

## Chapter 1 Transformation and Structural Changes in the 1990s

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Chapter 1  
**TRANSFORMATION AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES  
IN THE 1990s**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter depicts Myanmar's industrial policy, performance and structural changes in transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented one in the 1990s. Since the military government took over power in 1988, it abandoned a socialist central-planned economic system and headed for a market-oriented one with a series of liberalization and deregulation measures implemented.

However, the impact of liberalization – of international trade, finance, regulations and licensing and ownership requirements – on industrial structure and performance in Myanmar have been poorly documented and analyzed. Whether the new government policies changed the industrial structure and organizational behavior and hence improved its performance or not, is a key issue for future industrial policy making.

This chapter tries to outline a series of liberalization programs implemented under the present government (SLORC/SPDC), and assess the impact on industrial changes and performance. References should also be made to previous governments' policies including socialist one when relevant. Based on such analysis, this chapter draws policy implications, if any, for both the government and private sector.

## **2. HISTORICAL CHANGES IN INDUSTRIAL POLICY**

Industrialization is an essential element of the whole development of a country. Among the newly independent Third World countries after the World War II, there was a craving for economic growth through industrialization, i.e. from traditional agrarian economy to modern industrial one. Economic development had often been equated with industrialization. Independent Myanmar also shared the same aspiration for a modern indus-

trial economy.

However, a glimpse at Table 1 clearly shows the underdeveloped situation of industrial sector in Myanmar, compared with those of neighboring countries. The country is rich in natural resources with a highly literate population, which are obviously a good sign for development prospects. Before World War II its economy was slightly larger than that of Thailand. Its exports reached \$195 million, while Thailand's were only \$76 million. Although Myanmar's economy was substantially devastated during the war period, most economic and development indicators show that it was not too far behind Thailand by 1950. Therefore, it was not at all unrealistic to be an optimist for Myanmar's economic prospects including rapid industrialization in the 1950s.

**Table 1 : Shares of Major Sectors in GDP**

(%)

	Agriculture			Industry			Services		
	1970	1980	1995	1970	1980	1995	1970	1980	1995
Myanmar	49.5	47.9	46.1	12.0	12.3	15.3	38.5	39.8	38.6
Thailand	30.2	20.2	10.9	25.7	30.1	42.2	44.1	49.7	46.9
Indonesia	35.0	24.4	15.9	28.0	41.3	42.2	37.0	34.3	41.9
Philippines	28.2	23.5	21.5	33.7	40.5	35.5	38.1	36.0	43.0
Malaysia	—	22.9	13.9	—	35.8	47.1	—	41.3	39.0

Source: Asian Development Bank, *Asian Development Outlook; 1996 and 1997*.

Taking these historical facts as well as natural resources endowments in Myanmar into consideration, the main explanation for economic stagnation and dwarfed industrialization should lie in the government industrial policies that successive independent governments had adopted. Table 2 depicts a brief chronology of political economy of industrialization in Myanmar. It is clear that Myanmar governments had long clung to the control-oriented, or at least interventionist policy rather than utilizing market mechanism. (Table 2)

During the socialist period in particular, inward-looking growth strategy, nationalization (Burmanization) and import substitution had long been pursued. However, Myanmar's centrally planned economy, like other socialist countries, faced many obstacles and stagnant growth in not only industrial sector but also the whole economy. The socialist government relaxed some strict policies and introduced reforms of the State-owned Economic Enterprises along with prescription of commercial guidelines to improve their efficiency in the mid-1970s. Although its economy picked up shortly after

**Table 2 : A Brief Chronology of Political Economy of Industrialization in Myanmar**

Period	Political System	Economic System	Industrial Strategy	Result
1.1886-1948	Colonialism	Laissez-faire Policy	Export-propelled "Agriculturization"	Foreign-dominated Industrial Sector Poor-Spread Effect for Nation-Wide Industrial Development
2.1948-1962	Parliamentary Democracy	Moderate Economic Nationalism in the Framework of Market Mechanism	Raw Material-oriented Import Substitution Industrialization	Moderate Industrial Performance Foreign-dominated Industrial Sector
3.1962-1974	Military Rule (Burmese Way to Socialism)	Command Economy, Radical Nationalism, Burmanization & Stern Isolation	Import Substitution Industrialization Self-Reliant Line	Burmanization of Economy and Industry Poor Economic and Industrial Performance
4.1974-1988	BSPP Rule (Burmese Way to Socialism)	Centralized Planning Inward-Looking Policy with the exception of ODA Acceptance	Import Substitution Industrialization Agro-based Industries Inflows of ODA (mostly from Japan)	Poor Economic and Industrial Performance Import-dependent Industries
5.1988 to Present	Military Rule (SLORC/SPDC)	Transition toward Market Economy	Agriculture-based & Export-oriented Industrialization Inflows of Foreign Direct Investment	Economic Recovery Gradual Increase in Foreign and Local Private Enterprises Stalled Economic Reforms Crony-Capitalization (?)

Source: Based on Mya Than and Joseph L.H. Tan, "Introduction: Optimism for Myanmar's Economic Transition in the 1990s?" in Mya Than and Joseph L.H. Tan, eds., *Myanmar Dilemmas and Options: The Challenge of Economic Transition in the 1990s* (Singapore: ASEAN Economic Research Unit, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990), Appendix I, pp.14-15; and Maung Maung Lwin, "Industrialization of Myanmar and Economic Dynamism of Pacific Asia," *Kaigai-Jijo Kenkyu (Studies on Foreign Affairs)*, Vol.24 No.1 (Kumamoto: Kaigai-Jijo Kenkyu-jo, Kumamoto Gakuen University, September 1996). The author does some changes. For example, the original division of the post-independence history is four, but the author demarcated the period between 1962 and 1988 into two eras. Some descriptions are also subject to author's changes.

such reforms, it could not be sustainable mainly due to the shortage of imported material goods. After 1983, the industrial production deteriorated again, and other economic difficulties such as high inflation, rising living costs and macroeconomic and monetary mismanagement including demonetizations in 1987 worsened the situation, which eventually led to the collapse of the socialist regime in 1988.

SLORC/SPDC officially gave up the establishment of a socialist economic

system and started to promote a market-oriented economy. Two pillar laws were promulgated: the Foreign Investment Law (November 1988) and the State-owned Economic Enterprises Law (March 1989). The former resumed the intake of private foreign capital after 25 years' interval; the latter authorized private enterprises to be engaged in all but 12 stipulated industries. In addition to these, various reform measures were taken to promote the active participation of the private sector in the national economy. These include the decentralization of control of economic activities, the relaxation of price controls, the deregulation of export and import restrictions, the opening of border trade, the reduction of government subsidies, the announcement of full-fledged privatization of all State-owned Economic Enterprises, streamlining taxes and duties, the establishment of industrial zones, and the improvement of infrastructure (Table 3). Between 1988 and 1997, twenty-seven new business-related laws were promulgated including the above two. The military governments apparently committed themselves to the global trend of transition to market-oriented economy.

Nevertheless, can we be fully confident of the present government's commitment on transition to a genuine market economy, which guarantees level playing fields for every economic actor? This is a key question to consider the prospects for industrial development in Myanmar. However, before answering this question, let's have a look at impacts of economic reforms on industrial structure in the 1990s, with usage of some economic indicators. Without knowing the current situation, we would not be able to foretell future prospects in any way.

**Table 3 : Major Economic Reforms under the Military Rule**

1988	* Introduction of Myanmar Investment Law
1989	* Decontrol of prices
	* Regularization of border trade
	* Introduction of State-owned Economic Enterprises Law delineating the scope of the state sector
	* Revocation of the 1965 law that established the socialist economic system
1990	* Introduction of Myanmar Tourism Law
	* Allowing 100 percent retention of exports earnings
	* Introduction of Private Industrial Enterprise Law
	* Introduction of the Central Bank of Myanmar Law
	* Introduction of Financial Institutions of Myanmar Law
	* Introduction of Myanmar Agricultural and Rural Development Law

- 1991
  - \* Introduction of Commercial Tax Law
  - \* Initiation of industrial zones in Yangon
  - \* Announcement of the Central Bank of Myanmar Rules and Regulations
  - \* Introduction of Promotion of Cottage Industries Law
  - \* Reestablishment of Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- 1992
  - \* Announcement to lease inefficient state-owned factories
  - \* Announcement of denationalization of nationalized sawmills
  - \* Announcement of the establishment of four private banks
  - \* Introduction of Tariff Law
  - \* Introduction of Savings Bank Law
- 1993
  - \* Introduction of US\$ denominated foreign exchange certificate (FEC)
  - \* Introduction of Myanmar Insurance Law
- 1994
  - \* Introduction of Myanmar Citizens Investment Law
  - \* Licensing of representative offices of 11 foreign banks
  - \* Introduction of Science and Technology Development Law
- 1995
  - \* Announcement of the formation of Privatization Committee
  - \* Announcement of permission to establish joint venture banks between local private banks and foreign banks (although not realized until now)
  - \* Opening of the licensed foreign exchange center for FEC trading in Yangon
- 1996
  - \* Permission given to local private banks to conduct foreign exchange business and to pay interest on foreign currency deposit
  - \* Establishment of the Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre Co. Ltd., a joint venture between Japan's Daiwa Research Institute and the state-owned Myanma Economic Bank
  - \* Introduction of law on development of computer knowledge
  - \* Official rate of exchange for levying custom duties changed to K 100 per US\$ accompanied by reduction of tariffs to a fraction of previous values
- 1997
  - \* Announcement of paddy procurement through a tender bid system; but it was never implemented.
- 1998
  - \* Announcement of leasing of fallow and virgin land for paddy and cash-crop cultivation or livestock breeding by private entrepreneurs including foreigners
- 2000
  - \* Across the board increase of public sector salaries by 5-6 times to be in line with private sector wages

### **3. IMPACT OF ECONOMIC REFORMS ON THE INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE**

How did economic reforms including liberalization measures have an impact on industrial structure and performance? The impact and magnitude of economic reforms under the military governments have been thus far poorly documented and examined. Nevertheless, whether the new governments' policies have changed the industrial structure and organizational behavior, and hence improved its performance or not is a key issue for future industrial development in Myanmar.

