

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN PUNJAB AND SIR CHHOTU

RAM

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Abstract

Chhotu Ram used to advocate strongly for necessity of agro-based industries and cottage industries in the province. He expected to that the future of the industry is rosy, provided all constraints are duly removed between the entrepreneurs and the agriculture. In fact, he had a view point that it becomes imperative to incorporate industry with the agricultural activities which will be prove conducive to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the farmers, particularly the small and marginal farmers. It was one of the best preventive measures for betterment of the farmers through introducing the industrial activities in the Punjab province. Chhotu Ram tried to motivate the industrial environment by heart and soul for betterment of the masses of the rural areas. The consistent efforts made by him is justified by his development works like establishing the Engineering College in Punjab, regulating the power supply from the Mandi Hydro Electric Scheme and allocating the funds of Rs 6.25 crores during 1934-35 in the province.

Key Words: Mahatma Gandhi, Chhotu Ram, Peasantry, Loyalty, Punjab, Cottage, Rural Area, Colonial, Agriculture, Unionist Party, *Swadeshi*, Election,

Introduction

Secret alliances and economic thrust were the main features of early 20th century world. It resulted in the development of nationalism, extreme nationalism and blind nationalism in Europe and in India as well. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi Khilaphat and Non Cooperation Movement became Mass Movement in India in general and particularly in Punjab. With bright vision of the soldiers of Punjab, who returned from Europe after the Great War, the general public became aware and united for their rights. Indian National Movement became more aggressive after the implementation of Rowllat Act. With the

mounting pressure of the Allied Countries in the Great War and analyzing the changing conditions of North India the British Government tried to prove herself as a welfare Government and provide some rights to the Indian People. Mantegue-Chemsford reforms further divided the society between Rural and Urban by increasing the people's representation in Legislative Council. They tried to make the awakened peoples Voice silent and become successful as a Stalwart Congress Leader of Rohtak Chhotu Ram quit the congress and formed Unionist Party with Sir Fazele Hussain. Indian National Congress decided to boycott the Legislative Assembly Elections in Punjab and newly formed Unionist Party formed a Government. Later on Chhotu Ram became Revenue and Agriculture Minister and implemented his polices to strengthen the Peasantry and the down trodden.

This paper has examined long term trends of growth and structural change of Punjab economy. Small-scale industries are projects or firms started with low budget for a small group of people. A small-scale industry produces its goods using small machines, less power and hired labor. It is located within a single place and produces goods meant for few people. For example- Carpet industry, poultry farming, bee keeping, etc. Cottage industries are small-scale industries where the creation of products and services is home-based rather than factory-based. It means the industry is run in the home usually with the help of family members. Simple implements are used and workers are not paid wages. The products are quite unique and labour intensive. For example- Weaving, pottery etc.

During the Colonial era a huge boom emerged in Industrial goods and market in India and Punjab was no exception during that time. Punjab played the leading role in northern India. According to the opinion of Chhotu Ram, he said, "The industries is a question of giving a turn of mind of whole population and, I am afraid, I cannot say that can be given by me in a single year or even in five years. But there are ways in which that the enterprise can be overcome in various ways. Those various ways are laid by the State Aid to Industrial Act."¹

Chhotu Ram was keenly interested to establish the small scale and cottage industries. Small-scale industries are projects or firms started with low budget for a small group of people. A small-scale industry produces its goods using small machines, less power and hired labor. It is located within a single place and produces goods meant for few people. For example- Carpet industry, poultry farming, bee keeping, etc. Cottage industries are small-scale industries where the creation of products and services is home-based rather than factory-

based. It means the industry is run in the home usually with the help of family members. Simple implements are used and workers are not paid wages. The products are quite unique and labour intensive.

Chhotu Ram often used to say, "Cottage industries in the case of people, living in the rural areas will be very helpful. They have plenty of time for which they have no use and if we could introduce cottage industries in the rural areas to add a little income to agriculturalist or the village artisan, I think it would be good thing." As he rightly said, "Agriculture itself can never make this province sufficiently prosperous. Industries those which are independent of agriculture, ought to be started in the province on a larger scale than so far has been attempted. Unless something is done to industrialize the Punjab, we can't have the measure of prosperity in the province to live in the decent comfort and ease."²

He made consistent efforts for promoting the indigenous small scale and cottage industries in the rural areas. He said that there could not form any two opinions on the question of the commodities made in India over foreign made commodities. In this context, he further said that it was obvious that they are not supposed to think even for a scant time that this government would not like to motivate to make the use of *Swadeshi* articles."³

On industrial development front, Unionist Party discussed the priority for establishing the Industries in the Punjab Assembly which are as follows⁴:

1. To undertake the economic development projects, it is become imperative to develop the agriculture and industries simultaneously in the province to face the challenge of growing unemployment situation.
2. To promoting the commercial interests among the people of Punjab province.
3. To promoting the mass interest without deprivation of interests of masses, large land lords and the moneylenders in the rural areas.
4. To make improvement in methodology of marketing which include removal of marketing flaws and faulty practices; adopted by the manufacturers of consumer's good.
5. To make a significant improvement in educational system in the whole province and encouraging the students towards the entrepreneurships.

