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INDIAN INDUSTRY
YESTERDAY, TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

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A HEALTH VISITOR

INDIAN INDUSTRY

Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow

By

M. CECILE MATHESON

MEMBER OF THE BRITISH INDUSTRIAL COURT AND OF TRADE BOARDS
FORMERLY WARDEN OF BIRMINGHAM SETTLEMENT

HUMPHREY MILFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS

1930

PRINTED AT THE
WESLEYAN MISSION PRESS
MYSORE CITY

X9.2.N3

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PREFACE

INDUSTRIAL conditions have long engaged the attention of the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon. Committed to the conviction that the Christian Message applies to the whole province of human life the Council cannot look on unmoved while great industrial developments, instinct with promise and peril to the peoples of a land hitherto predominantly agricultural, are gathering strength at an ever increasing pace. As far back as November 1924, when the Council met in Waltair, an arresting statement on the subject was made by Miss I. Wingate of the Young Women's Christian Association, and it was then resolved to inaugurate 'a study of industrial conditions in India with a view to creating a more vigorous public opinion and advancing Christian standards in regard to industrial reform'. Useful spade work by the secretaries followed; but it was felt from the beginning that in order to make the proposed survey adequate to the end in view the help of a trained investigator would be necessary. The matter was therefore laid before the Institute of Social and Religious Research in New York, with the happy result that the services of Miss M. Cecile Matheson, a lady well-known and widely respected in England for her experience in industrial investigations and welfare work, were made available for a period of two years to the Council for the purposes of the survey. By an equally happy arrangement the Young Women's Christian Association agreed to set apart Miss Wingate for the same good cause. With these guarantees the Council took decisive action at its meeting held in Calcutta in November 1926, and invited Miss Matheson to come to India and lead the survey. It also gladly accepted the offered co-operation of the Young Women's Christian Association, and further instructed its executive 'to take steps for the association of Indian men and women, both throughout the investigation and in local areas, with Miss Matheson in her work'. In accordance with this instruction

Mr. R. Manohar Lall, whose experience as a welfare worker in Nagpur under the Young Men's Christian Association made him a valuable ally, was associated with Miss Matheson and Miss Wingate and the team was complete.

The present volume is the outcome of their labours. The purpose of its publication is—in the words of the resolution adopted by the Council at its meeting held at Madras in January 1929: 'To give the needed information and guidance to the Council and to Missions and Churches in studying the subject further and in rendering suitable service to the industrial population.'

The views expressed are necessarily those of the writers themselves, and the Council does not therefore accept responsibility for them; but it commends the book to the serious study of all who have regard to human values as a valuable contribution, on the part of a group of well-trained and well-minded observers, to a subject that is beset with difficulty and is at the same time of paramount importance. Obviously the observers could not see things with the same eyes, and the impressions left on their minds are not always of the same colour, but in things essential they have reached a refreshing degree of unanimity, and the minor differences that occasionally appear are a healthy reminder that facts are sometimes capable of more than one interpretation. In any case it would have been a pity had the desire to reach substantial agreement robbed the book of the individual and personal touch that lends added interest to its pages.

This report does not claim to be a complete statement. It was not possible for the group to visit all the centres together, and the enquiry into labour conditions on the tea-gardens, for instance, had to be undertaken by Miss Matheson alone. Her personal impressions are graphically recorded in the chapter on Tea. But the book will have achieved its purpose if it serves as a guide to further study and points the way to useful action. Its appearance is timely; India has entered upon her industrial age and there can be no going back; a Labour Commission is abroad in the land and busy taking notes; labour questions are rapidly forcing themselves to the front and it is incumbent on all good citizens to understand the issues involved. It is, above all, important that Christian men

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and women in India should see their duty in regard to industrial problems and endeavour to make the mind of Christ the standard of living throughout the entire realm of industry. To all such this book brings a clear message.

It remains to the Council to express its warm appreciation of the conscientious way the commissioners have done their difficult task and its gratitude to the Institute of Social and Religious Research, the Young Women's Christian Association and the Young Men's Christian Association for the happy co-operation that made this survey possible.

J. Z. HODGE
*Secretary, National Christian Council
of India, Burma and Ceylon*

Poona
27 December, 1929

The value of the rupee has been reckoned at 1s. 6d.