One of major objectives of this volume is to answer this key question. While other chapters are also designed to answer the question, in this chapter the author will give readers an overview of transformation and changes in Myanmar's industrial sector throughout the 1990s by using some of official economic indicators.

#### **3.1 Classification of Industries**

When we try to examine structural changes in industries, we inevitably encounter the problem of industrial classification. In Myanmar, the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) has established the Burma Standard for Industrial Classification (BSIC) of economic activities in 1952 based on UN's International Standard for Industrial Classification (ISIC) of 1948. The BSIC also categorized industrial activities into three levels, that is Divisions (1 digit), Major Groups (2 digits) and Groups (3 digits). Each Division is as follows: 0 Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fishery; 1 Mining and Quarrying; 2 & 3 Manufacturing; 4 Construction; 5 Electricity, Gas, Water and Sanitary Services; 6 Commerce; 7 Transport, Storage and Communication; 8 Services and 9 Activities Not Adequately Described. The Ministry of Industry (1) seems to be revising the BSIC based on the ISIC of 1990. However, the new version of BSIC has not yet been utilized in any government reports.

Apart from the BSIC, the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development has used another classification in compiling national income. This classification was revised and has been employed by the said Ministry for compiling an annual economic report called *Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions*. According to this classification, all economic activities were classified into 14 sectors: Agriculture; Livestock and Fishery; Forestry; Energy; Mining; Processing and Manufacturing; Electric Power; Construction; Transportation; Communications; Financial

Institutions; Social and Administrative Services; Rentals and Other Services; and Trade.<sup>1</sup>

The Processing and Manufacturing sector is further divided into 13 commodity groups in the *Review*. Those are Food and Beverages; Clothing and Wearing Apparel; Construction Materials; Personal Goods; Household Goods; Printing and Publishing; Industrial Raw Materials; Mineral and Petroleum Products; Agriculture Equipment; Machinery and Equipment; Transport Vehicles; Electrical Goods and Miscellaneous.

### 3.2 GDP

Industrial structure can be defined in terms of the relative importance of individual industries, or groups of related industries, within an economy. One of the most frequent measures of an industry's importance is based on its production (value added or net output).

Table 4 shows the relative importance of different sectors in GDP. As mentioned above, 14-sector-classification is employed here. In addition to the problem of industrial classification, there is another issue whether we should use nominal GDP or real GDP when to see industrial structural changes. Nominal GDP is, of course, measured at current prices. If all prices doubled without any changes in quantities, then nominal GDP would double. Yet it would be misleading to say that the economy's ability to satisfy demands has doubled, because the quantity of every good produced remains the same. Contrast to this, real GDP, which is the value of goods and services measured at constant prices of a base-year, would not be influenced by changes in prices. Since a society's ability to provide economic satisfaction for its members ultimately depends on the quantities of goods and services produced, real GDP, which summarizes the output of the economy measured at base-year prices, provides better measures of economic well-being than nominal GDP.

However, our main concern here is with changes in industrial structure, which presupposes changes in price structure as well. In this section, we will pay more attention to the relative importance of different sectors in nominal GDP, which also reflects changes in price structure.

The question of whether to use nominal GDP or real GDP to see structural

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<sup>1</sup> Until FY 1996 *Review*, 13 sectors were used for GDP statistics. Since FY 1997 *Review*, "Energy" was added to become 14 sectors in full. However, the Ministry has stopped to issue *Review* thereafter.



**Table 4 : Relative Importance of Different Sectors in GDP**

	1985/86	1988/89	1992/93	1994/95	1996/97	1998/99 (Provisional)		Changes in Share(85/86-98/99)	
	(Nominal-Real)	(nominal GDP)	(nominal GDP)	(nominal GDP)	(nominal GDP)	(nominal GDP)	(Real GDP)	(Nominal-Based)	(Real-Based)
Goods	61.3%	67.1%	70.0%	71.6%	70.5%	69.3%	59.6%	8.0	-1.6
Agriculture	39.7%	48.5%	50.6%	55.2%	53.2%	52.4%	34.5%	12.7	-5.3
Livestock & Fishery	7.1%	7.6%	8.5%	6.8%	6.1%	6.2%	7.2%	-0.9	0.1
Forestry	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%	1.0%	0.8%	0.5%	1.0%	-0.8	-0.4
Energy	-	-	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	-	-
Mining	1.0%	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	1.6%	-0.5	0.6
Processing and Manufacturing	9.9%	7.5%	6.9%	6.2%	7.1%	7.2%	9.2%	-2.7	-0.7
Electric Power	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	1.0%	-0.4	0.5
Construction	1.7%	1.1%	1.8%	1.6%	2.4%	2.4%	4.9%	0.7	3.2
Services	14.8%	12.2%	7.4%	6.9%	6.8%	6.8%	19.3%	-8.1	4.5
Transportation	3.6%	2.5%	1.9%	2.6%	3.2%	3.8%	4.3%	0.2	0.7
Communications	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	1.9%	-0.2	1.5
Financial Institutions	2.4%	2.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	2.0%	-2.3	-0.3
Social & Administrative	4.6%	3.9%	2.7%	2.1%	1.4%	0.9%	6.8%	-3.6	2.2
Rentals & Other Services	3.9%	3.3%	2.3%	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%	4.3%	-2.2	0.4
Trade	23.9%	20.8%	22.6%	21.5%	22.6%	23.9%	21.1%	0.0	-2.9
Gross Domestic Product	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0

Notes: Real GDP is based on 1985/86 constant prices.

1998/99 provisional figures are as of July 1999.

Source: *Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions* (various issues).

changes in an economy is particularly important with the case of Myanmar. We should notice that there is a large difference between nominal GDP and real GDP in shares of different sectors. Table 4 shows both of nominal GDP and real GDP in the base-year of 1985/86 and the latest year of 1998/99. While nominal GDP naturally equals real GDP in the base-year of 1985/86, there is a big difference between them in 1998/99. For example, while the agriculture sector occupies more than 50 percent of nominal GDP in 1998/99, it accounts for only about 35% of real GDP in the same year. Moreover, the agriculture sector decreased its relative importance in real GDP by 5.3 percentage-point between 1985/86 and 1998/99, whereas it increased its share in nominal GDP by 12.7 percentage-point during the same period. Similarly, the processing and manufacturing sector reduced its relative importance in real GDP marginally by 0.7 percentage-point, whereas it decreased its share in nominal GDP quite considerably by 2.7 percentage-point. According to the figures from nominal GDP, there occurs "agriculturalization" rather than "industrialization" during the last 13 years. On the other hand, according to the figures of real GDP, little change and transformation in industrial structure is observed.

Such differences between nominal GDP and real GDP are due to the dif-

ferentiated rates of increase by the different sectors of GDP deflator. Figure 1 shows the indices of GDP deflator by different sectors, where the base-year of 1985/86 is set at 1. The GDP deflator compares the current price of a basket consisting of quantities of goods and services produced this year with the price of the same basket in the base-year. In other words, the GDP deflator measures the price of the typical unit of output relative to its price in the base-year.

It is often the case with transition economy from central-planned to market-oriented one that price structure undergoes a big change. As for Myanmar's case, the prices of agricultural produce and food, which had long been controlled at lower prices throughout the socialist period, jumped to the market prices by liberalization measures. The price hike of agricultural produce such as rice and vegetable is much higher than those of other sectors' products such as industrial goods, construction, transportation, and social and administrative services. The share of agriculture sector in nominal GDP has increased due to such effect of relative price hike, although its share in real GDP had decreased during the same period.

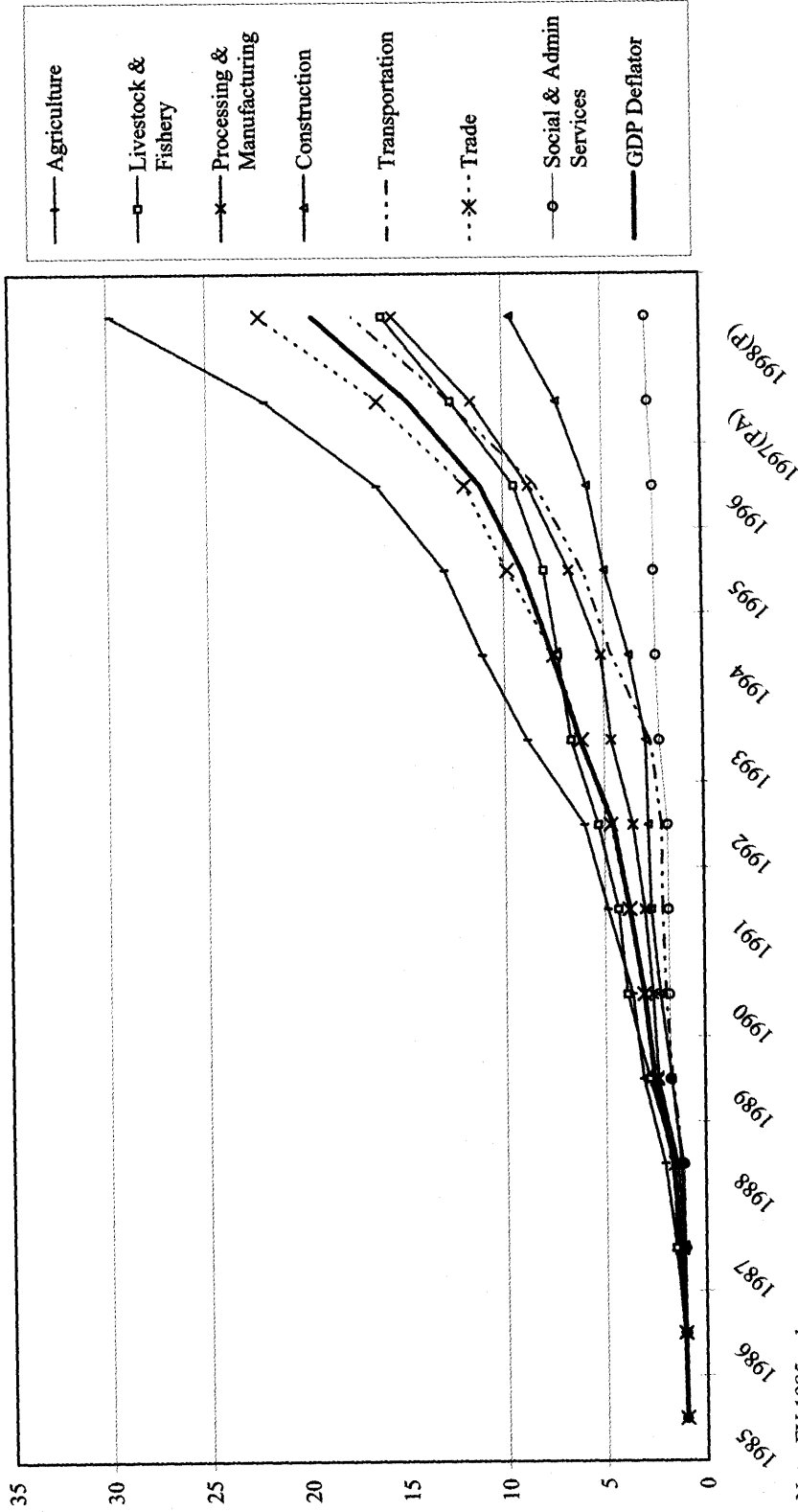
If it is further added, the 1985/86 base-year of real GDP of Myanmar is considerably outdated. We should note that an industrial landscape described by real GDP is based on the price structure of the heydays of the socialist era. As a conclusion, we should generally use nominal GDP to see the relative importance of different sectors in time series analysis. (Figure 1)