In this context, it was essential to draw inferences from the wrong doing for industrial development; as Chhotu Ram pointed out that he can ensure sincerely that the department which belonged to his portfolio. It is clear cut reason in the first instance; as head of this

department; it is his clear cut duty that he should be given the best performance. Secondly, he realized clearly as any member is capable to do to boost up their economic condition by acquiring the knowledge by attending the agricultural classes and the prosperity of the people; belonged to rural areas with the development of rural industries in the Punjab province. If we would like to take an additional income from the agricultural sector; then it is essential to execute the industrial expansion program in accordance with prevailing local conditions. It is therefore, he wished from his friends ought to disabuse their mind set with suspicion if it still consume excessive time.⁵

On May 1, 1937, an Annual General Meeting of Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chhotu Ram said, “Both general considerations of the prosperity of province and need of tacking the problem of unemployment point unmistakable in the same direction. Industrialization appears t o be the only promising solution. If we can ourselves turn our raw produce in to finished articles, we shall be able to find employment for the most, if not all, of our educated young boys.”⁶

It was the Unionist Party, the first political party in the country, which constituted the Government and conducted the district wise industrial survey in the Punjab province in the year

1938.⁷ Keeping in view the multiple benefits of the survey, Chhotu Ram, advocated his view in the Assembly that he was clear from his view point that the survey alone will pave the way for examining the prospective situation of industrial development in term of concrete base for development of industry in the rural areas of Punjab province. If we are not aware of the availability of adequate raw material and the consumption pattern or likely to be consumed in a specific mode of consumption with judicious or discriminative way; as a result, it require an imperative intervention to take legal action against the discriminative wage policy for the laborers. In this context, Chhotu Ram has assured and advocated that a comprehensive program was sought about industrial development in the rural areas. It is therefore, it was become imperative to collect the requisite information in this regard.”⁸

An Industrial Research Development Fund was established by Chhotu Ram in the year 1938.⁹ Commenting on the importance of establishing this research development fund, he pointed out that a considerable amount of sum were invested by the entrepreneurs, but in most of the cases, due to considerable research-gap, the capital sum was failed to give a

desirable results. On the other hand, the government has reached on conclusion that this constraint has given rise to discourage the entrepreneurs. No doubt, that the honorable members will accept that the “Research & Development” (R&D) is very essential for developing the industries in the rural areas to get the better return for their invested capital which was very essential to boost up the industries who were indeed interested should feel gratified that we have initiated in this context.”¹⁰ He was very much aware of facts the R&D is the base of Industries. He compared the industries and R&D with soul and body. In this context, Chhotu Ram said, “I may link the R & D work in the field conditions to soul in one’s body. Just as human body which has no value without soul, industries cannot flourish without industrial research. By instituting an Industrial Research Fund; we have provided soul to our body of Industry.”¹¹

With the initial sum of Rs 1.5 lacs, the “Research Fund” for industrial research areas. Whereas, facing the criticism regarding inadequate funds allocated for industrial research development, as he pointed out in the state assembly, “It is perfectly true that the amount which has now been set apart is inadequate but we must remember that we are passing through very difficult time and it is tribute to desire of the government to promote the cause of industries, that in spite of the present server financial stringency, the Government has agreed to set aside a sum of Rs 1.5 Lacs in order to create the Research fund. I hope that the private donations will also be forthcoming.”¹²

In the year 1937, when Chhotu Ram appointed as Development Minister and established a “Provincial Stores Purchase Department” which was based on the principle of this provincial stores purchase department and patronized and stimulated by the local industries.¹³

In the initial year of its inception, the Government of Punjab, the purchase value of Rs 12 lacs which was performed though this department. On discussion this matter, Chhotu Ram has pointed out in the Assembly that the significant value of this department was the freedom of purchasing the goods which was made in the Punjab provision, motivated for industries. On complaint, it was pointed out that the Punjab entrepreneurs have not been secured the adequate orders. Subsequently, this complaint was solved accordingly. It shows that the department of “Provincial Stores Purchase” was a valuable asset which was proved conducive to assist the local industries which were concerned.”¹⁴

On another instance in the Assembly, in the year 1939; Chhotu Ram delivered the speech: “One of the best remedies for ill to which agriculturists are subject to industrialise the province thoroughly and I assure that the house that so far as it lies in my power and in the power of the Government...we will do our best to industrialize the province at quick pace.”¹⁵

On the other instance, he pointed out in the Assembly in the year 1941 that as they assumed the office, the entire Punjab province was infested with the natural calamities, including drought, famine and hailstorms which has given rise to unproductive expenditure on the Punjab province. Addressing the members of the “Assembly” Chhotu Ram pointed out that they have spent millions of Rupees for controlling the famine during the short span of three years.

He critically examined the situation of the war and its impacts on financial and as general. It has been pointed out the feasibility to importing the machinery which was practically not possible. However, it was also pointed out that the development of industries as focused by the members,

it was only the large scale industries rather than small scale or cottage industries or handicrafts. In order to establish these large scale industries, it is required the large machinery but there were numerous of constraints to import heavy machinery from abroad. It is therefore, it was not proceed further in this regard. Thirdly, until recently government had not received an obvious mandate of policy from the house which was to be followed. In this context, there was considerable number of suggestions, made for the constituted government. The house has not been given well defined verdict in this regard.¹⁶

“Until we could not adopt any single course of action with the confidence, it was not possible to proceed in an effective way. At last, the resolution was passed by the Unionist Party sought for Memorandum of Understanding for establishing the large-scale industries either with the own themselves or joint venture with the private entrepreneurs. Of course, in one of feasible suggestion for boosting up the feasibility of policy which is to be executed in accordance with the prevailing local conditions. Owing to prolonged famine a condition in the province, which was urgent to control it, but war was still going on which become hurdle to execute the formulated policy on the ground. Due to adverse situation created by war like activities, it was not possible to start industries under such provision. All these have given rise to mobilize the financial resources from the available capitalists.