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INTRODUCTION

MODERN industry is a plant of comparatively recent growth in India, but it already boasts a large literature, so large that some apology for adding yet another book to the number might seem to need justification. The present modest essay is, however, the outcome of a desire on the part of the Christian people in India to have a reliable textbook, which would serve as a guide in criticizing the difficulties of the present and materializing hopes for the future. The reformer, who is above all things a humanitarian, and in India at least, rarely an economic specialist, is keenly conscious of the difficulties that confront him and those whom he fain would help. His help, if it is to be constructive and surely founded, must have relation to the past, with its successes and its failures, its virtues and its defects. He needs to see his immediate surroundings in their relation, not only to the country of his activity as a whole, but in their relation to the past and present of the human race. Above all, he needs to envisage his hopes for the future in the light of this larger experience, that will guide him as to what he may expect, warn him what to avoid and help him to draw from his field of work a contribution to the progress of mankind as well as an amelioration of present distressing conditions.

It seemed to the National Christian Council of India that no textbook in existence would serve exactly this purpose, and it was in the hope of securing one that they appointed a special Industrial Commission, first to tour India, visiting factories and workshops, cities and villages, and then to give a survey of present conditions together with what criticism, explanation and suggestions for building a happier future they felt able to offer.

The commission was small: an Englishwoman with long experience of industrial and social conditions in Great Britain, the United States and elsewhere, an Englishwoman with a long experience of social work in India, and an Indian man

who had been engaged in industrial welfare work and adult education. The little company varied and for a time the second Englishwoman was replaced by an Indian lady. Journeys, interviews and visits were made most often in company, sometimes singly or in pairs. The survey occupied two cold weathers with much preparatory work before and much supplementary work in the intervening and succeeding months. It covered India from Tuticorin to Lahore, and from Bombay to Sibsagar in north-east Assam. Although many of the chief centres were visited more than once, all visits, whether long or short, left the same impression, namely, that very little had been accomplished in comparison with what there was to see and to learn, and this in spite of the generous help and co-operation that was received everywhere, from Government and local authorities, from factory owners and managers, trade union officials, tea-planters, missionaries, teachers and a host of others too numerous to mention, and including many in various walks of life who freely showed their homes.

To all these friends of the enterprise the most grateful thanks are tendered, and also to Miss Rose Squire, O.B.E. (late of the Home Office, London), and to a little group of officials and others, who have read the whole or part of the manuscript and have made most valuable criticisms and suggestions.

This little book therefore goes forth with a deep sense of its inadequacy and a plea that readers will remember that time and resources were limited and that the members of the commission have tried to carry out a scheme that they had not the audacity to evolve and that they advise because advice has been asked, although they themselves are still learners.

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION

LIST OF PLACES VISITED

I. *Winter 1927-1928*

BOMBAY
AHMEDNAGAR
NAGPUR
SHOLAPUR
KILOSKIRWADI
(DECCAN)
AHMEDABAD

BARODA
DELHI
CAWNPORE
LUCKNOW
CALCUTTA AND
DISTRICT

DHANBAD AND
JHERIA
JAMSHEDPUR
GOSABA (BENGAL)
MADRAS
TRIVELLUR
BANGALORE

II. *Winter 1928-1929*

TUTICORIN
MADURA
TRICHINOPOLY
COIMBATORE
COONOR
CALCUT
MADRAS
CALCUTTA
SHAMNAGAR
(BENGAL)
CAWNPORE
ETAWAH

ALIGARH
ASSAM: MARIANI
JORHAT
ARMGOORIE
DARJEELING
BANGALORE
VELLORE
CHANNAPATNA
MYSORE
POONA
BOMBAY
INDORE

UJJAIN
DELHI
LAHORE
AMRITSAR
LUCKNOW
ALLAHABAD
ASANSOL
BOLPUR
BEZWADA
GUNTUR
DORNAKAL
HYDERABAD

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

REPORT OF A CONFERENCE ON INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS

Held in Poona, 14th to 15th January, 1929

Present

- MR. S. K. RUDRA (Reader in Economics, Allahabad University).
REV. F. M. PERRIL (M.E. Mission, Cawnpore).
MR. W. E. D. WARD (Welfare Work, Y.M.C.A., Bombay).
DR. MANSHARDT (Director, Nagpada Neighbourhood House, Bombay).
MR. S. C. L. NASIR (Y.M.C.A. Welfare Work, Nagpur).
MR. P. L. KRISHNASWAMY (Convener, Industrial Committee of Madras Representative Christian Council).
MR. S. V. KIRLOSKAR (Kirkoskar Bros., Kirloskarvadi).
MR. P. G. KANEKAR (Social Service League, Bombay).
MR. T. W. JOHNSTONE (Chief Inspector of Factories, Bombay).
MR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU (Secretary, Labour Union, Madras).
MR. J. R. EASON (Scottish Mission Industries, Poona).
MISS M. CECILE MATHESON } (Members of the Industrial Com-
MISS I. WINGATE } mission of the National Christian
MR. MANOHAR LALL } Council).
DR. JOHN R. MOTT (Chairman, International Missionary Council).
REV. W. PATON (Secretary, International Missionary Council).
DR. MACNICOL }
MISS VAN DOREN } (Secretaries of the National Christian Council).
MR. P. O. PHILIP }

The Rev. W. Paton occupied the chair and opened the conference with prayer.

Apologies for absence were read from Miss Tilak (Social Work Training Centre, Bombay); Dr. P. P. Pillai (Director of the International Labour Office, Delhi); Mr. Sankara Bankerlal (Labour Union, Ahmedabad).

The Chairman made a statement explaining the purpose of the conference, in the course of which he made mention of the investigation made during the past months by Miss Matheson and her colleagues, under the auspices of the National Christian Council; and said that their report would be of immense use to missions and churches in giving accurate information about the conditions of industrial workers, and also guidance as to the lines of work they could undertake for their betterment.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

I. *Amendment to the Factory Act*

Miss Matheson placed before the conference certain proposals about getting the present Factory Act amended.

(1) One of her proposals was for reduction of hours of work to a 54-hour week and 10-hour day.

After discussion and careful consideration, it was agreed that efforts be made to secure a normal 55-hour week and 10-hour day, seasonal industries being considered an exception.

(2) The second proposal was that efforts be made to secure that no spell of work without a pause be longer than five hours. This was agreed to.

(3) The third proposal that was agreed to was that efforts be made to get the multiple shifts abolished.

(4) The fourth proposal was that work-places employing ten or more persons be brought under the Factory Act. After discussion it was agreed that efforts be made to secure that work-places using power and employing ten or more persons on any day in the year be brought under the Factory Act, bearing in mind that the Washington Conventions have to apply to such places.

II. *Legislation about Fines*

It was pointed out that at present there was very little control over fines and deductions in industrial undertakings, and that efforts should be made to secure some legislation to remedy this. After discussion, it was agreed that the Government should be pressed to accept the principle that fines and deductions should be fair and reasonable, and not be a source of profit to the employer; that they should be recorded in a register, and that the Factory Inspector should have the right to inspect this register.

III. *Increase of the Inspectorate*

If the proposals made above are to be carried out, it would be necessary to increase the number of Factory Inspectors. The matter was discussed carefully, and it was agreed that the Government be urged to increase the inspectorate, and that there be a woman inspector at least in each of the large industrial centres.

There was also agreement about using more fully than is done now the clause in the present Act by which 'public officers' are empowered to inspect factories.

IV. *Alteration of Patterns*

Miss Matheson brought to the attention of the conference the practice by which wages agreed upon for working a particular pattern are kept unaltered while the pattern itself is altered. It was agreed that this matter be investigated.

V. *Minimum Wage Legislation*

A memorandum on the subject by Miss Matheson was circulated among the members, and she also spoke from her experience of the working of the minimum wage machinery in Great Britain.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Government of India should be pressed to ratify the Minimum Wage Convention, and that legislation along the lines suggested by the convention be asked for, without stressing the need of applying it to home trades.

It was pointed out that when legislation had been passed, it would be open to any body of persons to move that any given industry or parts of an industry be included.

It was also agreed that an article on the subject of minimum wage legislation, explaining its purpose, its working in countries where it has been adopted and suggesting in what respects, under what conditions and in what trades it can be applied in India, be secured and published in the *National Christian Council Review* and be made available to the public.

VI. *Amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act*

Mr. Varadarajulu Naidu made some proposals showing in what respects the Workmen's Compensation Act needed amendment.