Bearing the discussion above in mind, let's see the table 4 for considering the structural change of the economy. When we look through the figures of nominal GDP, only the agricultural sector increased its share substantially. Most of other sectors lowered their shares or changed little. It may be said that the industrial structure of Myanmar has been static throughout the 1990s. The economy is still characterized by the predominant importance of agriculture sector.

On the other hand, there is certainly a perception among people that the Myanmar economy has undergone a visible change. High-rise buildings come up in major cities such as Yangon and Mandalay; international hotels and shopping malls which are new to the mass, are constructed; streets are crowded with cars and a traffic jam has become an every morning and evening event.

Moreover, with series of economic reforms and transition to market-oriented economy, there was a steady economic development for the period

**Figure 1 : GDP Deflator by Different Sectors**



Note: FY 1985 = 1.  
 Source: Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions (various issues).

of the four-year plan (1992/93-95/96) with an average annual growth rate of 7.5%, which is certainly high in an agrarian economy such as Myanmar. The success of this plan was due to various factors: private sector development following the liberalization policy; inflow of FDI following the open-door policy; substantial increase of agricultural produce (especially rice) following the introduction of summer paddy; growth of exports following the decontrol of state monopoly of foreign trade; encouragement of tourism and construction mini-boom.

Nevertheless, according to the GDP statistics, it was only the agriculture sector that increased its relative importance in the whole economy. There was a growth in Myanmar economy, but it was an agriculture-led development without substantial industrial structural changes. Contrary to the general understanding of the public, it was not industrialization but agriculturalization that progressed in Myanmar in the 1990s.

Then, why did the agriculture sector raise its share in nominal GDP? First of all, the production of agriculture has increased. For example, the production of paddy, sown area of which occupies more than 40 % of total sown area, increased by 54 percent from 12,956 thousand tons in 1988/89 to 19,888 thousand tons in 1999/2000. The increase is remarkable, however such an increase is achievable with the annual average growth rate of about 4 percent. As shown by the decline in the share of agricultural sector in real GDP, the increases of quantity in other sectors must have surpassed that in agricultural sector.

Second and more importantly, the price hike of agricultural produce contributed to an increase in its relative importance in nominal GDP. As mentioned before, the prices of agricultural produce had increased more rapidly than the average consumer price index. In other words, the terms of trade of agricultural produce over industrial goods improved. In this way, it may be said that the economic welfare of farmers in rural area was more elevated than that of industrial workers in urban area in the 1990s.

This policy contrasts sharply with that of the socialist regime. During the socialist period, the prices of agricultural produce were consistently suppressed well below the market ones, which were de facto subsidies to the urban dwellers. Moreover, external trade was monopolized by the state and the socialist government poured much of export earnings from agricultural produce into import substitution industries mainly located in urban areas.

The military government suddenly abandoned such policies favorable for the urban population and concerns more about the well being of farmers in rural areas. Such a policy change was probably driven by the political and economic crisis in 1988 through the people's uprising against the then government. The military government must have understood the importance of improving the living standards of rural population, which consists of 75 % of national population. The agriculture-rural-favored attitude of the present government was also expressed in their repeated economic slogan, saying "Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well".

We can see how rapid and large the prices of agricultural produce increased in Figure 1 and Table 4. The share of agriculture sector in nominal GDP jumped from 40% in 1985/86 to nearly 50% in 1988/89, further reaching its peak of 55% in 1994/95. It may be safely said that food and agricultural prices were adjusted to the market-clearing prices by this time. Since then the share of agriculture sector is on the downturn trend. Without further reforms such as export liberalization of rice, there will be little prospects for further improvement of the terms of trade of agricultural produce. Then, industrial and services sectors may gradually increase their relative importance in nominal GDP hereafter.

### **3.3 Labor Force**

Labor force statistics is another indicator, which is frequently used to see industrial structural changes. It is generally known as Petty-Clark's law that as economic development measured by per capita income progresses, the relative importance of the primary sector in both production and labor force falls and that of the secondary sector, and then the tertiary sector rise.

Table 5 shows changes in labor force distribution by industries. In 1998/99, the agriculture sector occupies more than 60% of total labor force, followed by trade (9.6%) and processing and manufacturing (9.3%). All other sectors occupy less than 5% of total labor force. The pattern of labor force clearly shows the agrarian nature of Myanmar economy. It also shows the very static situation of Myanmar's industrial structure. There are changes of less than one percentage-point in the share of each industry for the period between 1985/86 and 1998/99, which covers the period of transition to market economy. The dynamic structural changes are yet to be observed in Myanmar.

We can calculate each sector's relative productivity (or relative income)

**Table 5 : Estimated Employment in Various Sectors**

(Unit / %)

	FY64	FY74	FY85	FY88	FY92	FY94	FY96	FY98	Changes in Share (FY85→FY98)
Primary Industry	66.6	69.3	65.8	65.2	68.9	67.9	66.6	65.6	-0.2
Agriculture	64.8	66.7	63.3	62.6	65.5	64.5	63.4	62.4	-0.9
Livestock & Fishery	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.4	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.1	0.8
Forestry	0.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	-0.2
Secondary Industry	9.0	9.3	10.8	10.9	9.6	10.8	11.7	12.4	1.6
Energy & Mining	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.2
Processing and Manufacturing	7.3	7.2	8.5	8.6	7.3	8.2	8.8	9.3	0.8
Electric Power	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Construction	1.1	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.1	0.5
Tertiary Industry	15.5	16.8	19.1	19.6	18.5	19.7	20.2	20.5	1.4
Transport and Communications	3.0	3.5	3.3	3.3	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.8	-0.5
Social Services	1.7	1.8	2.3	2.8	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.4	1.1
Administrative and Other Services	3.4	2.6	3.8	3.5	4.3	4.3	4.7	4.8	1.0
Trade	7.4	8.9	9.7	10.0	8.5	9.7	9.7	9.6	-0.1
Workers n.e.s	8.9	4.6	4.2	4.3	2.9	1.6	1.5	1.4	-2.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	-

(Source) Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions (various issues).

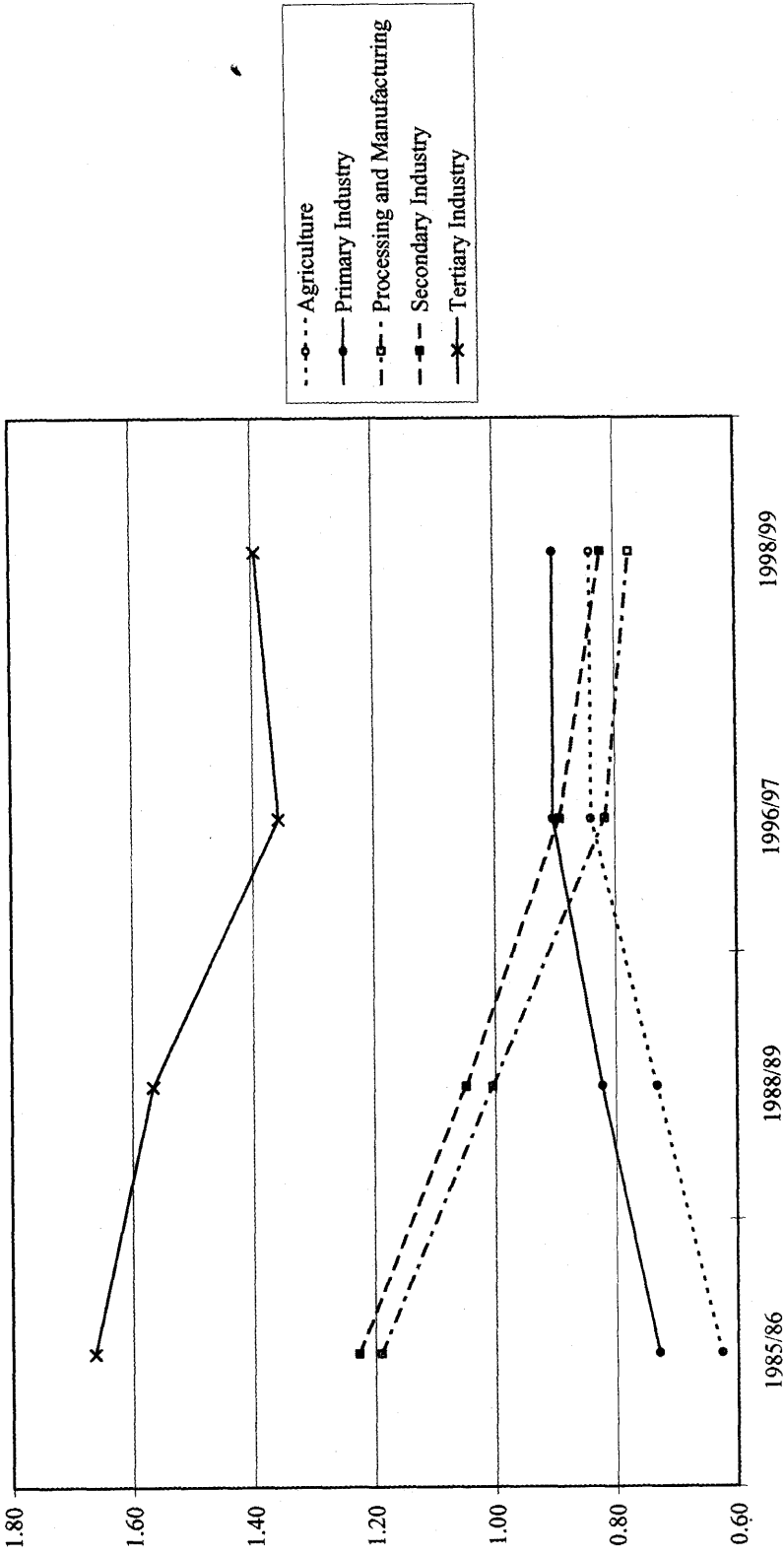
from Table 4 and 5. Relative productivity is the ratio of the labor productivity of an industry ( $Y_i/L_i$ , where  $Y_i$  stands for income of industry  $i$  and  $L_i$  stands for labor force of industry  $i$ ) divided by the labor productivity of the whole economy ( $Y/L$ , where  $Y$  stands for national income and  $L$  stands for total labor force). In practice, relative productivity can be calculated as the ratio of the share in nominal GDP (Table 4) divided by the share of labor force (Table 5). This will be shown in an equation as below:

$$(Y_i/L_i) / (Y/L) = (Y_i/Y) / (L_i/L).$$

If the figure of relative productivity exceeds 1 in an industry, it means that the industry has better labor productivity than the average. Figure 2 shows relative productivity of major industries and groups of related industries.

While the primary industry including agriculture increased its relative productivity, the secondary industry including processing and manufacturing and the tertiary one decreased their relative productivity. The increase of productivity in the primary industry is mainly due to the improved terms of

**Figure 2 : Relative Productivity of Different Industries**



Note: The average labor productivity equals 1.00.  
Source: Calculated from figures in Table 4 and 5.

trade of agricultural produce as explained before.

As contrast to the primary industry, the secondary industry decreased its relative productivity due to the worsened terms of trade of industrial goods over agricultural produce. In addition to this, changes in ownership structure in the secondary industry may have also affected the deterioration of its relative productivity. Such factors can be pointed out as the demise of some state-economic enterprises that usually enjoyed relatively high productivity, as well as new entries of small- and micro-sized private enterprises whose productivity is generally lower than that of state economic enterprises.

Another salient feature is the high standard of relative productivity of the tertiary industry, in spite of its downturn trend. This is mainly because of the highest level of labor productivity of trade sector, which composes more than 60 % of the tertiary industry. The relative productivity of trade sector was 2.45 in 1985/86, 2.25 in 1988/89, 2.33 in 1996/97, and 2.50 in 1998/99. In 1998/99, the trade sector occupied 24% of nominal GDP, whereas it composed only 10% in labor force.

The author does not have a clear answer for the question why the trade sector maintains such high labor productivity. One possible reason may be due to the deficiency of labor force statistics. The trade industry may include huge informal sector, which may not be well-recorded in labor force statistics. In any rate, full-fledged industrialization is not observed from either labor force pattern or the trend of relative productivity of each industry.

### **3.4 External Trade**

Lastly, let us observe changes in exports and imports. External trade was monopolized by the state in the period of Socialist Programme Party. As soon as the present government seized the power in 1988, they took the open-door policy. In practice, foreign direct investment was allowed to flow into Myanmar after a 25-year-interval; border trade with major neighboring countries was legitimized; and private businesses were allowed to engage in foreign trade. The share of the private sector in exports reached 73 % and that in imports reached 70 % in FY 1999.<sup>2</sup>

According to the government statistics denominated in Kyat, the amount

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<sup>2</sup> However, some of the major export items are still under the state monopoly. In principle, rice, teak, petroleum, natural gas and so on could be exported only by State Economic Enterprises (SEEs) and/or JVs with them.



of export grew at an average annual rate of 12.8% and that of import grew at that of 17.1% for the period between FY 1989 and FY 1997. Indeed, you can feel the affluence of imported goods in daily life. When you go shopping at City Mart, biggest supermarket chains in Myanmar, you will encounter so many imported consumer goods, most of which had been beyond people's reach in the socialist period. According to UNDP's survey on socio-economic conditions of rural area, about 90 per cent of expenditure on non-food and durable-use items spent by the rural population in the sample villages are foreign-origin goods.<sup>3</sup> Imported goods seem to have penetrated into the rural markets as well as urban ones.

Contrary to such facts, external trade's share as of nominal GDP has fallen from 7.4% in FY 1988 to 1.5% in FY 1998 (Provisional Figure). This is mainly because official statistics of external trade is substantially understated due to grossly overvalued exchange rate as well as large amount of unrecorded border trade. Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1 of SPDC, also admits the huge discrepancies in trade statistics between one recorded by Myanmar authorities and another by Thailand. On the other hand, external trade's share as of real GDP has increased from 12.5 % in FY 1988 to 17.9 % in FY 1998. The figures of real GDP seem to be more consistent with the flooding situation of imported goods into Myanmar.

Table 6 shows the development of exports by commodities. It indicates the predominance of primary products in Myanmar's exports. Export of agricultural produce occupied 55% in FY 1980, which was in the midst of the socialist period. However, it plunged into the record low of 8% in FY 1988, mainly due to the collapse of compulsory procurement system of agricultural produce by the state in the previous year. Under the present military government the share of agricultural produce in total export gradually recovered, reaching 46% in FY 1994. Since then, it has been again on the downturn trend due to the drastic decrease of rice export.

Among agricultural produces, beans and pulses are major export commodities, which have replaced the leading role of rice since FY 1990. While rice export occupied about 70% of total export of agricultural produce in FY 1985, it plunged into only 2% in FY 1997. Contrary to rice, export of bean and pulses has steadily increased since FY 1990, occupying 70% of total export of agricultural produce in FY 1997. Such an increase was achieved by the price incentives of export markets, which were realized through trade liberalization. This is sharply contrasted to the sluggish record of rice export, which is still monopolized by the state-owned Myanma Agricul-

<sup>3</sup> UNDP, *An Analysis of Socio-Economic Trends of Rural Myanmar*, May, 1998.

**Table 6: Exports**

(Unit: Million Kyat / %)

	FY80		FY85		FY88		FY89		FY90		FY91	
	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share
Agricultural Products	1761	55.4%	1126	43.9%	128	5.9%	432	15.3%	942	31.9%	1011	34.5%
Rice and Rice Products	1355	42.7%	763	29.7%	54	2.5%	266	9.4%	172	5.8%	251	8.6%
Beans and Pulses	152	4.8%	238	9.3%	52	2.4%	123	4.3%	515	17.4%	429	14.7%
Maize	11	0.3%	15	0.6%	1	0.0%	12	0.4%	13	0.4%	28	1.0%
Oilseeds	46	1.4%	32	1.2%	6	0.3%	15	0.5%	11	0.4%	8	0.3%
Raw Rubber	82	2.6%	56	2.2%	13	0.6%	8	0.3%	3	0.1%	34	1.2%
Raw Cotton	4	0.1%	18	0.7%	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0.0%	NA	NA
Raw Jute	99	3.1%	NA	NA	NA	NA	4	0.1%	NA	NA	0	0.0%
Other Agricultural Products	12	0.4%	4	0.2%	2	0.1%	4	0.1%	228	7.7%	261	8.9%
Animal Products	13	0.4%	11	0.4%	5	0.2%	3	0.1%	5	0.2%	4	0.2%
Marine Products	82	2.6%	94	3.7%	61	2.8%	134	4.7%	165	5.6%	156	5.3%
Fish	58	1.8%	13	0.5%	12	0.6%	0	0.0%	36	1.2%	33	1.1%
Prawn	24	0.8%	76	3.0%	46	2.1%	107	3.8%	114	3.9%	119	4.1%
Other Marine Products	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	3	0.1%	27	1.0%	15	0.5%	4	0.1%
Timber	793	25.0%	1046	40.8%	661	30.5%	891	31.4%	999	33.8%	931	31.8%
Teak	721	22.7%	982	38.3%	600	27.7%	798	28.2%	740	25.0%	668	22.8%
Hardwood	72	2.3%	64	2.5%	61	2.8%	93	3.3%	259	8.8%	263	9.0%
Base Metal and Ores	190	6.0%	114	4.4%	70	3.2%	68	2.4%	72	2.4%	48	1.6%
Precious Minerals	105	3.3%	74	2.9%	60	2.8%	87	3.1%	86	2.9%	54	1.8%
Silver	64	2.0%	13	0.5%	10	0.5%	4	0.1%	5	0.2%	3	0.1%
Precious Stones and Pearls	41	1.3%	61	2.4%	50	2.3%	83	2.9%	81	2.7%	51	1.7%
Garment	0	0.0%	6	0.2%	8	0.4%	14	0.5%	8	0.3%	59	2.0%
Other Commodities	232	7.3%	95	3.7%	1176	54.2%	1205	42.5%	676	22.9%	663	22.7%
Total Domestic Exports	3176	100.0%	2566	100.0%	2169	100.0%	2834	100.0%	2953	100.0%	2926	100.0%

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 1998.