These adverse circumstances certainly compel to wait for ending the war. Chhotu Ram wished that the waiting was essential.”¹⁷

This speech justifies the tendency of commitment of Chhotu Ram on developing the industry in the region, it also indicates the intensity of commitment and preparation of statement, he made in this regard. Hence, it is obvious that Ch. Chhotu Ram has been making consistent efforts through legislative, judiciary and executive measures for promoting the rural industries in the Punjab provinces, so that the deteriorated conditions of the small and marginal farmers may be ameliorated in accordance with prevailing local conditions of the farmers of the backward regions of Punjab.

THE NOTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIES

Chhotu Ram has always been advocating for expanding the industrial infrastructure in the province which were aimed at follows:

To boosting up the interests of the people without deprivation of capitalistic interests, large land owners and the money lenders;

To undertake the economic development and restructuring the agrarian structure of the rural areas with slowly changing with industrial activities in the rural areas of Punjab so that the disguised unemployment situation may be tackle in a judicious way;

- To restructuring the education system so that it may become employment oriented;
- To make a significant improvement in marketing strategies; including reform in the pitfalls lie within the marketing system;
- To improve the distribution system and the incidence of taxation system;
- To promoting the industrial structure with special reference to cottage industries, located in the rural areas so that an additional income may be generated particularly among the small and marginal farmers;
- To promoting and carry out the study on potentiality of commercial activities in the Punjab province.

Chhotu Ram used to advocate strongly for necessity of agro-based industries and cottage industries in the province.¹⁸ He expected to that the future of the industry is rosy, provided all constraints are duly removed between the entrepreneurs and the agriculture. In fact, he had a view point that it becomes imperative to incorporate industry with the agricultural activities which will be prove conducive to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of

the farmers, particularly the small and marginal farmers. It was one of the best preventive measures for betterment of the farmers through introducing the industrial activities in the Punjab province.¹⁹ Chhotu Ram tried to motivate the industrial environment by heart and soul for betterment of the masses of the rural areas. The consistent efforts made by him is justified by his development works like establishing the Engineering College in Punjab, regulating the power supply from the Mandi Hydro Electric Scheme and allocating the funds of Rs 6.25 crores during 1934-35 in the province.²⁰

He focused on establishing the cottage industries and agro-based industries too. He always preferred small scale industries rather than large scale. He also encouraged private sector for

capital formation and liberalized the rules and regulations and tariff rates. He used to motivate the indigenous products rather than imported items. Chhotu Ram also invited prominent economist T.K. Shah to formulate the plan for developing the industries in Punjab.²¹

Chhotu Ram focused on the industries by taking the incentives which are as follows:

- I. To established the industrial and technical education schools.²²
- II. He allowed the breaches of the “Land Alienation Act of Punjab” in to two regards to acquire loans from the department of Industries and acquisition of plots for setting up the industries.²³
- III. To facilitate the industrial plots for unemployed youth and spreading the technical education for the women in the provision.²⁴
- IV. He has taken some of promoting measures for making use of indigenous and mobilizes the local resources for sailing the produced goods and promoting *Swadeshi* goods.²⁵
- V. To increase the capacity of department of industries in the provincial budget and established an Industrial Research Fund which was initially the first experiment of this type in the country.²⁶
- VI. He motivated the entrepreneurs for investing the state share or private sector, guaranteed them imparting the technical knowhow and providing the legal safe guard to them.²⁷
- VII. He taken the initiative for completing the Mandi Hydel Project for cheaper

electricity.²⁸

- VIII. He managed the survey party to conduct the district wise survey for industries for the province and formulated the master plan for industrial development in the province.²⁹

ECONOMIC VIEW POINT

The economic view point of Chhotu Ram was not as subservient to any political expediency, but it was the friend, philosopher and guide to his political activities too. From his point of view, it was the duty of every one to work better for the farmers which was aimed at ameliorating the conditions of the peasantry class.³⁰ It was due to economic view point of Chhotu Ram and his advocacy for reducing the expenses of the Government which was relatively empathetic during the „Great depression“ period.³¹

Chhotu Ram was in opinion and strongly agreed with a view of reducing the salaries of the Government servants and the officials, in place of uniform cut of ten percent, barring any salary structure. He projected a graduated scale which was as follows³²:

PROPOSED CUTTING OF SALARIES OF GOVERNMENT SERVANTS

Salary (In Rs./Month)	100-500	500-1000	1000-2000	2000-3000	Above 3000
Proposed Cut in Salary (in % age)	10	12.50	15	20	25

It was a proposal of rational reduction of the salary of the Government servants which was expected to save the government expenditure.

BOOSTING UP THE PEASANTRY CLASS

The role of Chhotu Ram in the politics of Punjab was confined to leadership of peasantry class. Under the banner of National Unionist Party, which was formed in the year 1923, which was aimed at unite the peasantry class to ameliorating their economic status. The emergence of first Unionist Government in Punjab in the year 1923 has been in power during 1923 to 1926 subsequently, in 1937, during 1937 to 45. In his point of view, there was a “Centripetal force” which has been proved a cementing factor to unite the peasantry class which was based on economic interest rather than any religious or caste-based criteria.³³ The Punjab province was

mainly the province of peasants who used to cultivate the lands with their own hands. The numerical strength of the big land lords was negligible, e.g. out of total population of Punjab, which was 2.358 crores, more than 37 lacs were landless.³⁴ On the other hand, in U.P. there were only 12 lacs, out of total 4 crores population, who possess their own lands.³⁵

In order to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the peasantry class and creating awareness among the depressed class, he had written the article series of 17 articles, which was entitled as, “*Thagi Bazar ki Sair*” and “*Bechara Zamidar*” Chhotu Ram often used to quote the line of Iqbal, “*Khamoshi Guftgu hai, baijubani hai zuban meri*”³⁶ (Silent is my speech, my tongue being incapable of any expression) Chhotu Ram tries to remove past anomalies in accordance with the basic principle, as highlighted in the “Provincial assembly”.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

During the British period, the agricultural activities in the Punjab province were not developed. The agrarian economy has always been proved a “wet blanket” for establishing the industries in the British period. Although there has been autonomy of the village system of the province, but there were few rural industries established during the British period. The industrialization in India was against the British industrial policy, because the industrial activities were confined to Britain only. They use to acquire the raw material from India and send to England for manufacturing varied agro-based products, and then

bring back to India for selling in the Indian market in the rural and urban areas. This was the policy, which has been proved a very big pulling factor to keep the British, lived in India for over 200 years.