After discussion, it was agreed that the points be referred to the Industrial Committee of the National Christian Council, and that opportunity be taken to make representations on this matter when the Act will be coming up for revision in two or three years' time.

VII. *Legislation on Maternity Benefit*

The need for legislation on maternity benefit was considered. It was agreed that efforts should be made to secure such legislation on this matter as would satisfy as far as possible the Washington Convention.

VIII. *Sick Leave*

Mr. Varadarajulu Naidu pointed out the need for legislation by which workmen could get at least twenty days' sick leave in a year, on doctor's certificate, on full or half pay.

It was felt by some that experiments along this line should be tried and experience gathered. After discussion, it was agreed that efforts be made to secure such legislation.

TARIFFS

Miss Matheson gave some instances of tariffs which impede the educational and hygienic progress of people. Educational films imported into India have a prohibitive tariff. This makes the use of educational films in welfare work among workmen very expensive.

So also a tariff on scientific instruments, especially microscopes, is retarding medical treatment.

It was further mentioned that the special kind of cloth needed for working embroidery and lace was subject to high tariff. If such cloth coming from foreign countries could be imported on less tariff or a rebate allowed on re-import, it would greatly help the lace and embroidery industry.

After consideration, it was agreed that the Christian Medical Association be requested to take up the question of tariffs on scientific instruments with a view to getting them reduced.

It was further agreed that more evidence on the other matters mentioned must be gathered before any action could be taken.

AN INDUSTRIAL WELFARE SOCIETY FOR INDIA

Miss Matheson, in introducing the subject, spoke about the absence in India of any kind of co-ordination in welfare work. For instance, in some places housing plans are worked out; but those in other centres know nothing about them. We, in India, need an Industrial Welfare Society (on the lines of the one there is in England) to collect information and advise as to welfare matters. The Industrial Welfare Society of England was started by a clergyman, Mr. Hyde, soon after the War. He got several employers interested in it. The Society has a staff of experts, and any firm which wants information or help can get it. The firms pay a certain contribution for the upkeep of the Society. The standard of welfare work in England has been considerably raised by this Society. It may be possible to have a branch of this Society in India, but organized as an autonomous body.

In the course of the discussion, the following points were brought out :

(1) That Mr. Hyde, if invited, might be willing to come to India and help in organizing a Welfare Society for India.

(2) That work-people should be made to feel more and more that they have a share in welfare work.

(3) Care should be taken that welfare work is not used as a rival to trade union, and in this connexion it was pointed out that the name 'Welfare Society' might be a handicap.

After consideration, it was generally agreed that it would be an advantage to have a Welfare Society on the lines outlined above, with a clearly defined objective for India, and that the question of its affiliation to any outside organization should only be considered later.

It was further agreed that Miss Matheson and Mr. Nasir be requested to enlist the support of bodies like the Millowners' Association and trade union organizations for bringing Mr. Hyde out to India for a short period to render help in organizing such a society and in discovering suitable men and training them for carrying on the work.

WELFARE OR LABOUR SUPERVISORS

Miss Matheson proposed that every effort be made to promote the appointment of welfare or labour supervisors, to undertake, among other things :

(1) Direct management of labour.

(2) Property management of lines or chawls.

(3) Health, educational and recreational work, always safeguarding the direct access of labour to management as it exists in many places at present.

It was also pointed out that such welfare supervisors might handle advances to workmen now given through jobbers, and that they could also develop adult education activities and the committee or *panchayat* system.

After discussion, it was agreed :

(1) That every effort be made to promote the appointment of welfare or labour supervisors as outlined above, and that where firms are found willing to co-operate in the appointment of such supervisors, the facts be recorded and definite schemes for promoting such appointments be submitted to the firms concerned.

(2) That the International Missionary Council and the National Christian Council may be requested to recruit suitable persons for such work.

(3) That when the proposed Industrial Welfare Society is started in India one of its functions should be the promotion of the appointment of labour and welfare supervisors in Indian industrial centres and rendering them help and guidance in their work.

A TRAINING SCHEME FOR WELFARE WORK SUPERVISORS

Miss Matheson placed before the conference the outline of a scheme for training welfare work supervisors, Indian and European, both to meet immediate needs and possible future development of educational facilities in India. This scheme contemplates co-operation between the Economics Department of some of the Indian Universities with the Universities of Birmingham and Manchester. This was recorded.

