/DP/2019/144 dated July 3, 2020, shareholders holding securities in physical form will be allowed to tender shares in an open offer. Such tenders shall be at par the provision of the SEBI (SAST) Regulations, 2011. Accordingly, Public Shareholders holding Equity Shares in physical form as well as eligible to tender their Equity Shares in this Open Offer as per the provisions of the SEBI (SAST) Regulations, 2011.

10) Equity Shares should not be submitted/tendered to the Manager to the Open Offer, the Acquirer or the DPS.

X. THE DETAILED PROCEDURE FOR TENDERING THE SHARES IN THE OFFER WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE LETTER OF OFFER, WHICH SHALL BE AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE OF SEBI (WWW.SEBI.GOV.IN).

X. OTHER INFORMATION

1) For the purpose of disclosures in this DPS relating to the Target Company, the Acquirer has relied upon the publicly available information and information provided by the Target Company and has not independently verified the accuracy of details of the Target Company. Subject to the aforesaid, the Acquirer accepts the responsibility for the information contained in this DPS and also for the obligations of the Acquirer laid down in the SEBI (SAST) Regulations, 2011.

2) Pursuant to Regulation 12 of the SEBI (SAST) Regulations, 2011, the Acquirer has appointed Mark Corporate Advisors Private Limited as the Manager to the Offer.

3) The Acquirer has appointed Venita Capital and Corporate Investments Private Limited, as Registrar to the Offer having Registered Office at Gurum, Plot No. 57, 5th Floor, Jayabheri Enclave, Phase-II, Gachibowli, Hyderabad-500 032, Telangana, Contact No. +91 40 2381 8475, 3516 4940, Email: pravin@vcip.com, Investor Grievance Email ID: investorrelations@vcip.com; Contact Person: Mr. P V Srinivas Rao, SEBI

Reg. No.: INR000001203.

4) The DPS may be incomplete in any table between the total and sums of the amount listed is due to rounding off and/or rounding up.

5) This DPS and the PA will also be available on the website of SEBI i.e., www.sebi.gov.in.

Issued by Manager to the Offer:

MARK CORPORATE ADVISORS PRIVATE LIMITED

CIN: U67100KA2009PTC181998

404/1, The Summit Business Bay, Sanjanai Road (Service Lane), Off Western Express Highway, Vile Parle (East), Mumbai - 400 057

Contact Person: Mr. Manish Gaur | Tel. No.: +91 22 612 3207/08

Email: manish@markcorporateadvisors.com

Investor Grievance Email ID: investorrelations@markcorporateadvisors.com

SEBI Registration No.: INM000012128

For and on behalf of the Acquirer

For Virupaksha Organics Limited ("Acquirer")

Sd/-

Balasubra Reddy Mantri

Whole Time Director

Agb/sg

Date: October 08, 2024

Place: Hyderabad

Form No. - NCLT 3A
(Rule 35 of the National Company Law Tribunal Rules, 2016)
Before The National Company Law Tribunal, Allahabad Bench
Company Petition No. CP (CA) No. 16/2024
In Connection With Company Application No. CA (CA) No. 04/ALD/2024

In the matter of Sections 299 and 300 of the other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Companies (Compromises, Arrangements and Amalgamations) Rules, 2016

And

In the matter of Scheme of Arrangement between Umang Darlie Limited, Panchmahi Properties Limited and Bengal & Assam Company Limited and their respective shareholders and creditors

Umang Darlie Limited [CIN: L15111UP1992PLC014942], a Public Limited Company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956, and having its registered office at 1, Gyan Bhawan, 3rd Floor, Sector 10, Salt Lake City, Kolkata, West Bengal, India, Jyoti Phule Nagar, Amroha, Uttar Pradesh – 244 235

And

Panchmahi Properties Limited [CIN: U74899UP1995PLC118056], a Public Limited Company, incorporated under Companies Act, 1956, having its registered office at 3 Km Stone, Hasnarpur Road, Gajratia, Jyoti Phule Nagar, Hasnarpur, Uttar Pradesh – 244 235

...hereinafter referred to as "Petitioner Companies"

NOTICE OF HEARING OF PETITION

A Petition under Rule 20(2)(a) of the Rules of Procedure, 2015 (Petition) seeking sanction of the proposed Scheme of Arrangement between Umang Darlie Limited, Panchmahi Properties Limited and Bengal & Assam Company Limited and their respective shareholders & creditors, was presented by the Petitioner Companies before the Allahabad Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal ("NCLT") on 20th September, 2024. The hearing of the Petition by the Hon'ble NCLT, Allahabad Bench, will be held on 20th September, 2024 at 11.00 AM.

Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said Petition should send to Petitioner Companies, at the address mentioned above, a notice of his/her intention to support or oppose the Petition, giving his/her name and address, and to the Hon'ble NCLT at 67-9, Pranna Lal Patel, Prayagraj – 211 002, so as to reach the Petitioner Companies not later than two days before the date fixed for hearing of the Petition i.e., 7th November, 2024. Any person who seeks to oppose the Petition, the grounds of opposition or a copy of his/her affidavit, may file the same with such notice. A copy of the Petition will be furnished by the Petitioner Companies to any person requiring the same, on payment of the prescribed charges.

For Umang Darlie Limited
Sd/-
Panjal Kaura
Company Secretary
Date: 7th October, 2024

BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, MUMBAI BENCH
C.P.C./CAA/172/M/2024

C.I.A.(CAA)/NOM/2024

In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013;

AND

In the matter of Scheme of Arrangement amongst Strides Pharma Science Limited ("Strides") and Steriservice Specialties Private Limited ("Steriservice") ("Target Company") and Umang Darlie Limited ("Umang") and Other ("Petitioner Companies") ("Scheme of Arrangement") ("Scheme")

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Transferee Company 1/
Demerged Company 1

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Transferee Company 2/
Demerged Company 2

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Resulting Company

(Collectively referred to as "Petitioner Companies")

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