The imported items, particularly the British Machinery used to be very costly for the people, belonged to different strata of society. Only few people, belonged to elite class were in a position to afford and set up their industries in the urban areas; as a result, the rural areas were remained backward for a long time. The other reasons for industrially backwardness of rural Punjab, was associated with mass illiteracy, non-availability of skilled labours, poor health of the villagers and poor socio-economic conditions of the work force to be used in the industrial activities; were the factors which has given rise to not developing the industrial activities in the rural areas in the British period. The agriculture sector was not in a position to support the country's growing

population during the British period. The problem of disguised employment in the agricultural sector was a pressing problem which was related to surplus labour in the agricultural sector in whole of Punjab province. It is because of these reason, Chhotu Ram thought that it is very essential to restructure the agrarian economy of Punjab, through diversifying the occupational structure by setting up the small-scale industries in the rural areas, so that the rural economy of Punjab province may get some of “momentum” particularly in the rural areas.

In order to highlight the significance of the industry in the rural areas, Chhotu Ram said, “Agriculture itself can never make this province sufficiently prosperous. The industries are subsidiary to agriculture and those which are independent in agriculture, ought to be started in the province on such a large scale than so far has been attempted. Unless something is done to industrialize the state, we cannot have the measures of prosperity in the province, which are required for enabling the people of the province to live in the decent comforts and ease.”³⁷

He used to advocate for developing the industrial infrastructure in the province with at least one aim in the mind, ending of employment from rural as well as urban areas, and to ameliorate the economic conditions of peasantry class,³⁸ Chhotu Ram insisted on necessity to develop the Agro- based industries as well as cottage industries in the province. On the other hand, Chhotu Ram satisfied the members of the opposition party who taken censure against the formed industrial policy of the Unionist Party, it was highlighted by Chhotu

Ram about the priorities of his party which were as follows.³⁹

1. To promoting and safe guarding the masses interests without creating the conflicting situation of the interests of the capitalists, bigger landlord and the village money lenders.
2. To undertake the economic development and re-structuring the agricultural and industrial ways of life of the Punjab province. It was become imperative overcome the unemployment situation from the rural area.
3. To carry out the study on promoting the interest for the commercial activities of the people, belong to Punjab province.
4. To bring educational reform in the existing educational system in the province.
5. To promoting the industries, particularly focusing on supplementary source of additional income among the people, belonged to rural areas.
6. To introducing the innovative marketing strategies and correcting the flaws in the existing marketing structure in the rural areas of province.
7. To make the efforts for taxation system so that a judicious tax structure may be developed in accordance with prevailing socio-economic conditions.

In this connection, more or less similar view points were presented in the „Annual General Meeting of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on dated May 1, 1937, which was as follows:

“General considerations of the better off conditions of the province and an urgent need of eradicating the problem of unemployment situation unmistakably in the same direction; and industrialization process seems to be rosy potential for growth and development, provided, we are capable to convert our raw material in to finished goods. As a result, we shall be enabling to generate the employment for most of the people, if not for all the educated youth.”⁴⁰

However, there were some of points, pointed by the opposition leaders⁴¹ in the Assembly, particularly the leaders from the urban constituencies, have objected on the functioning of Chhotu Ram. In the capacity of development minister, he was not paying his attention towards the industry department. In reply to these objectionable points, Chhotu Ram remarked as follows:

“Sir, I am assuring that the department of industry will have the same attention from me as any other department, belong to my portfolio. It is quite clear reason that in the first

instance, as a Minister in charge, belonged to this department; it is my clear-cut duty that I suppose to perform best in accordance with need of the people of Punjab. Secondly, I am having a clear-cut vision to make consistent efforts for uplifting the peasantry classes, the prosperity of the farmers which is closely related with industrialization. If we would like to add an additional income for the farmers community in the rural areas; as a result, it becomes imperative to go for industrialization. It is therefore, my friends, please remove your doubtful concepts and clear all suspicious thing, if it is still lingers.”⁴²

“There are some of my respectful friends, who seem to have persuaded themselves are having view that the Government is neither willing to establish the industries nor having any concrete policy to develop the industries in the province. It is particularly mentioned that the „Industry

Minister“ has no sympathy worthy of the name with regarding to take initiate on industry in the province. I take censure against their current intention towards industrialization and refute the baseless allegation against the Government and as well as myself.”⁴³

In fact, Sir Chhotu Ram always had cause of the small and marginal farmers in mind and had never been treated biased behavior towards him. Thus, Chhotu Ram frequently used to focus on agro-based industries in Punjab and thought that the.re should be close interaction between agriculture and industry.⁴⁴ However, it has been misunderstood by the numerous of the people of Punjab that it will be against the interest of the entrepreneurs“ class, rather than protecting the interest of both the classes simultaneously. It was the only problem pertaining to overwhelming Punjab population dwell in the rural areas and sole dependent upon the agriculture and allied activities. In this situation, the villagers usually keep themselves idle in most of their time. It is therefore, it was realized by Chhotu Ram to channelize this hidden energy in to productive works in their respective villages. He had a biased view towards the peasantry classes and the rural areas, yet they having a considerable place as well.⁴⁵ In fact, in order to promote the industrialization, he had given a considerable relaxation in the Land Alienation Act (1900) in a two way by highlighting the interest towards industrial development in the province which was diluted, and are to be protected as follow:

- i. The farmers, enacted by legal authority, who wanted to undertake the industries which could mortgage with the department of industry, had to mortgaged to get the

loan and such areas are to be declared, as a result, they exempted from the operations in accordance with the Act.⁴⁶

- ii. There was also barred to entertain any plea, from reversions of person as declared by the courts; for mortgaging their lands to the department of industries in lieu of advancing the loans for the farmers.⁴⁷

Keeping in view the diarchy in the Punjab State, the „Industries“ was placed in the list of „Reserved Subject“ over which the popular ministers had no control. However, from the view point of promoting the small and cottage industries, a department of industry was established by

the Punjab state in 1920.⁴⁸ Subsequently, he was designated as „Ministry-in-Charge“ of the concerned department, as a result; undertaken the department in the September, 1924. Under his leadership during the period between the years 1924-25, Chhotu Ram established large number of institutions for spreading the education in the Punjab province.

The most outstanding contribution of Chhotu Ram in the industrial development in the Punjab province, during his tenure has been remarkable. Despite a strong opposition of the opposition leader, Gokul Chand Narag, Prof. Ruchi Sahni and others, he successfully approved the Mandi Hydrel Project by the Punjab Legislature in the year 1925.⁴⁹ This project was proposed for generating 36000 Kilowatts of electric power for supply for agricultural and industrial activities at cost-effective charges ^{and} the cost of the project was Rs 6.25 Crores.⁵⁰ When Sir Chhotu Ram was out of power, during the period between 1926- 36, he was simply MLA of Punjab legislature; he often used to criticize the government industrial policy. He used to strongly advocate for developing the cottage industries in the rural areas; as highlighted the provincial Legislative Assembly.⁵¹ Sir Chhotu Ram highlighted as follows:

(i) To find out the permanent preventive measure for ameliorate the economic conditions of the people, belonged to rural areas, so that they may find an additional source of income from working in the nearby industries in their spare time, particularly whenever they are free after sowing or harvesting their crops, so that they may find the alternative earning in case of loss of crops during drought like conditions or any natural calamities.

(ii) To reduce the chronic population pressure on land has been cultivated during different successive periods.

Sir Chhotu Ram's arguments were apt and seemed to be similar view, as expressed by the experts. For instance, the committee, constituted for managing the problem of indebtedness⁵² which was appointed by the Government of Punjab in March, 1932 to make appraisal of the recommendations, relating to relief for indebtedness, formed by Royal Commission on Agriculture, as well as Royal Commission on labour and different committees on banking. In this

context, more or less views were given by S.N. Kapur.⁵³ On establishing the co-operative societies which were formed for supplying the raw material and exploring the market for the products of the rural industries, as a result; Chhotu Ram was impressed by all these activities. It was essential for him to institutionalize these societies, if we would like to make successful all the small scale and cottage industries and profit motivated ventures.⁵⁴

It was because of the consistent efforts made by Sir Chhotu Ram and his party. The Government of Punjab; established an organization on market research for selling the products, produced by the cottage industries and „Central Depot“ located at Amritsar and its branches, located at Multan and Hoshiarpur.⁵⁵ In the year 1935, Punjab received a provincial autonomy and the first election was held in the year 1935. In order to devolve the power to Sir Chhotu Ram, Unionist Party voted for him, as a result, he was elected and become the development Minister in the Punjab Assembly. In the capacity of a development Minister, he made consistent efforts for developing the industries in the Punjab province.

He used to take consistent pain for industrial development in Punjab and made all round efforts to boosting up the economy through industrial development in Punjab province. In fact, during tenure of Chhotu Ram, a considerable progress has been noticed in industrial development in Punjab in 1937. It was the results of the consistent efforts made by Chhotu Ram from time to time, which had a considerable impact on various industrial fronts as a result a significant change has been experienced in Punjab province. It was the Unionist Party which formed Government, initiated in first time in the country, which conducted district -wise and industry-wise industrial survey in the entire province in the year 1938.⁵⁶ In the beginning, it was estimated that the survey will be completed with three years, but subsequently, it was realized that this task was too difficult to complete it within the three years, rather than it will take not less than five years.⁵⁷ In order to highlight the benefits of

this survey, Chhotu Ram said, “It is quite obvious from my view point that it is expected to pave the way for making a solid ground for industrial development. If we are not aware of the facts about the adequate raw material is available and where it is likely to be consumed, knowledge about the labour availability and their wages to be paid by the entrepreneur. I am sure you can unable to find out the right strategy in this regard. It is because of the immediate requirement to gathering the required information on relevant matters.”⁵⁸

In order to formulate the tentative plan for industrial development for the Punjab province, Chhotu Ram invited Prof. K.T. Shah, a noted economist in that period. The recommendations made by Prof. *Shah* were of far reaching significance.⁵⁹ In this context, Sir Chhotu Ram was well aware of the feedback, given by „Research & Development“ programme with full of spirits and said, “I may linkage the research work on industrial development with full spirit in the industrial areas. It is the same; the human body which is not having any value without sprit, it is difficult to flourish the industries without industrial research. By adopting the industrial research, we are unable to provide the spirit to the body of the industry.”⁶⁰

It is therefore, establish an Industrial Research Fund in the year 1938, which was aimed at help the Industrial research;⁶¹ and this proposal was favored by the members of the opposition in the council too. In order to highlight the importance of establishing such fund, Chhotu Ram commented as follows:

“A considerable sum is invested by the entrepreneurs but the majority of the industrial projects were failed due to research experiences. On the other, the Government has realized that it was too difficult to get the desired in accordance with the invested sum in the industrial sector. No doubt, addressing the honorable members, it becomes imperative to focus on „Research & Development“ for industrial development in the rural areas of Punjab province. Addressing to his friends, Chhotu Ram insisted on urgency of conducting the industrial survey in the potential areas and they have made a good beginning in the right direction.”⁶²

The fund, established was the testimony to fact that the Chhotu Ram was not forward in accordance his time as he established an example, by citing himself before the country.⁶³ It was Punjab, which was the first province of the country, for establishing such type of fund, not even the most advanced industrially forward areas like Bombay and Kolkata, ever

taken a positive

step in this direction.⁶⁴ In order to promote the „Research & Development“ the research fund was started with the meager sum of Rs 1.5 Lacs, whereas, facing the criticism from the opposition leaders about the inadequate funds allocated to this fund, has been main topic in this regard. In this context, Chhotu Ram said as follows: “It is through true that the sum which was allocated is inadequate, but he should keep in mind that we are facing the grim situation and it the wish of the Government to promoting the industries in the rural areas. In spite of current financial crisis, the Government has approved the sum of Rs 1, 50,000 to develop the „Research Fund“ I think the private donors will also be motivated to share significantly in this regard in the prospective period.”⁶⁵

The Provincial Stores Purchase Services was established by Chhotu Ram, in the capacity of „Development Minister“ in the year 1937.⁶⁶ It was again a novice idea and set up throughout the province, except in the United Province.⁶⁷ He commented that the necessity of developing the industries in the province to ensure the tapping of potential market for the commodities which it manufactured.⁶⁸ On the basis of provincial store purchase departmental principles which were patronized and motivated by the local entrepreneurships.⁶⁹ It was set up in the year 1940.⁷⁰ In the initial stage of inception, (1940-41), with the tune of Rs 12,00,000 was purchased by the

„Government through its department; as justified by Chhotu Ram which is as follows: “Department is characterized with various advantages which includes buying of freely goods and availability of other infrastructural facilities made available within the province; as a result, encouraged the local industries in Punjab. With the agents who usually complaint about the industrialists of Punjab, do not ensure to secure the adequate orders as operated by the „Central Stores purchasing department“ as a result, now this problem has been solved to a considerable extent. It depicts that the „Provincial Stores Purchase Department“ has been proved helpful to the local entrepreneurs and motivating the local industrialists. It is therefore, obvious that the

department will ensure to function well in accordance with the requisite standard, laid down by the industrial authorities.”⁷¹

Thus, Chhotu Ram developed the vast infrastructure which has been proved very significant for development and growth of industries in the Punjab province, but due to

piece meal fashion of funding; his efforts were failed to achieve its desired results. In fact, Chhotu Ram conceded to take censure against the policy by some of the leaders, belonged to opposition party for the causes of lack of funds for industrial of the provincial districts of Punjab. Chhotu Ram was alive of the necessity of developing large scale industries in the province.⁷²

However, due to paucity of the funds; his efforts in this direction have been limited. It was because of piece-meal fashion of funding.⁷³ “In this context, he faced the criticism from the leaders of the opposition about the industrial backwardness of Punjab province. At this he pointed out that it was due to non-availability of funds. Thus, he pointed out that they have been unable to allocate the funds for the development projects and industrial development.”⁷⁴ Along with this statement, he also told that in accordance with availability of the financial resources, the maximum funds have been allocated for this sector.⁷⁵

On commenting on the issue of Budget of 1936-37, there were only fund of Rs 14,70,107 allocated For industrial development program for the year 1937-38; and it was subsequently increased by 37 per cent in the revised estimated budget⁷⁶ by considering the „piece-meal fashion of financial resource allocation, the industrial development has been initiated under the public sector, he focused on large-scale industrial development, under the private sector. To this end, he received the doubled or triple budget allocation to motivating the private investors for industrial development in the rural areas and promised to make available the required technical knowledge and providing the legal protection.

However, Chhotu Ram faced another constraint in the large-scale industrial development under private sector and it was enterprise paucity in the province, as he told that it is not to be

developed or capable to develop-over night or in a year even.⁷⁷ On discussing the enterprise paucity in the Punjab province and his resoluteness to develop it in the Punjab province, he said: “It is the question to brain wash for the entire population and, I am afraid, I am not in a position to say anything to be given by me during a single year or even within the five years, but has been ways that the industries are capable to overcome in the different modes. All these different modes are laid down in accordance with State aid to Industry Act⁷⁸ which were sanctioned under the aegis of previous Government, as a result,

the consistent efforts; made by Dr. Sir Gokul Chand Narang, who is my friend, philosopher and guide to me.”⁷⁹

Despite making consistent efforts, by Chhotu Ram, the industrial development has failed to get the desired results. And this fact was very well known to Chhotu Ram himself. The state affair was very much influenced by some of limiting factors which was justified by Chhotu Ram in the council in the year 1941; which was as follows: “As we arrived in the office; a sizeable number of natural disasters; occurred in the province; including drought and famine, hailstorms etc. during different successive periods which had increased the undue stress on the provincial budget. Honourable members are you in a position to imagine that a sizeable amount of funding with the tune of Rs two crores and seventy lakhs of the sum has been spent on famine only? It would have been establishing a large-scale industry within the short period of three years.”

The other considerable limiting factor which was taken by the Government critics, noticed that the unproductive war expenditure of the province; which has been proved a wet blanket to finance as well as general. It had become too difficult to import the machinery for establishing the industry in the Punjab province. I consider it to a great extent that the industrial development has been insisted by the members and pointed out that it is the large-scale industries, meaning thereby not the cottage industries or handicraft manufacturing units. In order to establishing the large-scale industries; we will have to acquire large scale machinery too. On the other hand, there are numerous of constraints in the way of importing large and heavy machinery from the foreign countries. It is therefore, the large-scale industries have not been made much headway in the industrialization process in the province.