**Table 6: Exports (Contd.)**

(Unit: Million Kyat / %)

	FY92		FY93		FY94		FY95		FY96		FY97	
	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share
Agricultural Products	1299	36.2%	1358	32.1%	2478	45.9%	2321	46.1%	1981	36.1%	1952	31.0%
Rice and Rice Products	249	6.9%	268	6.3%	1166	21.6%	440	8.7%	126	2.3%	38	0.6%
Beans and Pulses	667	18.6%	724	17.1%	799	14.8%	1358	27.0%	1272	23.2%	1403	22.3%
Maize	30	0.8%	28	0.7%	49	0.9%	46	0.9%	107	2.0%	45	0.7%
Oilcakes	17	0.5%	26	0.6%	12	0.2%	12	0.2%	4	0.1%	0	0.0%
Raw Rubber	71	2.0%	91	2.2%	122	2.3%	180	3.6%	171	3.1%	134	2.1%
Raw Cotton	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	0.0%	3	0.1%	26	0.4%
Raw Jute	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6	0.1%	5	0.1%	8	0.1%
Other Agricultural Products	265	7.4%	221	5.2%	330	6.1%	278	5.5%	293	5.3%	298	4.7%
Animal Products	2	0.1%	5	0.1%	5	0.1%	7	0.1%	9	0.2%	8	0.1%
Marine Products	259	7.2%	368	8.7%	617	11.4%	615	12.2%	887	16.2%	945	15.0%
Fish	42	1.2%	22	0.5%	209	3.9%	159	3.2%	219	4.0%	289	4.6%
Prawn	190	5.3%	262	6.2%	345	6.4%	407	8.1%	560	10.2%	559	8.9%
Other Marine Products	27	0.8%	84	2.0%	63	1.2%	49	1.0%	108	2.0%	97	1.5%
Timber	949	26.4%	1241	29.4%	1061	19.6%	1048	20.8%	985	17.9%	853	13.6%
Teak	629	17.5%	741	17.5%	953	17.6%	903	17.9%	855	15.6%	698	11.1%
Hardwood	320	8.9%	500	11.8%	108	2.0%	145	2.9%	130	2.4%	155	2.5%
Base Metal and Ores	27	0.8%	29	0.7%	61	1.1%	70	1.4%	33	0.6%	30	0.5%
Precious Minerals	108	3.0%	165	3.9%	105	1.9%	137	2.7%	159	2.9%	207	3.3%
Silver	2	0.1%	1	0.0%	4	0.1%	4	0.1%	1	0.0%	3	0.0%
Precious Stones and Pearls	106	3.0%	164	3.9%	101	1.9%	133	2.6%	158	2.9%	204	3.2%
Garment	97	2.7%	220	5.2%	343	6.3%	300	6.0%	402	7.3%	436	6.9%
Other Commodities	849	23.6%	842	19.9%	735	13.6%	535	10.6%	1032	18.8%	1859	29.6%
Total Domestic Exports	3590	100.0%	4228	100.0%	5405	100.0%	5033	100.0%	5488	100.0%	6290	100.0%

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 1998.

tural Produce Trading (MAPT).

Similarly, export of prawn raised its head from negligible share in the socialist period to the third biggest export item following beans and pulses and teak by FY 1997. These increases of exports of pulses and beans and prawn clearly show how powerful market mechanism is. Moreover, Myanmar's farmers, fishermen and traders are rational and efficient enough to respond to the export markets.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the present government recently started to intervene in exporting and importing businesses. The government recently restored the compulsory procurement system regarding beans and pulses. Farmers who grow certain kinds of beans and pulses have to sell a portion of their produce to MAPT at a fixed price, which is usually set well below the market price. Likewise, export of sesame was recently re-monopolized by MAPT and some of military-related companies. In addition to these, a portion of foreign currency obtained from export of prawn must be surrendered to the Department of Fisheries of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries at a fixed exchange rate, which is often more favorable for the Department than the market rate.

It is not a coincidence that all these commodities of the government's targets for intervention are newly-emerging export items as explained before. The government and SEEs carefully watches markets and look for businesses that are profitable export earners. Then they began to intervene in those industries to squeeze foreign currency. It should be noted, however, that the export of such new commodities increased due to price incentives provided by the export markets. The enhanced government intervention will inevitably distort the markets and reduce price incentives for producers and traders. The government intervention could damage the prospects of export of new commodities.

While agricultural produce accounts for the major share of total export, it should be noted that some of processed and manufactured goods are also emerging as new export goods in the 1990s. Garment presents a good example. Garment export was negligible in FY 1990, but it increased its share up to 7% by FY 1996, which is the fourth biggest export item in the Table 6. Most of garments are produced on CMP-basis (Cutting, Making, and Packing). Recently both foreign and local companies have vigorously invested in the garment industry. It is said in Myanmar that if you see a new factory, it must be a garment one. To be sure, CMP-based garment projects

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 4 for details.

are the most vigorous sector in Myanmar's industry.<sup>4</sup>

Export of wood-based products such as plywood, flooring, plaque and furniture are also on the upturn trend, although most of them seem to have been classified in *Teak* and *Hardwood* in Table 6.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, some of industrial goods may also be classified in *Other Commodities*, which occupied 30% of the whole export in FY 1997. Taking such *invisible* industrial goods into consideration, the share of industrial goods in total export could be steadily increasing throughout the 1990s.

Then let us briefly examine the trend of imports by commodity (See Table 7). Import commodities are broadly categorized into three groups, that is, capital goods, raw materials and spare parts, and consumption goods. Immediately after trade liberalization in 1988, the share of consumption goods increased from 12% in FY 1985 to 36% in FY 1988, and up to 46% in FY 1992. It is surprising that food recorded the highest growth rate among consumption goods.<sup>6</sup> Although Myanmar has been a food exporter, it still has to import dairy products, spices, seasoning powders, snacks, ready-made foods, and even edible oil as essentials.

On the other hand, the share of capital goods decreased from 57% in FY 1985 to 29% in FY 1991. It is often the case for the beginning stage of a transition from planned economy to market-oriented one that trade liberalization brings about an increase in import of consumption goods to supply pent-up demands, which had long been suppressed during the socialist period. The share of capital goods bottomed out in FY 1991. Since then it increased considerably, and reached 43% in FY 1997. This recovery reflects industrial development, increased inflows of foreign direct investment as well as strong economic growth for the said period.

However, there is a possibility that import structure may have been changed again from capital-goods-oriented to consumer-goods-oriented after the economic downturn in 1997. It should be noted that import structure would drastically change towards capital-goods-oriented only when a full-fledged industrialization begins in Myanmar.

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 5 for details.

<sup>6</sup> Except for *others*, which occupied about 30% of total imports for the period between FY 1988 and FY 1992.

**Table 7: Imports**

(Unit: Million Kyat, %)

	FY80		FY85		FY88		FY89		FY90		FY91	
	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share
Capital Goods	2496	53.9%	2741	57.1%	1407	40.9%	1072	31.6%	1906	34.5%	1571	29.4%
Building Materials	394	8.5%	505	10.5%	286	8.3%	250	7.4%	500	9.0%	415	7.8%
Machinery	1877	40.5%	1789	37.3%	649	18.8%	397	11.7%	924	16.7%	471	8.8%
Transport Equipment	107	2.3%	303	6.3%	426	12.4%	358	10.5%	400	7.2%	638	12.0%
Others	119	2.6%	144	3.0%	47	1.4%	68	2.0%	82	1.5%	47	0.9%
Intermediate Goods	1863	40.2%	1485	30.9%	814	23.6%	1025	30.2%	1662	30.1%	1523	28.5%
Raw Materials	1327	28.6%	982	20.4%	452	13.1%	586	17.3%	1068	19.3%	1035	19.4%
Fuels	NA	NA	0	0.0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Tools and Spares	536	11.6%	503	10.5%	362	10.5%	439	12.9%	594	10.7%	488	9.1%
Consumer Goods	276	5.9%	576	12.0%	1223	35.5%	1298	38.2%	1956	35.4%	2243	42.0%
Durables	95	2.1%	273	5.7%	85	2.5%	79	2.3%	231	4.2%	223	4.2%
Food	54	1.2%	64	1.3%	12	0.3%	29	0.8%	109	2.0%	168	3.2%
Textiles	20	0.4%	62	1.3%	22	0.6%	23	0.7%	34	0.6%	39	0.7%
Medicines	74	1.6%	122	2.5%	43	1.3%	75	2.2%	95	1.7%	121	2.3%
Others	33	0.7%	56	1.2%	1060	30.8%	1092	32.2%	1488	26.9%	1692	31.7%
Grand Total	4635	100.0%	4802	100.0%	3443	100.0%	3395	100.0%	5523	100.0%	5337	100.0%

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 1998.

**Table 7: Imports (Contd.)**

(Unit: Million Kyat, %)

	FY92		FY93		FY94		FY95		FY96		FY97	
	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share	Amount	Share
Capital Goods	1750	32.6%	2777	35.1%	2914	35.0%	3645	35.4%	4714	40.0%	6172	43.3%
Building Materials	591	11.0%	508	6.4%	472	5.7%	1067	10.4%	1395	11.8%	1749	12.3%
Machinery	395	7.4%	824	10.4%	1100	13.2%	798	7.7%	1489	12.6%	2537	17.8%
Transport Equipment	723	13.5%	1364	17.2%	1251	15.0%	1626	15.8%	1681	14.3%	1543	10.8%
Others	41	0.8%	82	1.0%	91	1.1%	153	1.5%	149	1.3%	344	2.4%
Intermediate Goods	1128	21.0%	2128	26.9%	1854	22.3%	2377	23.1%	3046	25.9%	3350	23.5%
Raw Materials	764	14.2%	1817	22.9%	1547	18.6%	2015	19.6%	2645	22.5%	2840	19.9%
Fuels	0	0.0%	3	0.0%	4	0.0%	4	0.0%	6	0.1%	2	0.0%
Tools and Spares	364	6.8%	308	3.9%	304	3.6%	358	3.5%	395	3.4%	508	3.6%
Consumer Goods	2487	46.4%	3018	38.1%	3564	42.8%	4280	41.5%	4019	34.1%	4735	33.2%
Durables	231	4.3%	238	3.0%	340	4.1%	735	7.1%	744	6.3%	616	4.3%
Food	612	11.4%	842	10.6%	1189	14.3%	1605	15.6%	758	6.4%	1514	10.6%
Textiles	56	1.0%	170	2.1%	312	3.7%	294	2.9%	449	3.8%	742	5.2%
Medicines	14	0.3%	24	0.3%	17	0.2%	20	0.2%	151	1.3%	186	1.3%
Others	1575	29.3%	1745	22.0%	1706	20.5%	1627	15.8%	1918	16.3%	1678	11.8%
Grand Total	5365	100.0%	7923	100.0%	8332	100.0%	10302	100.0%	11779	100.0%	14257	100.0%

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 1998.