THE PLACE OF CHRISTIAN AGENCIES IN VOLUNTARY WORK FOR AN INDUSTRIAL POPULATION

After a full discussion of this subject the following resolutions were unanimously adopted :

Resolved that the Executive of the National Christian Council be requested to appoint a committee of the National Christian Council, which shall work in co-operation with similar committees of the Provincial Christian Councils, to have charge of industrial problems in their relation to the Christian Church and Christian Missions. The duty of that committee shall be to bring to the attention of the Church and of Christian Missions the urgency of the call to the Christian forces in India to undertake new types of service in relation to the needs of the rapidly growing industrial population in this country, especially as these needs are presented in the report that has been prepared by the Industrial Survey Group of the National Christian Council.¹

That some of the ways in which that committee would discharge its task are the following :

(1) That by means of public meetings and conferences of Indian Christians at various centres, especially in the industrialized areas, this Committee, with the co-operation of the Provincial Councils and of local Christian leaders in the various areas, shall press upon the Church the call that the needs of the industrial population bring to every Christian to seek to help these people in the temptations and hardships of their lives, by friendship, by an understanding of their needs and difficulties, by

¹ This committee has since been appointed.

voluntary service along educational, recreational and health lines, through the establishment of adult and other schools, by means of lantern and general lectures, by establishing libraries and reading rooms, as also hostels for young people among such workers; also by giving them training in committee work, by the inauguration of infant welfare and health education, by the establishment of crèches, of troops of Scouts and Girl Guides and similar organizations, by helping to form clubs, by organizing games, and musical and other entertainments, by carrying on temperance work, and, in these and other ways, by engaging in voluntary Christian service on behalf of these classes of the community.

(2) That the claims of this industrial population and the call to the Church to help them be brought, by this committee, to the attention of students in theological and other colleges, and in student camps, and that they be urged to consider how they can give their lives to service of these classes, and co-operate with others in such voluntary service whatever their own future careers may be; that at the same time this be brought to the attention of the non-Christian students and that they be invited to co-operate in such service and their responsibility be similarly pressed upon them.

(3) That the authorities in such theological and arts colleges be urged to give an important place in their curriculum of studies to subjects relating to this type of service, and that some arts colleges be urged to consider whether they can institute courses of training for workers in this department of service.

(4) That arrangements be made for the production of literature in English and the vernaculars, drawing attention to this type of service—especially of study books for young people's classes.

(5) That the Churches be urged to recognize it as their duty to follow their members to the industrial areas and, either by their own efforts or through some other Church or Mission, to endeavour to discharge the responsibility for their instruction in Christian truth and their upbuilding in general character in these new and difficult circumstances.

(6) That the committee take measures to bring to the attention of Missionary Societies the need that some at least of them, especially those which have work in areas where large industrial populations are gathered, should appoint members of their Mission staff who shall be specially qualified to take charge of work of this kind and to give guidance to the Indian Church, and that in seeking to arouse interest in this matter in the older Churches of the west they invite the co-operation of the International Missionary Council.

(7) That such societies be urged to consider the establishment of centres for the industrial population, similar to the Neighbourhood House of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at Byculla in Bombay, where practical instruction shall be given in this type of work to Indian Christians and other young people.

(8) That plans be made for the establishment at different industrial centres of training schools for workers similar to the Social Service Training Centre in Bombay, where men and women, Christian and non-Christian, both those who are themselves actually artisans and others, shall be trained for service of the industrial population.

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It was further resolved to recommend to Churches and Missions that in undertaking and discharging this service of the industrial population, they should seek in every way possible, consistently with their Christian motive and aim, to co-operate with non-Christians who are actuated by a similar desire to serve and help the industrial community.

APPENDIX II

REPORT ON ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN WORKING IN SHOLAPUR MILLS

By IRIS WINGATE

SHOLAPUR is a city of 119,500 inhabitants according to the last census. It is an old centre of the handloom industry and this is still the major occupation of the town outside the cotton mills. According to the recently issued *Report on Family Budgets* of the Bombay Labour Office, out of 62,000 persons engaged in industry, 50,000 are employed in the textile industry.

There are five cotton mills employing 16,975 persons, of whom 4,335 are women. The number of cases investigated in the present inquiry was 482, or just over 10 per cent, belonging to all the various castes employed.