The limiting factor has been not clearing of mandate from the „House’ on the policy matter is to be followed for establishing the industries in the Punjab province. In this context, there are some of suggestions for the Government for making further improvement in this regard. Till now no definite verdict was given by the „House“ so that we may take any course of action with high level of confidence. During the month of January, the „House“ has sanctioned a resolution which was derived by Unionist Party seeking the capability of advice of the Government to undertake the large-scale industries either by it or private sector capitalists. No doubt is left with regarding to our policy. It is very much well

acquainted what „House“ desire us to do in this behalf. The constraints created by the famine in the execution process, successfully removed in a systematic ways. It is therefore; neither have we started the large-scale industries due to non-availability of machinery which are very much necessary owing to war conditions, nor are we in a position to helping the private capitalists in the current scenario. The prevailing circumstances certainly force us to wait till ending of war. Here, I would like to wish that the waiting was not essential.⁸⁰

By considering this, Chhotu Ram thought in the right way to think development-oriented way for developing the small and cottage industries which were less capital consuming industries and huge machinery along with multiple measures for promoting these industries in the rural areas. Chhotu Ram brought out with some of views which are as follows: “In case the people, dwelling in the rural areas, as a result; the cottage industries will be proved very effective to boosting up the rural economy. It is because of the villagers are having plenty of time for which they do not utilize it in the best way; as a result, if we introduce cottage industries in the rural areas which can help to generate an additional income for the farmers, particularly small and marginal farmers and the agricultural labourers. I think it will be a good thing.”⁸¹

Chhotu Ram establishes the parties for special demonstration to motivate the cottage industries in the rural areas without any gender discrimination.⁸² It is therefore, all men and women were included in this cottage industries establishing mission. In the year 1941, there were numerous of

„Travelling Demonstration Parties“ which were numbered twenty-five. Visited several districts of Punjab province and imparted required training for the poverty ridden people of the rural areas,

so that they may earn a sustainable livelihood at their respective villages.⁸³ This experiment was proved very beneficial for the villagers who seek employment in their neighbouring areas; and they were not in a position to afford to attend the regular classes in the training schools, located in their respective areas for this purposeful training. In order to revive some old crafts, like pottery craft and silk industry. In this context, the consistent efforts were made for putting in to practice for regular livelihood.⁸⁴

The sum of Rs 60000 was allocated as budget for the year 1939-40, for regenerate the venues for pottery industry.⁸⁵ The silk manufacturing industry which was neglected with very pessimistic approach during mid 1930s was thought to revive and shown and reorganized with target oriented success by the late 1940s.⁸⁶

Chhotu Ram taken some of good measures for spreading the industrial and technical education among the people, who were interested in the change to be brought through planned change by the “Unionist party” in their respective areas of Punjab. In this context, he converted some of industrial schools in to „Training Schools“ in to training centers, for technicians.⁸⁷ Apart from these establishments, he started numerous of new institutions, aiming at these objectives. Amongst all these institutions, there were two institutions which were relating to weaving and carding, at Panipat and Kullu respectively.⁸⁸ In this context, there was a new division attached to Hosiery Institute of Ludhiana and the investment of Rs 40000/- was allocated for this potential of this area. Subsequently, these divisions were attached to all the 32 schools of technical education of Punjab province too.⁸⁹

Keeping in view the growing interest of the girls, an industrial school for the girls, was set up at Rawalpindi and a project proposal was sanctioned for another institution for Multan district with the budget for the year 1941-42.⁹⁰ These institutions were in addition to the institutions, which were already established at Ambala and Lahore. Chhotu Ram also allocated Rs 60000 for setting up a central agency for reviving the pottery industry which has a glorious past in the province.⁹¹ Ch. Chhotu Ram has always been making consistent efforts for promoting the indigenous industries. In this context, once he clarified in the „House“ the conflicting situation of two opinions are likely to create problem, as the question of priority of “Made in India” goods to foreign made goods is concerned.”⁹² Further, he said that he make it clear to the hounarable members that they are not supposed to think even for moment that this Government is reluctant to motivate the *Sawdeshi* goods.

In the year 1937, an “All India Exhibition” was organized at Lahore for developing the industries in Punjab province, as a result; it was observed from the prevailing scenario that such goods will be discouraged and displayed.⁹³ From the view point of promoting the “Sawdeshi goods” an order was issued in the year 1939 on the policy matter of the Government to all the departments, which as, “Even whether it is little bit variability in the

quality; the preference should be given to buying the native goods rather than purchasing the exotic goods and articles, made in our province or other province.”⁹⁴

Keeping in view the similar views, he established the “Provincial Stores” and purchase department, and directed them to procuring the goods in accordance with the requirements, demanded from time to time from the Government and at the individual level as well as by the local industries independently.⁹⁵ Further, in order to reduce the completion from the foreign countries, in the year 1938, Chhotu Ram recommended the „Central Government“ for promoting the entrepreneurs of Punjab province, with special attention should be paid towards the entrepreneurs, growers and the customers.⁹⁶ Chhotu Ram examined the entire present and prospective industrial environment in accordance with prevailing local conditions.

All these studies carried out by the experts belonged to various industrial streams have brought out with some of findings which have been proved conducive to create a favourable environment for the new entrepreneurs. Apart from examine the existing and prospective environment, Chhotu Ram also carried out the diagnostic and techno-economic survey, by the assistance with experts, belonged to various industrial and managerial streams, so that a feasibility of the varied Industries may be properly examined in accordance with prevailing local conditions. All these surveys have thrown an adequate light on the degree of probability of success and the failure of the enterprises which are to be proposed to establish in a particular area.