#### **4. IMPACT OF ECONOMIC REFORMS ON OWNERSHIP PATTERN: EMERGENCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR**

In order to see industrial structural changes, it is also important to examine changes in ownership pattern, especially in transition from centrally-planned economy where state sector is a major player, to market-oriented economy where private sector is expected to play a major role. Myanmar is also a transitional economy. In this section, the author will examine impacts of economic reforms on ownership pattern.

##### **4.1 GDP**

Economic reforms of the military government began with the open-door policy and the recognition of private businesses. The government announced its Foreign Investment Law in November 1988 and opened her doors to foreign investment after 25-year-interval. It also announced the State-owned Economic Enterprises Law in March 1989, in which the Law conferring powers for Establishing the Socialist Economic System, 1965 was repealed. In other words, the military government officially renounced the Burmese Way to Socialism by this law.

The State-owned Economic Enterprises Law stipulated the twelve economic enterprises that SEEs continue to monopolize.<sup>7</sup> By stipulating the twelve enterprises exclusive for SEEs, the government conversely allowed the private sector to enter the other fields. In other words, the industrial policy for the private sector's participation in national economy changed from "banned in principle" to "allowed in principle".

Under the industrial liberalization and open-door policy, the private sector has gained momentum. Table 8 shows the real GDP by industry and ownership. Thus far the author mainly used the figures of nominal GDP to see industrial structural changes. However, the figures by industry and ownership are available only in real GDP. Therefore, the author uses the figures

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<sup>7</sup> Those are: (a) extraction of teak and sale of the same in the country and abroad; (b) cultivation and conservation of forest plantation; (c) exploration, extraction and sale of petroleum and natural gas and production of products of the same; (d) exploration and extraction of pearls, jade and precious stones and export of the same; (e) breeding and production of fish and prawns in fisheries which have been reserved for research by the Government; (f) Postal and Telecommunications Service; (g) Air Transport Service and Railway Transport Service; (h) Banking Service and Insurance Service; (i) Broadcasting Service and Television Service; (j) exploration and extraction of metals and export of the same; (k) Electricity Generating Services other than those permitted by law to private and co-operative electricity generating services; (l) manufacture of products relating to security and defence which the Government has, from time to time, prescribed by notification.

**Table 8 : Relative Importance of Different Sectors in Real GDP by Ownership**

	1986/87				1998/99				Changes in Shares of Private Sector	
	Share		Private		Share		Private		Changes	Major Factors for Changes
	State	Co-operative	State	Co-operative	State	Co-operative	State	Co-operative		
I Goods	61.3%	11.9	5.3	82.7	59.6%	11.4	1.4	87.2	4.5	
1 Agriculture	40.3%	0.1	6.4	93.4	34.5%	0.2	1.9	97.9	4.5	Decontrol of trade of agricultural produce
2 Livestock & Fisheries	7.3%	1.3	2.6	96.2	7.2%	0.3	1.1	98.6	2.5	Development of private enterprises
3 Forestry	1.3%	38.0	4.4	57.6	1.0%	46.2	0.6	53.2	-4.4	Strengthened conservation of forests
<b>Primary Industry</b>	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>92.9</b>	<b>42.7%</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>4.1</b>	
4 Energy	-	-	-	-	0.2%	99.9	0.1	0.0	-	Entry ban by SEE Law
5 Mining	0.9%	89.8	2.2	8.0	1.6%	10.8	1.0	88.2	80.2	Provision of mining concession
6 Process & Manufacturing	9.2%	41.6	4.2	54.2	9.2%	28.2	0.9	70.8	16.6	Development of SMIs
7 Electric Power	0.5%	100.0	0.0	0.0	1.0%	99.9	0.1	0.0	0.0	Entry ban by SEE Law
8 Construction	1.7%	88.3	1.0	10.8	4.9%	45.8	0.2	54.0	43.2	Dvymt. of private firms & mini-boom
<b>Secondary Industry</b>	<b>12.4%</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>62.4</b>	<b>19.9</b>	
III Services	15.5%	60.6	2.5	36.9	19.3%	54.5	2.6	43.0	6.1	
1 Transportation	3.6%	36.0	4.9	59.1	4.3%	29.8	1.0	69.2	10.1	Development of private enterprises
2 Communications	0.5%	100.0	0.0	0.0	1.9%	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Entry ban by SEE Law
3 Financial Institutions	2.6%	98.9	1.1	0.0	2.0%	54.8	14.4	30.7	30.7	Lift of entry ban by LAW
4 Social & Admin Services	4.8%	98.8	1.2	0.0	6.8%	88.8	0.5	10.7	10.7	New entry to social services
5 Rentals & Other Services	4.1%	9.0	3.2	87.8	4.3%	3.9	2.9	93.3	5.4	Development of private enterprises
III Trade	23.1%	33.9	13.5	52.6	21.1%	21.3	2.4	76.3	23.7	Development of private enterprises
<b>Tertiary Industry</b>	<b>38.7%</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>40.4%</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>14.0</b>	
Gross Domestic Product	100.0%	24.6	6.8	68.6	100.0%	21.8	1.9	76.3	7.7	

Note: Real GDP based on 1985/86 constant prices.

Source: *Statistical Yearbook* (various issues); *Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions* (various issues).



of real GDP for this section. (Table 8)

First of all, you may notice with a glance at the table that the private sector accounted for nearly 70% of the whole GDP even in FY 1986, which was in the midst of the socialist regime. This high ratio of the private sector as of GDP in Myanmar sharply contrasts with those of Central and Eastern European transitional economies, where the state played a major role in the economy during the socialist period.

The high participation of the private sector in Myanmar's economy was largely due to the fact that most of the agriculture sector, the biggest industry that accounted for 40% of real GDP in FY 1986, has long been categorized as the private sector in GDP statistics.

However, it should be noted that even though the private sector contributed more than 90% of agriculture sector both in the socialist period and at present, the private sector's reality is substantially different between two periods. The agriculture sector was not collectivized, and land holdings remained at the hands of small farmers throughout the socialist period. In this sense, it may not be wrong to categorize the agriculture sector as private one. Nevertheless, farmers were under strict state control in those days. They could not grow what they wanted, but they had to cultivate lands according to the government policy and planning. They could not sell freely their products to markets, but they had to sell most of their products to the state at lower prices, which were unilaterally fixed by the government, than market ones. Farmers could not enjoy a freedom of management in those days.

The government decontrolled the trade of main agricultural produce in November 1987, which had long been monopolized by the state under the socialist regime. Since then, farmers have become able to sell their products to markets after selling a portion of their products to the state. Now farmers are getting more responsive to the market; they positively react to the price incentives from the market. Now farmers enjoy a relatively larger freedom of management compared to the socialist era. In this way, even though the agricultural sector has been continuously categorized as "the private sector", the real situation is totally different between before and after 1988.

Secondly, contrast to agriculture, some sectors were largely occupied by state-owned enterprises even in FY 1998. Energy, Electric Power, Communications, and Social and Administration Services were almost monop-

lized by the state. The state controlled the substantial shares of Forestry, Construction and Financial Institutions as well. Many of such industries that were monopolized or dominated by the state are on the list of twelve industries exclusive for SEEs. But there exists an exceptional clause that with a view to the interest of the state private business enterprises may be allowed to enter the twelve industries in the form of joint-venture with SEEs or even in the form of pure private ownership.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, many private companies including foreign ones invested in the twelve enterprises. Large-scale foreign investments in Yadana and Yetagon natural gas exploration provide good examples. On the other hand, although entry ban to the industries such as Forestry, Construction, Financial Institutions was lifted, there remain large-scale SEEs in those industries. This is why the shares of the state in those industries remain considerable.

Thirdly, the shares of the private sector increased in all industries except Forestry. In spite of remaining entry barriers and other restrictions, the private sector positively reacted to the industrial liberalization. The participation of the private sector increased particularly in Mining, Construction and Financial Institutions.

The government provided mining concessions to private enterprises in order to enhance production and to obtain revenue. The share of private sector in Mining rose from 8.0% in FY 1986 to 88.2% in FY 1998. As for Construction, private construction companies have mushroomed with construction mini-boom, which started in the early 1990s and burst by mid-1997. Some of business groups have been forged with such construction companies. Regarding the sector of Financial Institutions, although it was one of the twelve enterprises exclusive for SEEs, the establishment of private financial institutions was allowed by the Financial Institutions of Myanmar Law, enacted in July 1990. According to this Law, 20 private banks have been established since 1992.<sup>9</sup> The private sector's share in GDP rapidly increased from zero by 1991 to 30.7% in FY 1998. In terms of deposit outstanding, the private banks occupied 66% of total deposit as of the end of last year.

The shares of private sector are also increasing in the sector of Trade, the second biggest contributor to the GDP, and the sector of Processing and Manufacturing, the third largest one. All these figures point out the active participation of private sector in the national economy. As entry barriers

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<sup>8</sup> Section 4 in the State-owned Economic Enterprises Law, 1989.

<sup>9</sup> However, foreign banks are not yet allowed to operate.

and restrictions imposed upon private businesses are lifted, the participation of private sector in economic activities would be further enhanced even in the industries that are still monopolized or controlled by predominant SEEs. Myanmar's private sector is active and efficient enough to respond to the government liberalization policies.<sup>10</sup>

## 4.2 Business Registration

As the private sector plays an enhanced role in national economy, business entities registered with the authorities concerned have also mushroomed. Table 9 shows the number of various kinds of business entities, data of which was collected from various sources such as the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration and the Directorate of Trade.

There must be overlapping and double counting in the Table 9. For example, Myanmar Companies Limited can be organized according to the Burma Companies Act (1913) and Partnership Firms can be established according to Partnership Act (1932). When these companies or partnerships are engaged in external trade, both of them must obtain export and import licenses from the Ministry of Commerce and they would be counted as exporters and importers as well. In the same way, when you run a hotel, you have to obtain a business license from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, i.e. it was counted as Hotel Business in the Table 9. When the hotel run a tourist business, it may be also registered as Tourist Enterprise. Tourist Enterprise and Tourist Transport Business may also be overlapped. Moreover, some of business entities may be just paper companies without doing any actual business. In this way, we have to be careful that there must be overlapping, double counting and empty figures of business entities in Table 9.