This inquiry was conducted during August 1928, with the object of discovering the salient facts concerning the economic status of women workers in the textile industry. Sholapur was chosen primarily because a suggestion had been made that a somewhat similar inquiry be held on behalf of the Bombay Representative Christian Council. It was in the hope that the National Christian Council inquiry might serve both purposes that this place was selected.

METHOD OF INQUIRY

A *questionnaire* was drawn up covering the points required and the answers were obtained personally from the women in their own homes and in one case at a mill crèche, partly by myself and partly by a schoolmaster whose full-time services were obtained. The managers of the mills were asked to supply the following information :

- (1) The number of women employed by them, and their caste.
- (2) Minimum, average and maximum wages for a given month, July 1928.

Two mills supplied this information in full, one supplied all but the wages particulars and for these referred us to the *Labour Gazette* for May 1925, which gives figures for August 1923, stating the wages had not changed since then.

No serious attempt was made to collect family budgets as there had been a Government inquiry into this in 1925, the report of which has just been published in time for reference to be made to it in this report. About a dozen typical budgets were collected for comparison and the results obtained will be found below.

Economic Status of Women in Mills 187

Every effort was made to ensure accuracy and to verify statements. On the whole I am satisfied that the information obtained was correct, but it is probable that implicit faith cannot be placed in every return made. Where there seems to be doubt as to accuracy reference will be made to this fact. Completely true answers to questions are not always easy to obtain from ignorant people. Yet it is only fair to record that when the purpose was explained, the information asked for was freely supplied both by workers and most mill owners.

Classification. The 482 cases studied were divided as to caste as follows :

Hindus	...	178 = 37 per cent	}	330 = 69 per cent
Outcastes	...	152 = 32 " "		
Mohammadans	...	54 = 11 " "		
Criminal Tribes	...	52 = 11 " "		
Christians	...	24 = 5 " "		
Caste unknown	...	22 = 4 " "		

While these figures do not correspond, exactly as to proportion, with the total numbers of these castes employed in the mills, they are a fair indication of their proportions, as may be seen from the following two typical mills which made returns as follows :

	MILL I	MILL II
Hindus	1,846 = 82 per cent	566 = 80 per cent
Mohammadans	252 = 11 " "	51 = 7 " "
Criminal Tribes	131 = 7 " "	92 = 13 " "

The total number of Christians working in the mills is included in this report. One curious discrepancy discovered was that the mills, in the returns supplied by them, stated the number of Christian women employed by them as nil, while 24 Christian women were found who were working in these mills and were included in this inquiry.

Of the 482 women covered by the inquiry there were :

Married women with husbands	...	396
Widows	...	81
Deserted wives	...	3
Unmarried	...	2

The husbands of 333 women also worked in the mill, 63 did other work while their wives worked in the mill. The total numbers in the families concerned were :

Adults	...	1,235
Workers	...	1,065
Children under 12	...	864

The average family contained five persons, three adults and two children under 12 years of age.

The number of children in each family was as follows :

No. of children in family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Nil	
No. of families	...	106	153	111	47	8	6	1	50

Housework. Besides working ten hours a day in the mill 446 women did all their own house work. That is 92 per cent.

Care of Children. Crèches are provided by all the mills. These vary considerably in adequacy and in the provision made for the children, but one or two are in good situations and well cared for. All are taken advantage of by a large number of women. Of the families investigated :

50 had no children.

14 had children over 14 years of age.

4 sent the older ones to school and had babies in the crèche.

6 left the youngest in the crèche and the older ones at home with a relative.

15 had all their children in school.

36 left the babies in the crèche and the older ones at home uncared for.

50 have only young children who are all in the crèche.

46 left all the children at home in care of a relative.

256 left all their children at home uncared for.

Regarding five no returns were made. In all cases where relatives are referred to, they include any adult over 14 years not going to work. Where, as often, it simply means that the oldest child is over 14 years, the attention given to young children cannot be considered adequate, but in view of the fact that girls marry at that age or soon after, 14 was taken as the minimum age for an adult in this connexion. All those who sent any of their children to school were either members of the Criminal Tribes for whom it is compulsory, or Christians.