Hence, it is obvious that Ch. Chhotu Ram has always been making his consistent efforts to mobilize the farmers and the agricultural laborers and taken the preventive and curative measures to uplifting their socio-economic conditions. In order to raising an additional income of the families, he tried to establish the industries, especially the agro-based and agro-industries in the rural areas. In this context, he has conducted various surveys to examine the potentiality and the feasibility of the industries in accordance with availability of the local resources in a particular area.

On the basis of his consistent efforts made during different successive periods, we find that there has been significant growth and developments have been experienced in different districts of the Punjab province. The industrial infrastructure has taken place in multiple growths in almost every district of Punjab, including some of *Nawab* states of Punjab province. It was because of

“Demonstration effects” which were the joint venture with the provincial Government as well as the efforts, made at an individual farmer’s level. As a result, a surplus labour in the agricultural sector, successfully diverted to the manufacturing sector, based mainly on agro-based and agro industries in the Punjab province.

On the basis of consistent efforts, the results show that the number of registered factories has been increased to a considerable extent. In the end of the year 1936, the numerical strength of the registered industries were 802, subsequently, a significance growth has been noticed within the two years. In the year 1938, now it has been reached up to 887, which is a net growth of 11 per cent which is a remarkable growth, experienced by the Punjab province. This industrial growth in the Punjab province has been proved helpful to raise the socio-economic conditions of the peasantry class, as highlighted by Sir Chhotu Ram in various Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates. On the other hand, the numerical strength of the factory labourers, which was 63268 in the period of end of 1936, and subsequently it has reached to 72268 in the year 1938. In this context, it is to be noted that there has been net growth of 9000 (14.23 %) industrial work force in various factories in Punjab province.⁹⁷

Despite a sizeable numerical strength of constraints and the limitations, Chhotu Ram had successfully complete his mission of industrialization of the rural areas of Punjab province and also successfully diverted the surplus labours from the agricultural areas to the industrial areas of Punjab province. All these efforts have been successful to a greater extent to raise the socio- economic conditions of the peasantry class. Despite some of limitations and the constraints Chhotu Ram achieved some of his targeted aims and objectives, laid down by his „Unionist Party“ and always advocated for pro-grievances of the peasantry class. However, Chhotu Ram has always been ready to reply each and every question; rose by the opposition leader. In the assembly debates he has always been fully confident to answer to quarry of every one, particularly the grievances of the peasantry class.

With regarding to industrial development of Punjab province, Chhotu Ram made his progress; despite the limitations of the alien rule which was almost indifferent to the grievances of the farmers; if not hostile to any growth and development, particularly industrial development in the country. On the whole, if we examine the pro-farmer welfare activities of Chhotu Ram, as a result; it has been observed that most of territorial confined

to Doaba area of Punjab, Ambala, Lahore, Karnal and Rohtak districts only. On the other hand, the southern part of Punjab, presently the southern Haryana has been neglected part of his activities. It is because of biased approach; Chhotu Ram often used to face an adequate criticism in the Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates since 1930s to early 1940s.

Among the farmers, he used to give weight age to the farmers, belonged to Jat community, whereas the other cultivating castes like Ahirs, Gujjar; and Mali had a significant number of the farmers, used to inhabitant in Southern Punjab too. Owing to caste wise anomalies of pro- farmers activities have given raise the resentments among the other cultivating castes in Southern Haryana. Chhotu Ram has not been considered the „Regional approach“ and the concept of dominant cultivating caste in a particular region; were some of the questions which were raised in the leaders meetings as well as the Punjab Legislative Assembly debates in Lahore. While execution the farmers welfare measures like establishing the rural industries a lop-sided approach has been came in to the notice of people of Punjab who used to reside in different parts of Punjab province.

Hence, it obvious that the role of Ch. Chottu Ram has been quite significant for uplifting the socio-economic status of the peasantry class of the Punjab province. Keeping in view the vested interest of the British, was confined to revenue collection from the *Zamindars* in entire Punjab province, as a result they have been indulged in exploitative nature of activities. In the British period, frequency of drought and famine were the regular feature of agrarian economy of Punjab. As a result, the farmers, particularly the small and marginal farmers have been punished from both sides. It is therefore, aiming at eradication from the exploitative policy of the British, Ch. Chhotu Ram, emerged as a good leader among the Jat community from district Rohtak, of South- eastern part of Punjab, and had made the consisting efforts for ameliorating the peasantry class.

Keeping in view the gravity of the problem of peasantry class of Punjab province, Chhotu Ram has taken legislative, judiciary and executive measures to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Punjab farmers, particularly the farmers, belonged to South-Eastern part of Punjab province during 1930-40s. In order to ameliorate the socio-economic status of the peasantry class, he focused on establishing the rural industrialization in accordance with prevailing socio- economic and physiographic local conditions of particular areas of the province. He also focused on conducting the industrial surveys so that the feasibility of the industrialization may be examined in accordance with

prevailing local conditions. It is therefore, it had become imperative to diversify the surplus labour from the agricultural sector towards small scale and cottage industries sector, so that the chronic population pressure may be reduced and the productivity of the agriculture may be improved of the agricultural depressed areas.

In order to improve the socio-economic status, rural development and rural industrialization have been suggested to betterment of agrarian economy. He also emphasized for institutional supports, marketing research, Research & Development, people participant, and the land reforms, and indigenous capital formation for investment in the industrial sector, to diversify the traditional occupational structure so that a sustainable development of agriculture and industry may take place in every part of the Punjab province.

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