Bearing such shortcomings in mind, let us examine Table 9. First of all, there is a significant increase in business entities. The number of various business entities increased by 17 times from 1,776 in total as of the end of FY 1989 to 29,868 as of FY 1997. Of course, all of them cannot be truly *new* entries, but some of them already existed and just registered themselves to the authorities concerned according to newly promulgated laws. Nevertheless, it may be safely said that the private sector positively responded to market-oriented policy and started up their businesses.

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<sup>10</sup> As for the availability of entrepreneurship in Myanmar, see Chapter 3.

**Table 9 : Number of Registered Exporters, Importers, Limited Companies, Partnerships and Joint-Venture Companies Limited**

	FY89	FY90	FY91	FY92	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97
1 Exporters	770	1777	2102	4813	6032	4277	5510	7410	8931
2 Importers	216	900	1503						
3 Business Representatives	183	480	768	947	1225	1509	1805	1981	2076
4 Myanmar Companies Limited	174	816	1308	2269	3401	4784	6672	8814	10844
5 Partnership Firms	376	565	727	850	949	1055	1108	1166	1214
6 Foreign Companies and Branches	39	80	133	183	296	442	658	984	1184
7 Joint Venture Companies Ltd.*	15	18	24	26	40	70	88	106	123
(a) SEE and Private Entrepreneurs	7	10	12	13	16	17	23	28	31
(b) SEE and Foreign Companies	8	8	12	13	24	53	65	78	92
8 JV Companies Ltd. formed under Foreign Investment Law	-	14	18	23	32	44	53	66	78
9 Other Organizations	3	5	27	29	31	31	32	33	35
10 Tourist Enterprises	-	-	-	69	145	288	455	573	474
11 Tourist Transport Business	-	-	-	71	287	825	1283	1562	1642
12 Hotel Business	-	-	-	27	72	112	179	266	302
13 Lodging-House Business	-	-	-	19	62	102	177	229	198
14 Tour Guide Business	-	-	-	87	247	600	1407	2124	2767
<b>Total</b>	<b>1776</b>	<b>4655</b>	<b>6610</b>	<b>9413</b>	<b>12819</b>	<b>14139</b>	<b>19427</b>	<b>25314</b>	<b>29868</b>

Note: Total for FY1997 is 29,874 in the original *Statistical Yearbook* (1998).

\*Excluding those under Foreign Investment Law.

Source: *Statistical Yearbook* (various issues).

Second, even though the number of various business entities shows a strong growth until 1996, since then the growth rate declined. The data has not been available after 1998, but the growth of the number of various business entities may have further declined due to economic slowdown.

Third, the so-called formalization of business entities is observed. The share of exporters and importers, which is generally regarded as easy forms of business entities, substantially declined from 55 % in FY 1989 to 30 % in FY 1997. In the same way, the share of partnerships, which is also regarded as easy form of business entities, declined from 21 % to 4 % in the same period. Contrary to these, Myanmar Companies Ltd., formal business entity, increased its share from 10 % in FY 1989 to 36 % in FY 1997. This may be called formalization of business entities.

Lastly, tourism-related businesses recorded a high growth rate. The aggregated share of tourism-related businesses covering from 10 to 14 in Table 9 increased from 3% in FY 1992 to 18% in FY 1997. However, the increased number of registered tourism-related businesses does not necessarily indicate the prosperity of tourism in Myanmar. For example, there are many tour guides who registered themselves with the authority concerned but could not find a job in tourism business due to stagnant tourism in this country. The number of overseas visitors jumped from 170,143 in FY 1995 to 310,298 in FY 1996 due to the Visit Myanmar Year campaign, and recorded 345,829 in FY 1998. However, it is on the downturn with 309,418 in FY 1999 and 126,380 for the first six months of FY 2000. The number of tourism-related businesses may have declined since 1997.

### **4.3 Private Manufacturing Firms**

Manufacturing sector is particularly important for full-fledged industrialization. In-depth sector-wise analysis in manufacturing sector will be presented in the later chapters in this volume. Here the author would like to provide a brief description of the sector.

Table 10 shows an ownership pattern by size of manufacturing measured by the number of employees. Most of manufacturing enterprises in Myanmar is micro-sized establishments with fewer than 10 workers, which account for 94% in FY 1998. Among them 98% is owned by private entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the state economic enterprises occupy 68% of large-scale factories, which however account for only one per cent of total establishments. Thus, the ownership structure of manufacturing sector in Myanmar is characterized as one with a small number of large-scale state

**Table 10 Factories and Establishments by Number of Workers**

Number of Workers	State		Co-operative		Private		Total	
Micro (Below 10)	719	1%	443	1%	50844	98%	52006	94%
Small (10- 50)	291	11%	175	7%	2134	82%	2600	5%
Medium (51-100)	257	55%	57	12%	150	32%	464	1%
Large (Over 100)	309	68%	2	0%	142	31%	453	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1576</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>53270</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>55523</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>MVA (% as of Total MVA)</b>	<b>28%</b>		<b>1%</b>		<b>71%</b>		<b>100%</b>	

Note: The ratios of columns of State, Co-operative and Private are ones as of each row's number of factories and establishments. The ratio of column of Total is one as of total number of factories and establishments.

MVA stands for Manufacturing Value Added.

Source: *Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions* (various issues)

economic enterprises producing 28% of total manufacturing value added (MVA), and with a large number of micro private establishments producing 71% of MVA.

Table 11 shows the development of private industries that registered with the Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department of Ministry of Industry (1). According to the Private Industrial Enterprise Law enacted in November 1990, any private industrial enterprises using three horsepower and above and/or ten wage-earning workers and above shall register themselves with the said Department. Then Procedures relating to the Private Industrial Enterprise Law was prescribed on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1991. In the Procedures, the authorities concerned requested that existing private industrial enterprises should apply for registration within 120 days from 1<sup>st</sup> February 1991. If they applied for registration within 120 days, then they would be allowed to continue their production activities before receiving any directive from the Directorate. The number of registration jumped from 27 in FY 1990 to 23,848 in FY 1991 by 883 times. However, the growth of registered number stabilized in the following fiscal year: it increased by only 5.2%, recording 25,081 in FY 1992. It can be said that almost all private enterprises that should be registered according to the Law and Procedures and had intention to do so, had registered by the end of FY 1991. Thus, increases in the figure of registered industries after FY 1992 can mostly be regarded as new entries. (Table 11)

The number of registered private industries increased from 24,117 factories in 1992 to 35,597 in 1999, with an average annual growth rate of 5.7%.

**Table 11: Registered Private Industries by Product Groups**

No.	Description	1992			1996			1997					
		No. of Establishments	Average No. of Employees	Share in Total Employment	No. of Establishments	Average No. of Employees	Share in Total Employment	No. of Establishments	Average No. of Employees	Share in Total Employment			
1	Food Products	13,406	60,537	56%	22,106	92,922	4.2	63%	22,517	111,747	5.0	63%	58%
2	Tobacco Products	130	868	1%	149	1,726	11.6	0%	145	1,704	11.8	0%	1%
3	Textiles	1,520	10,543	6%	2,348	17,334	7.4	7%	2,353	17,512	7.4	7%	9%
4	Wearing Apparel	17	230	0.1%	69	8,870	128.6	0%	77	9,967	129.4	0%	5%
5	Leather & Its Products	133	645	1%	231	1,232	5.3	1%	236	1,319	5.6	1%	1%
6	Wood, Wood Products	2,571	13,797	5.4	2,647	16,011	6.0	8%	2,673	16,250	6.1	7%	8%
7	Paper & Paper Products	231	973	4.2	250	1,133	4.5	1%	252	1,160	4.6	1%	1%
8	Publishing & Printing	251	1,048	4.2	280	1,223	4.4	1%	276	1,212	4.4	1%	1%
9	Coke & Petrol Products	1	3	0%	5	40	8.0	0%	3	20	6.7	0%	0%
10	Chemicals & Its Products	399	1,841	4.6	392	1,874	4.8	1%	392	1,910	4.9	1%	1%
11	Rubber & Plastics	637	2,969	4.7	722	3,951	5.5	2%	700	3,919	5.6	2%	2%
12	Other Non-Metallic Mineral Products	226	1,081	4.8	270	1,867	6.9	1%	279	1,971	7.1	1%	1%
13	Basic Metals	539	2,837	5.3	581	3,356	5.8	2%	590	3,398	5.8	2%	2%
14	Metal Products	661	3,179	4.8	1,101	5,380	4.9	3%	1,121	5,474	4.9	3%	3%
15	Machinery & Equipment	102	424	4.2	353	1,580	4.5	1%	386	1,798	4.7	1%	1%
16	Electrical, Machinery & Apparatus	293	777	2.7	272	911	3.3	1%	270	935	3.5	1%	0%
17	Radio, TV, Others MFG	2	6	3.0	4	17	4.3	0%	5	22	4.4	0%	0%
18	Medical & Optical Instruments	4	23	5.8	5	27	5.4	0%	5	27	5.4	0%	0%
19	Motor Vehicles & Trailers	2,622	8,751	3.3	2,871	10,356	3.6	8%	2,861	10,393	3.6	8%	5%
20	Other Transport Equipment	71	300	4.2	103	507	4.9	0%	100	411	4.1	0%	0%
21	Furniture	301	1,396	4.6	432	2,105	4.9	1%	442	2,209	5.0	1%	1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>24,117</b>	<b>112,228</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>35,191</b>	<b>172,422</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>35,683</b>	<b>193,358</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Av.No. of Employment stands for Average Number of Employment.

Figures for 1999 is as of end of September 1999.

Source: Ministry of Industry (1).

