

SMALL AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES:IT'S ROLE IN RURAL ECONOMY OF MAJULI

Dr. Rajen Chandra Borah
Associate Professor,
Head of the Department of Economics,
Majuli College

ABSTRACT:

The small scale and Cottage industries play an important role in the economic development of developed, developing and under developed countries. India is a developing country and almost all important characteristic features of an under developed economy were present in it which have not changed since independence. Underdeveloped or developing countries primarily depend on agriculture where about 80 percent of its total population directly or indirectly depends upon agriculture. Assam is one of the North-Eastern states in India among 9 union territories and 28 states. It is a developing state with 36 million population as of the year 2021 with an area of 78,438 59 sq. kms and density of 397 people per square km. Due to rapid growing population and lack of alternative job opportunities in Assam, considerable amount of unemployment exist in agricultural sector which can be removed to some extent giving prime importance to the small scale village industries and cottage industries.

Key words: Cottage, economic development, Underdeveloped, job opportunities etc.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Majli has a population of 167,304 (approx.) in 2011 and density of population 300 sq. km. Due to widespread poverty most of the people of Majuli have virtually no ability to save, hence low capital formation causes no conducive to invest for extra income generating employment. Mass of the people spend major portion of their income on food and necessities. So there is a greater need for the development of small scale and cottage industries in Majuli. It would be much better if we give much importance on small scale and cottage industries in Majuli utilizing the agricultural output as raw materials. The small scale and cottage industries are important in the context of employment generation in rural areas, equitable distribution of income, balanced regional growth and development of rural and semi urban areas.

Small scale industries are those whose capital is supplied by proprietor or from any financing agencies setup for the purpose. Cottage industries, on the other hand, also called household Industries organized by industries with private resources where family members are employed as full time or part time employers. Traditional small scale industries includes khadi and Handloom, handicrafts, village industries, bamboo based industries, sericulture etc. Small scale and cottage industries in Majuli include cane and bamboo industries, handloom and weaving, mask making,

boat making, pottery etc. It also includes matches and agarbatti, fiber, soap, carpentry, jiggery production, bee keeping, spinning, toy making etc.

II. OBJECTIVES:

- To find out the problem of small scale industries.
- To find out the prospects of small scale and cottage industries.
- To find out the market feasibility of small and cottage industries

III. METHODOLOGY:

Historical and exploratory methods have been used to prepare this paper. Most of the data have been collected through book, journals and reports published by concerned authorities in this regard. Secondary data collected through observation and from secondary sources which have been intensively studied.

IV. DISCUSSION:

Major small scale and cottage industries in Majuli are:

(i) **Pottery Industry:** The pottery industry in Majuli is a hereditary occupation of some people belonging to the Kumar community lives in the Brahmaputra valley In Majuli, the Kumar community is concentrated in the Salmora mouza. The word 'Kumar is derived from the word 'Kumbhakar which means the pot makers These Kumar are belonging to the caste of Kalita. Koch and Keol and thereby hence known as Kumar Kalita, Kumar Keot and Kumar Koch pottery is the main occupation of kumar community and about 80-90 percent of their total population directly or indirectly engaged in pottery industry. The raw materials required for the industry are glutinous clay, wheel (chak), mould (athali), mallet (hatiyapiteni) and polisher (chaki). The articles made are khula. charuudhan, kalah, tekeli, thali, jaka, lamp etc They also made the image of Hindu deities like Durga, kali, Saraswati etc. These products have a good market within and outside the Majuli

(ii) **Cane and Bamboo industry:** The making of bamboo and cane products is one of the traditional practices of Majulians. The essential equipments required for cane and bamboo industry are Dao and Katari. The articles made by bamboo and cane are japis like haluajapi, pithajapi, sorudoiyajapi, bordoiyajapi etc. The satras in Majuli have huge no of devotees and many of them practices the making of cane and bamboo made article like cane fan of AuniatiSatra which has a worldwide importance The musk making of NatunChamaguriSatra also has the international market; KamalabariKutirSilpa Kendra which is located in Uttar KamalabariSatra also have the various products of cane and bamboo. The same has a great role in the livelihood of Majulians from house to house and day to day life.

