

Socio-Economic Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic in India: Growing Challenges and Potential Solutions

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Influence of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath's Philosophy of Village Industry: Understanding Cottage Industry in Covid Pandemics

S.K. Kamruzzaman

Abstract: In order to control the spread of covid-19 infection, various restrictions were imposed on the socio-economic system throughout the country for most of the year 2020 and 2021. In such a situation, the whole country is facing new socio-economic challenges. Especially in the urban life system, the industrial economy and production were completely blocked. As a result, a large population of urban and rural life became unemployed. The most significant impact of the Covid transition and lockdown is that the entire urban society and economy has become village-centric again after many decades. The industrialization, urbanization, and technology and capitalist-based modernization which destroyed rural self-sufficiency and self-reliance decades ago, seem to be shattered by the extreme adversity of nature. The whole economy and civilization again became dependent on the rural economy for some time due to the infallible laws of nature. In this context, the present study highlights the relevance of Rabindranath and Gandhi's village-based artistic thinking. They both believed that the rural economy and industry had enriched the Indian economy for many centuries. So, it needs to be revived. It is possible to make villages self-reliant and self-sufficient through proper maintenance and application of rural resources, industry, education and culture.

Keywords: Colonial Nationalism, Corona Epidemic, Economic Decentralization, Indigenous Technology, Village Reconstruction, Village Swaraj, Swadeshi, Self-sufficiency, Self-reliance.

Introduction

According to recent data estimate, 68% of total population belongs to the rural area and every second person of them are poor. Due to their poverty and unemployment, till now, most of the rural villagers are engaged with cultivation, household industry or small-scale industry and other low-income occupation. Very few populations of village depend on service and business and remaining are well known as peasants or small tenants or labor/ marginal labors. A review of data over the past few decades reveals that due to population explosion, inflation, capitalist economy, urban industrial planning, widespread migration, rural poverty, infrastructural mismanagement, declining employment etc., marginal farmers, share peasants, landless laborers and farm laborers are facing immense pressure and competing for scary employment opportunities. Moreover, the problem of poverty and unemployment is creating a lot of pressure on the land. As a result, more and more people are being shifted from agriculture to non-agricultural...



is the development of cottage industries and small and medium enterprises in rural and semi-urban areas. In general, cottage industries are identified under various names such as village industries, rural industries, agro-industries and unorganized industries. Determining its identification classification and criteria by industrial policies is often vague and confusing. The Fiscal Commission has created a distinct concept between cottage industry and small-scale industry in terms of wage labor standards and the relationship between proprietors and workers. A cottage industry is usually a full or part-time occupation run entirely or mainly with the help of family members. On the other hand, a small-scale industry is basically operated with 10 to 50 hands or hired labor. Thus, cottage industry can be called a small, unorganized and decentralized production system that is usually run from home or 'cottage'. Examples of cottage industry or business include Sericulture, Coir, Handicrafts like Pottery, Stone carving, Ceramics, leather, carpentry, Black smithy, Jewelry, Cane and bamboo works etc., Handloom (Spinning and Weaving) like Khadi, Textiles, Blanket making, Village Industries like Confectionary, Food stuff processing, Ghani oil preparation, etc.

According to the census guidelines, Cottage industries are identified as household industries (H.H.I.). The main features of the household industry are:

1. Cottage industries are known as self-employment enterprises. That means initially it is run by one or more members of the family and they are directly involved in the work. In some cases, however, the work is carried out by minimum wage labor. Whereas, small-scale industries generally engage with employ or hire people.
2. Its activities are related to certain matters related to production, processing, servicing, repair or sale of goods.
3. The products produced are used for household purposes as well as for partial sale.
4. In rural areas this industry can develop anywhere inside the house or within the village boundaries but in urban areas they drive the industry within the boundaries of the house in which they live.
5. Primarily the cottage industry focuses on meeting local demand, but small-scale industries focus on manufacturing and a wide range of fields.
6. The basic equipment of cottage industries adopt simple and easily adoptable technology and they invest very little capital, where small scale industries invest relatively more (currently around ₹ 60 lakhs to ₹ 3 crores) and apply heavy and fully equipped modern machinery powered by electricity.
7. Cottage industry business is usually run from the owner's or employee's home, while small-scale industry businesses are run from an outside business center or business complex.