

Cottage and small scale industries in Majuli and its challenges: A study

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Abstract

Industrialization is the most important factor of economic development of a region or a country. Cottage and small scale industries are those which are running at the home or local area with the help of the family members or a few workers. Cottage and small scale industries play a vital role in the economic development of a country or a region. Majuli is considered as one of the industrially backward places of the state. Cottage and small scale industries are the backbone of the industrial sector of Majuli. The river island has a plenty of natural resources to grow the cottage and small scale industries. But many problems are being faced by the cottage and small scale industries in the river island. This paper is an attempt to make an overview of the cottage and small scale industries in Majuli. The paper also finds out the problems of cottage and small scale industries in Majuli and it provides some suggestive measures for promoting these industries in the river island.

Keywords: majuli, cottage, development, industrial

1. Introduction

Majuli, the largest river island of the world is an agricultural place as most of the people in the river island are engaged in agriculture sector. It is one of the industrially backward places of Assam. Cottage and small scale industries are the backbone of the industrial sector of Majuli. Cottage and small scale industry sector is the second largest employment providing sector in the river island. Cottage and small scale industries in Majuli include cane and bamboo industry, pottery, sericulture, handloom and weaving, mask making industry, boat-making industry etc. The river island has a plenty of natural resources to grow the cottage and small scale industries. Many problems are involved with the cottage and small scale industries of Majuli. The main problems are lack of finance, Improper marketing facilities, geographical isolation, improper marketing facilities, poor transportation, storage problems, problem of raw material and traditional methods of production etc. In spite of these problems there is a huge potential of income and employment generation in Majuli through the cottage and small scale industries. The government should take proper initiatives to develop the cottage and small scale industries through the utilization of available natural resources in the river island [1, 2, 5].

2. Objectives of the Study

This paper entitled "Cottage and Small Scale Industries in Majuli and Its Challenges: A Study" is based on the following objectives.

1. To make an overview of the cottage and small scale industries in Majuli,
2. To find out the problems of cottage and small scale industries in Majuli and
3. To provide some suggestive measures for promoting the cottage and small scale industries in the river island.

3. Methodology

The methodology is being followed in collecting data and information about the cottage and small scale industries of Majuli. Most of the data used in this paper are secondary in

nature. The data and information are collected from different sources such as internet, books, e-journals, journals and other relevant publications on cottage and small scale industries of Majuli. The methods used in this paper are data collection, data presentation and data interpretation.

4. The Major Cottage and Small Scale Industries in Majuli

Cottage and small scale industries are the backbone of the industrial sector in Majuli. In 2009, there are more than 400 cottage and small scale industries in Majuli. Following are the major cottage and small scale industries in Majuli [3, 6].

(a) Cane and Bamboo Industry:

Majuli is very rich in cane and bamboo and the river island is well known for its cane and bamboo industry. The fan made of cane and bamboo, baskets and some other products occupy a good market in the other parts of the state. Cane and bamboo products are available in the Kamalabari Kutir Shilpa Kendra situated at the Uttar Kamalabari Satra. Most of the people in Majuli use the products of cane and bamboo in their day to day life. Cane and bamboo industry has a great potential and it may provide livelihood to many people of the rural areas in Majuli [4, 7].

(b) Handloom and Weaving Industry:

Majuli is well known for its handloom and weaving industry. It is the most important cottage industry of the river island. Endi, Silk and cotton fabrics produced in Majuli are very popular all over the state. The traditional dresses like Mibugalok, Ribigachang, Mirizim, Endi Chadar and other silk and cotton dresses woven by the Mishing women occupies a good market in the international level.

(c) Mask Making Industry

Majuli is well known for its mask making industries. The Natun Chamaguri Satra of Majuli is the centre of mask making industry. Masks are used in Bhaona, Rasleela, and other cultural functions. It is also used for decoration in many places and institutions. Masks made by the Chamaguri Satra

are displayed at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi, Viswa Bharati University, Kolkata and Shrimanta Sankardeva Kalakhetra, Guwahaty. The products of Majuli's mask making industry are also exported to foreign countries.