**Table 11: Registered Private Industries by Product Groups (Contd.)**

No.	Description	1998				1999					
		No. of Estbs	Employment	Average No. of Employment	Share in No. of Estbs	Share in Employment	No. of Estbs	Employment	Average No. of Employment	Share in No. of Estbs	Share in Employment
1	Food Products	22,522	98,937	4.4	62%	53%	22,152	93,957	4.2	62%	51%
2	Tobacco Products	146	1,913	13.1	0%	1%	146	1,913	13.1	0%	1%
3	Textiles	2,337	17,500	7.5	6%	9%	2,093	18,158	8.7	6%	10%
4	Wearing Apparel	98	10,187	103.9	0%	5%	160	12,863	80.4	0%	7%
5	Leather & Its Products	294	1,500	5.1	1%	1%	289	3,038	10.5	1%	2%
6	Wood, Wood Products	2,763	17,300	6.3	8%	9%	2,756	17,243	6.3	8%	9%
7	Paper & Paper Products	267	1,290	4.8	1%	1%	267	1,299	4.9	1%	1%
8	Publishing & Printing	285	1,268	4.4	1%	1%	285	1,268	4.4	1%	1%
9	Coke & Petrol Products	5	29	5.8	0%	0%	5	29	5.8	0%	0%
10	Chemicals & Its Products	415	2,140	5.2	1%	1%	411	2,157	5.2	1%	1%
11	Rubber & Plastics	739	4,804	6.5	2%	3%	733	4,493	6.1	2%	2%
12	Other Non-Metallic Mineral Products	283	2,130	7.5	1%	1%	282	2,104	7.5	1%	1%
13	Basic Metals	608	3,408	5.6	2%	2%	607	3,691	6.1	2%	2%
14	Metal Products	1,220	6,100	5.0	3%	3%	1,206	6,069	5.0	3%	3%
15	Machinery & Equipment	621	2,561	4.1	2%	1%	586	3,408	5.8	2%	2%
16	Electrical, Machinery & Apparatus	257	907	3.5	1%	0%	255	900	3.5	1%	0%
17	Radio, TV, Others MFG	6	24	4.0	0%	0%	8	22	2.8	0%	0%
18	Medical & Optical Instruments	7	30	4.3	0%	0%	7	36	5.1	0%	0%
19	Motor Vehicles & Trailers	2,804	10,003	3.6	8%	5%	2,802	10,275	3.7	8%	6%
20	Other Transport Equipment	119	425	3.6	0%	0%	119	500	4.2	0%	0%
21	Furniture	507	2,775	5.5	1%	1%	428	2,453	5.7	1%	1%
	Total	36,303	185,231	5.1	100%	100%	35,597	185,876	5.2	100%	100%

Note: Av.No. of Employment stands for Average Number of Employment.  
 Figures for 1999 is as of end of September 1999.  
 Source: Ministry of Industry (1).



The growth of Garment (Wearing Apparel) was the highest with a growth rate of 37.8% per annum, which was followed by Machinery and Equipment with 28.4% per annum, Coke and Petro Products with 25.8% and Radio, TV Communication Equipment Manufacturing with 21.9%.

As registered industries increased, their employment also augmented. Here again, Garment Industry recorded the highest growth rate of 77.7% per annum. This was followed by Coke and Petro Products with 38.3%, Machinery and Equipment with 34.7%, Leather and Leather Products with 24.8% and Radio, TV, Communication Equipment Manufacturing with 20.4%.

The average number of workers of Garment Industry exceeded 80 workers per factory, whereas that of all manufacturing industries was just 5.2. As a result, the share in employment of Garment Industry increased from negligible per cent in 1992 to 7% in 1999. As mentioned before, the foreign and domestic companies vigorously invest in Garment Industry and the number of garment factories is estimated to reach 380 by now. It is surely one of the most vibrant industry in Myanmar.<sup>11</sup>

However, apart from the garment industry, the industrial structure shown by Table 11 has not been much changed. Myanmar's industry is still characterized with the extremely large share of agro-based consumer's goods industries and less importance of heavy industries.<sup>12</sup> The upgrading and diversification of industrial sector in Myanmar has not yet to be observed.

## **5. RECENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT: BACKLASH AGAINST LIBERALIZATION?**

Although major economic indicators do not reveal drastic industrial structural changes, Myanmar's private sector has demonstrated its resilience, surviving the socialist period, and ability to participate in the national economy when market economy revived. Once equal chances are given to the private sector, it will actively penetrate to economic activities and to contribute to economic development. This is one of our findings in the previous sections.

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 4 for details.

<sup>12</sup> Although Motor Vehicles and Trailers occupy 8% of total establishments, most of them are considered to be small and medium repair workshops.

Nevertheless, recent policy trends turned increasingly inward and against market-mechanism, particularly after the Asian currency crisis in mid-1997. The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has consciously adopted import substitution and self-reliant, or you may call it even *survival* policy. The government started to intervene in many economic activities, and strengthen the state control. The Trade Council, an extra-ministerial committee, is said to be responsible for such policy changes.

The Trade Council was formed in July 1997, with General Maung Aye, Vice-Chairman of the SPDC as Chairman, and with Minister for National Planning and Economic Development as Secretary. The Trade Council has laid down important policies not only on external trade but also on other economic affairs. These policies include export first (import against export earnings) policy; limit on non-essential imports; 10% export tax; advanced purchase of beans and pulses for export; advanced purchase of cotton; market-price-based taxation on imported vehicles; import restrictions of motor vehicles; monthly grant for palm oil import; lowered FEC limit on overseas bank transfer; strengthened revenue collection from MIC-approved projects; inspection of under-priced import invoices and so forth. A number of these may be motivated to capture foreign exchange earnings for the government budget.

Foreign companies are also getting to face more and more difficult business environment under such policy changes. Some foreign investors are said to request relaxation on economic controls to the authorities concerned. However, responses from the authorities to such requests are largely stereotyped and not with commitment. For example, the Myanmar Investment Commission often describes the Foreign Investment Law of 1988 as a most liberal and encouraging investment act, which admits 100 % foreign-owned investment and provides attractive tax incentives. Theoretically, it is even comparable to those of senior ASEAN members. However, as far as they use the existence of this law as excuse and do not listen to the voices of foreign investors, they will never address the deep-seated structural problems, which are real impediments to the inflow of foreign direct investments.

Moreover, the military holding companies, Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) and Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. (MEHL), which are extensively engaged in the manufacturing sector, are exerting increasing influence over business activities. The State-owned Economic Enterprises Law of 1989 was intentionally amended in 1997 to make it possible to establish a 100% military-owned company. Military-related companies

themselves are not necessarily harmful to economic development. However, it would become harmful if they were provided with special favorable treatments by the government, and damage the idea of level playing fields for every economic actor. Such arbitrary favoritism, if provided for the military holding companies, may send a bad signal to the business circle that the government could change even the rules of the game.

In addition to these military holding companies, the government has started to embrace so-called national entrepreneurs. It is said that they have been given preferential treatments in doing business.<sup>13</sup> Favoritism and corruption has been epidemic and become a serious problem in some developing economies. On the contrary, the successive governments of Myanmar have taken pride in being clean even since the socialist period. Nevertheless, it is also true that transitional economies from centrally-planned to market-oriented tend to suffer from the problems of favoritism and corruption, because they often lack legal and institutional foundations for functioning of free and fair market economy.

We should note that once such a business environment was created as personal connections to the authorities, rather than management skills and technical merits, are the most important factors for business success, then it would be difficult to provide sound economic incentives to entrepreneurs of ability, and hence they would lose their confidence on policy environment.<sup>14</sup> Then emerging enterprises and entrepreneurs as well as foreign potential investors may well divert their interests to other economies, or just chase for windfall profits through rent-seeking activities. In order to prevent Myanmar would head for so-called crony capitalism, it is important for the government to lay down a level playing field where all economic actors can play and compete with each other in a free and fair manner.

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter outlined a series of liberalization programs implemented under the present government (SLORC/SPDC), and assessed the impact of them on industrial structural changes. Major economic indicators did not

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<sup>13</sup> The Asiaweek reported as an account of a businessman, saying "To do business in Myanmar, you need to know how to play the game. Rule No.1: Get along with the junta — Rule No.2: Only Rule No.1 matters." (*Asiaweek*, February 23, 2001, p. 24.)

<sup>14</sup> See also U.S. Embassy, *Country Commercial Guide*, September 2000.

show significant structural changes in Myanmar's industries. The country still can be described as a predominantly agricultural economy.

Nevertheless, we observed the resilience and vitality of private sector in Myanmar. They positively and swiftly reacted to market-oriented policy of the government, and penetrated into fields where market economy revived. They are ready to play a more significant role in the national economy, once they are given opportunities. This situation contrasts with some of other transitional economies, where lack of entrepreneurship seriously hinders the private sector from playing enhanced role in economic development. On the contrary, Myanmar has a big advantage of having entrepreneurs of ability and vitality. They would make its transition toward market-oriented economy much easier and smoother. Players are ready.

Therefore, public policy does matter whether it can make the most of such players in economic development or not. Then the question comes back to the one in the section two: Can we be fully confident of the present government's commitment on transition to a genuine market economy, which guarantees level playing fields for every economic actor?

Here again, we should look back Myanmar's history on industrial policy. Every government to date since independence, either civilian or military, and either democratic or socialist, has approached the problem of the private sector with great concern and trepidation. Whenever they wanted to accommodate and integrate the energy of private enterprises into the national economy, the socialist philosophy, anti-capitalist attitude, control-prone disposition and xenophobia based on the bitter colonial experiences provided obstacles, with the redefinition of the role of the private sector being left vague and halfway.

The transition to market-oriented economy in the 1990s seems to be a historical exception. The various reform measures taken by the military government apparently show their strong commitment toward a full-fledged market economy. The author calls the present transformation of the economy the *Third Wave*, and assures himself that it has been the biggest wave of liberalization in Myanmar's industrial history.<sup>15</sup> Compared with the previous two waves, which the author thinks occurred in the latter half of the 1950s and in the mid-1970s, the present regime has committed itself much

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<sup>15</sup> See Toshihiro Kudo, "Industrial Policy in Myanmar: Lessons from the Past" in *Industrial Development and Reforms in Myanmar: ASEAN and Japanese Perspectives*, (Bangkok, The Sasakawa Southeast Asia Cooperation Fund, 1999).

more clearly to market economic principles and the enhanced role of the private sector.

Nevertheless, the history still exhibits a reserve to be fully confident in government policy toward a market economy. Recent backtracking of economic reforms is certainly something to be worried. It would be necessary for the military government to commit itself again to such ideas as open markets, free competition, transparency, accountability, consistency, level playing field, freedom of information and rule of law, which are the foundations for a free and fair market-oriented economy. Without the government's commitment to those ideas, the private sector would never be confident on public polices, and as a result, the full-fledged investments would never be forthcoming.