(iii) Handloom and Weaving Industry: One of the most important cottage industries in Majuli Handloom and weaving industry. The majority of Majulians belong to the caste of Tanti and Mising community have producing practices of their own clothes from time immemorial. The weaving clothes of Mising community have been playing an important role in the market. Mising women are very proficient in rearing End and Silk warms, spinning threads and weaving Endi, Muga and Silk clothes. Their traditional garments are Gadu or Minijhim, Rib Gaseng, Yambo, Gonorougou, Gero, Tapun, Kebbung, Dumer, EgeGasor, MibuGaluk etc. have international market.

(iv) Mask Making Industry: Mask making culture of Majuli has some special features of its own. It is mainly practiced in NatunChamaguriSatra and the master artist in Majuli is Sri Hemchandra Goswami. He is striving hard to promote the mask making culture of ChamaguriSatra in internationally and globally. The mask of ChamaguriSatra attracts the characters of Brahma, Jatayu, Ravan, Kumbhakarna etc. The satra is now able to engage many of the devotees and local persons in the mask making culture.

The mask of ChamaguriSatra is made of bamboo and paper. The articles used are elays, hengul and haital, neel, balichandra etc. The masks made by ChamaguriSatra are displayed in London Museum, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Vishwa Bharati University, SrimantaSankardevaKalakhetra.

(v) Boat Making Industry: Majuli is a river island. The mighty Brahmaputra flows keeping Majuli in the midst of it. Hence, flood and erosion is a continuous, natural phenomenon for Majulians. In summer, there are always flood in every year. Hence boat is the only means of communications within the villages in it. Majuli is also connected to outer world by water ways hence boat is an ubiquitous for the people living in Majuli. Some people of Majuli are concentrated in the areas of Salmora and Kamalabari mouza who made boats for various purposes. The satras in Majuli also practise boat making, so it has a great potentiality in River Island.

❖ **Problems of small scale and cottage industries in Majuli:**

There are many problems in the small industries in Majuli. Some of them are:

(a) Finance and Credit: The scarcity of finance and credit is the main problem for small scale and cottage industries in Majuli. The small industrial units are very weak and the artisans or craftsmen running their businesses with little capital or take credit from the mahajans or traders on a very high rate of interest and thus they are exploited. The availability of institutional credit to small scale industries is very limited.

(b) Availability of Raw Materials: The majority of small scale and cottage industries depend on local sources for their raw material requirements. The local traders supplied the raw cotton for this industry on the condition that the weaver would sell the clothes to them when it is ready. Majuli is industrially backward because of its poor quality of local raw materials used in cottage industrial sector, the weavers also subjected to the double exploitation.

(c) Problem of Marketing: One of the major problem faced by small scale and cottage industries in Majuli are lack of proper market. Due to shortage of capital and finance resources, the small units do not have adequate capacity and are often forced to sell their products at unremunerative prices.

(d) Traditional Method of Production: The obsolete and traditional methods of production are used in small scale and cottage industries in Majuli. These production units are still not using the modern sophisticated methods of production for good quality output that lead them towards the competitive market.

❖ **Suggestion to improve the small scale and cottage industry:**

Small scale and cottage industries are playing a vital role in Majuli, so it is very essential to have some suggestions for the uplift of the industry in Majuli. The main suggestions are:

- (i) Cheap finance and credit facility should be there from the government.
- (ii) The good quality raw materials should be provided to the small scale industries at low prices.
- (iii) Proper storage and marketing strategy should be there.
- (iv) Modern technology and means of production, should be applied by the units for effective production.

V. Conclusion:

From the analysis of small scale and cottage industries in Majuli we can conclude that it has a major role to play in the economic life of the people in Majuli. The proper importance from government through supplying credit providing a suitable market can uplift the position of small scale and cottage industries in Majuli.

❖ **References:**

1. Mishra and Puri, Indian Economy- Small Scale and Cottage Industries in India, Himalaya Publishing House, Girgaon, 1995.
2. P.K. Dhar, The Economy of Assam, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, fifth edition, 1999
3. Cottage Industries: Leading Issues in Economic development, Kasturi press, Dec, 2015
4. E-source