(d) Pottery Industry

Pottery industry is one of the most important cottage industries of Majuli. Mainly pottery industry is concentrated in the Salmora mouza. About 90% inhabitants of Salmora mouza depend on the pottery industry for their livelihood. Pottery is the main occupation of the people of Kumar community in Majuli. The products of pottery industry have a good market in the rural areas of Majuli. The products of pottery industry of the river island are also exported to other parts of the state.

(e) Sericulture

Sericulture is one of the most important agro-based small scale industries of Majuli. It is a labour-intensive industry of the river island. Sericulture is the source of livelihood for many people in the river island. About 2.5% people of the Majuli is engaged in sericulture. There are more than 150 registered sericulture villages in Majuli.

(f) Boat-Making Industry

Boat is an important necessity of the people of Majuli. Majuli is well known for its boat-making industry. Some people of the river island make boats for business purposes. The areas like Salmora, Dakhinpat, Bargaya of Majuli are well known for the boat-making industry. The Auniati, Natun Kamalabari and Bhogpur satras are also known for the boat-making industry. Boat-making industry has a great potentiality in the river island.

5. Problems of Cottage and Small Scale Industries in Majuli:

Many problems are being faced by the cottage and small scale industries in Majuli. The major problems of cottage and small scale industries in the river island are as follows.

i) Lack of Finance

Financial problem is the major problem of developing the cottage and small scale industries in Majuli. The cottage and small scale industries in Majuli is facing the problem of capital storage. In Majuli, the financial institutions provide loan at a very high interest rate to the small entrepreneurs^[7].

ii) Problem of Raw Material

Majuli has a plenty of natural resources or raw materials for developing the cottage and small scale industries. Industrially the river island remains very backward due to improper utilization of its natural resources. Raw materials of poor quality are provided to the cottage and small scale industries in the river island which are not enough to developing these industries.

iii) Improper Marketing Facilities

Lack of proper marketing facilities is one of the major problems face by the cottage and small scale industries in Majuli. The small scale and cottage industries in Majuli have to sell their products to the middlemen at a very low price. They can't advertise to popularize their products due to the lack of finance.

iv) Poor Transportation

Transportation system in Majuli is very backward. It is one of the major problems faces by the small scale and cottage industries in the river island. It is very difficult to carry the raw materials from its sources to the industrial areas due to poor transportation system.

v) Lack of Storage Facilities

The cottage and small scale industries Majuli do not have any developed storage facilities. These industries are usually in rural areas where there is no any adequate go-down facilities to store the products. A huge amount of products is wasted due to this problem. Besides, these industries have to sell their products at very low price due the lack of storage facilities.

vi) Traditional Methods of Production:

The cottage and small scale industries in Majuli usually uses traditional methods of production. They do not use modern technology or machineries for production. Therefore, production is very low in these industries and quality is very low. It is very difficult for these industries to compete with the large scale industries.

6. Suggestive Measures for Promoting Cottage and Small Scale Industries in Majuli:

Cottage and small scale industries are playing a vital role in the economy of Majuli. Hence, it is very essential to improve these industries in the river island. With these regards the following suggestive measures are provided.

1. The government should provide credit facilities to small scale and cottage industries at a lower interest rate.
2. Raw materials should be import from other places outside the river island and it should be provided to the small scale and cottage industries at lower prices.
3. Training centers have to be set up by the government to provide training to the workers of cottage and small scale industries.
4. Transport and communication system has to be developed for the development of cottage and small scale industries.
5. Adequate storage facilities should be developed and go-downs have to be developed to store the products.
6. Proper marketing facilities should be developed.
7. Effective government policies should be introduced for developing cottage and small scale industries.

7. Conclusion

From the above analysis we may conclude that cottage and small scale industries are the backbone of the industrial sector of Majuli. There is a plenty of natural resources in Majuli. Hence, the river island has a huge potentiality of developing its economy through cottage and small scale industries. Moreover, these industries have a vast scope of income and employment generation as these are labour-intensive industries. However, cottage and small scale industries in Majuli is facing many problems. Geographical isolation, poor transportation, inadequate financial system, improper market facilities, lack of storage facilities are the major problems involving with the cottage and small scale industries in Majuli. It may be hoped that adequate government initiatives and proper utilization of the natural resources of Majuli will bring a positive change to the cottage and small scale industries of the river island.

8. References

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