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### **Small-Scale Industries in India:**

In Indian economy small-scale and cottage industries occupy an important place, because of their employment potential and their contribution to total industrial output and exports. Government of India has taken a number of steps to promote them. However, with the recent measures, small-scale and cottage industries facing both internal competition as well as external competition.

There is no clear distinction between small-scale and cottage industries. However it is generally believed that cottage industry is one which is carried on wholly or primarily with the help of the members of the family. As against this, small-scale industry employs hired labour. Moreover industries are generally associated with agriculture and provide subsidiary employment in rural areas. As against this, small scale units are mainly located in urban areas as separate establishments.

**Definition:**

The official definitions of a small scale unit are as follows:

**(i) Small-Scale Industries:**

These are the industrial undertakings having fixed investment in plant and machinery, whether held on ownership basis or lease basis or hire purchase basis not exceeding Rs. 1 crore.

**(ii) Ancillary Industries:**

These are industrial undertakings having fixed investment in plant and machinery not exceeding Rs. 1 crore engaged in or proposed to engage in,

(a) The manufacture of parts, components, sub-assemblies, tooling or intermediaries, or

(b) The rendering of services supplying 30 percent of their production or services as the case may be, to other units for production of other articles.

**(iii) Tiny Units:**

These refer to undertakings having fixed investment in plant and machinery not exceeding Rs. 23 lakhs. These also include undertakings providing services such as laundry, Xeroxing, repairs and maintenance of customer equipment and machinery, hatching and poultry etc. Located in towns with population less than 50,000.

**(iv) Small-Scale Service Establishments:**

These mean enterprises engaged in personal or household services in rural areas and town with population not exceeding 50000 and having fixed investment in plant and machinery not exceeding Rs. 25 lakhs.

**(v) Household Industries:**

These cover artisans skilled craftsman and technicians who can work in their own houses if their work requires less than 300 square feet space, less than 1 Kw power, less than 5 workers and no pollution is caused. Handicrafts, toys, dolls, small plastic and paper products electronic and electrical gadgets are some examples of these industries.

**Characteristics of Small-Scale Industries:****(i) Ownership:**

Ownership of small scale unit is with one individual in sole-proprietorship or it can be with a few individuals in partnership.

**(ii) Management and control:**

A small-scale unit is normally a one man show and even in case of partnership the activities are mainly carried out by the active partner and the rest are generally sleeping partners. These units are managed in a personalised fashion. The owner is activity involved in all the decisions concerning business.

**(iii) Area of operation:**

The area of operation of small units is generally localised catering to the local or regional demand. The overall resources at the disposal of small scale units are limited and as a result of this, it is forced to confine its activities to the local level.

**(iv) Technology:**

Small industries are fairly labour intensive with comparatively smaller capital investment than the larger units. Therefore, these units are more suited for economies where capital is scarce and there is abundant supply of labour.

**(v) Gestation period:**

Gestation period is that period after which teething problems are over and return on investment starts. Gestation period of small scale unit is less as compared to large scale unit.

**(vi) Flexibility:**

Small scale units as compared to large scale units are more change susceptible and highly reactive and responsive to socio-economic conditions.

They are more flexible to adopt changes like new method of production, introduction of new products etc.

**(vii) Resources:**

Small scale units use local or indigenous resources and as such can be located anywhere subject to the availability of these resources like labour and raw materials.

**(viii) Dispersal of units:**

Small scale units use local resources and can be dispersed over a wide territory. The development of small scale units in rural and backward areas promotes more balanced regional development and can prevent the influx of job seekers from rural areas to cities.