



## Changing consumption pattern and rural industrialisation

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### Abstract

Traditionally, artisans in a village include blacksmiths carpenters, potters, shoe-makers and weavers. Thus, their role in a traditional rural economy was towards making the village a self-sufficient unit. In the present context, however, villages are getting increasingly modernised and the tendency among farmers is to acquire more and more of improved farm machinery and equipment. The present paper tries to identify the reasons of Changing Consumption Pattern and Rural Industrialisation.

**Keywords:** consumption pattern, rural industrialisation, change

### Introduction

#### Structure of Rural Areas

In India rural areas are predominantly agricultural. In most of them however agriculture is supporting and supported by industry. There are artisans and craftsmen, household and cottage industries and sometimes small and medium size industries. They take the inputs from other sectors such as agriculture, forestry, mining and quarrying and fisheries: in turn, they sell the processed and semi-processed outputs to the local materials, manpower, skills, talents, capital and other resources, produce goods and services to meet local needs and demands and export surpluses to outside regions. Next to agriculture, therefore, industry can be considered as the most important economic activity to be planned for rural people.

#### Changing Consumption Pattern and Rural Industrialization

Traditionally, artisans in a village include blacksmiths carpenters, potters, shoe-makers and weavers. These artisans constitute the backbone of a rural economy engaged in traditional agricultural technologies and cultural practices: they effectively provide the needed servicing facilities for the traditional forms of equipment and other assets possessed by the house holds in the village. Thus, their role in a traditional rural economy was towards making the village a self-sufficient unit. In the present context, however, villages are getting increasingly modernised and the tendency among farmers is to acquire more and more of improved farm machinery and equipment. Here a question arises: can the traditional artisans (such as black-smiths, carpenters and shoe-makers) effectively render the needed services? Likewise, can, with the increasing use of mill-made cloth and metal utensils; artisans like weavers and potters continue to flourish in their traditional professions.

In fact the present economic conditions of the rural artisans are not good. Financial resources at their disposal are inadequate. They are found living in one or two room hutments which are also their working place. Hence they find it difficult to adopt the latest technology, even it is provided

freely. As a result, the items produced to them are generally crude.

Yet the position is not hopeless, these artisans can only be organised with liberal financial assistance. By improving the skill of these artisans and by imparting further training, they can be equipped to handle job through modern small-scale units in industrial estates. The recent rural development activities have in fact, provided wide-ranging opportunities for rural artisans. For instance, the rising demand for improved farm implements and machinery has created, demand for a large number of servicing work shops. Likewise, the changing consumer tastes with a distinct trend towards luxury consumption among durable-goods resulting from an increase in farm incomes-have created demand for needed servicing facilities in the vicinity of villages. However, the ability of the rural artisans to avail these opportunities in crucially dependent upon the availability of resources, the provision of training in new skills, the local demand, and above all, the motivation and attitude of the rural artisans themselves.

Generally, the households of the black-smiths and carpenters have taken up other occupation to supplement their incomes from smithy and carpentry i.e. farming, animal husbandry, and flour milling; these are some of the favoured activities, with regard to modernisation of the traditional activities. Some of the households have started manufacturing modern plough in place of the traditional wooden plough. Others have started the manufacturing of bullock-drawn seed-drill. Some of the households (having skills only in traditional carpentry) are now manufacturing modern wooden furniture. Despite all the modernisation in the traditional activities of artisans and the new activities initiated by them, the role of rural artisans in the new situation is to be far from satisfactory. Far, in the wake of rural development particularly technological transformation in agricultural it is expected that the village artisans would come forward to meet the growing demand for the servicing of modern farm machinery such as tractors, tubewells, pump-sets and sprayers. Nevertheless, only few artisans' household has taken up the servicing of modern farm machinery. Even then they undertake, repairs of only oil engines and threshers.

Artisans are desirous of acquiring new skills of smithy, welding and leather work but they often lack motivation. All those households who are engaged in new activities are found to have acquired the new skills through friends and relatives.

Artisans of shoe-makers were engaged as agricultural and non-agricultural labour, and the rest combined goat and shepa rearing with shoe-making. However, by and large, shoe-making appears to be a decaying occupation in the village for various reasons:

1. with an increase of incomes and mobility (resulting from overall rural development activities), farmers are rapidly switching over to modern shoes in preference to desi juti' and as a result, the demand for village-made shoes is declining rapidly,
2. with the discontinuance of the 'customary' relationships, the sense of security and assured income, that shoe-makers used to enjoy, no longer exists : this makes it difficult for the artisans to continue their professions and finally,
3. the younger generation are not coming forward to continue this profession : possibility because this profession does not enjoy the same status as others' professions in the given set-up. Nevertheless, most of the households are interested in changing the desi juti over to modern shoes, if adequate funds were made available to them for the purchase of modern equipments. These persons are also keen on acquiring the necessary skills. However, in view of the limited market within the villages and lack of entrepreneurial skills, mere acquisition of modern equipments does not render their activities viable. Therefore, in addition to providing training and finances, the village shoe-makers should also be provided with marketing facilities for their new products.

Kumhars (a backward caste group are the traditional potters), make the traditional earthen-ware such as pots and pitchers. A good percentage of kumhars households is, engaged in a secondary occupation. Increasing income of the rural people does not seem to have adversely affected the demand for the products of village potters, because in the villages there are no modern substitutes for earthen wares such as the pitcher. No doubt, many farmers are going in for modern pottery: but for the purposes of cooking and storing water and grain, traditional pottery has as yet no effective substitutes. Nevertheless, the kumhars have a strong desire to improve their traditional products. Also, some of them desire to diversity activities to manufacture products such as crockery and coloured toys.

The 'weavers' are generally engaged in servicing activity. They just weave coarse cloth for villagers who supply them the necessary raw materials and pay them the labour charges. But the weavers are also adversely affected due to overall development and the resulting increase of income. Thus this profession is also faced with the threat of decay and declining demand. For, the farmers are rapidly shifting to mill-made clothes and that too synthetic clothes. As a result, many of the weaver households are planning to take up the manufacture of new products. However, all the weavers expressed a desire to acquire the skills through some: institution bases short – term

training. In fact, like the shoe-makers, the weavers also need Institutionalised assistance and support

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