Of the total of 482, 388 only worked from necessity and would remain at home if not driven to the mills by economic pressure. Ninety-four worked from choice as well as necessity and did not wish to remain at home idle. These included mothers of large families as well as those who had no home ties. Possibly on account of their extreme poverty a life of leisure could not even be conceived of in their imagination.

Housing. The Sholapur Mill workers live in several different types of housing, varying considerably in quality. The Criminal Tribes are in a special settlement under the care of the American Marathi Mission. Practically all build their own houses in the style they prefer, each tribe having its own clearly marked type of house, and pay a nominal rent for the land. These huts may be of mud and thatch, or merely shelters of grass and leaves, sometimes not more than three or four feet high and primitive in the extreme. Other workers live in mud huts also built by themselves. Some of these on waste land are rent free, others pay a small ground rent. Very few live in *pucca* houses except those who live in the mill lines. All the mills house a proportion of their people. The majority of the mill-housing is a considerable improvement on the private types. One mill has a large settlement comprising houses of different kinds and

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here the standard has steadily advanced with each new type constructed. For these mill chawls it seems the practice to charge a rent somewhat lower than the economic rent.

Of the families studied the rents paid worked out as follows :

Rent per month	As. 12 or less	Re. 1 to Re. 1-8	Rs. 2 to Rs. 3	Rs. 4 and over	Rs. 5 and over	Nil
No. of families	149	203	80	9	3	35

The rents paid by three families was not recorded.

The total average rent works out at Re. 1-3 a month. It will be seen from the fact that 35 families pay no rent, and as many as 149 pay less than 12 annas, usually 8 annas, that village conditions still obtain to a certain extent. The reason for this is that the mill workers do not live in the city itself but on the outskirts, or even in the surrounding villages, some coming as much as two and three miles to work each day.

Wages. The standard of wages in Sholapur is considerably lower than in either Bombay or Ahmedabad. To compare these rates and the comparative cost of living, general reference may be made to the *Reports of the Bombay Labour Office.*

All the mills in Sholapur give a grain allowance, which seems greatly appreciated. The district suffers from frequent scarcity and general shortage of rainfall so that the prices of the staple foods vary considerably from year to year. All workers who have not missed more than four days' work out of the full working month are entitled to this allowance, which is eighteen seers¹ of *jowar* and two seers of *dhal* to each adult worker and half rations to each half-timer. A fixed amount, Rs. 2, is deducted from the workers' wages irrespective of the market price which was about Rs. 3 at the time of the inquiry, but would be much more in a bad year. Inquiry revealed that this grain allowance was highly valued and indeed was sometimes the main inducement to take up factory work. The women when questioned seemed to receive this allowance regularly and indeed implied that they could not live without it on account of the smallness of their wages. This statement conflicted somewhat with the statements of two mill managers that the labour was very irregular in its attendance. According to mill registers of two mills the number of women attending the full number of working days in the month was only 56 per cent and 53 per cent respectively. The truth seems to be that while over 50 per cent fail to put in a full month's attendance, very few are absent more than four days in the month, in order to get their grain allowance.

A few *mukadams*, or forewomen, earn from Rs. 12 to Rs. 15 or Rs. 20 per month. The average wage including all classes, as shown by the women's own statements was, Rs. 8-6 per month; according to returns furnished by the management of two mills it was Rs. 8-8, including grain allowance in both cases, so the agreement is very close, and the women's statements are evidently to be relied upon. The average minimum wage for all departments employing women in the above mills was Rs. 4-14 per month and Rs. 6 per month respectively.

¹ One seer = 2 lb.

According to the statements made by the women of their average earnings they were as follows :

Wages	Rs. 7 and under	Rs. 8 to Rs. 9	Rs. 10 to Rs. 11	Rs. 12 to Rs. 15	Over Rs. 15
No. earning	194	164	86	31	6

One woman had newly joined work and had not received any salary. It was worthy of notice that she did not seem to have any idea of how much she was entitled to for a full month.

From the above figures it will be seen that 92 per cent earn less than Rs. 12 a month, 74 per cent earn less than Rs. 10, and 40 per cent less than Rs. 8 a month. That is Rs. 6 in cash wages plus the grain allowance. This result may be compared with the figures given in the *Families' Budgets Report* of the Bombay Labour Office, page 15, namely :

Out of 290 women :

137 women earned less than	...	Rs. 9 per month.
139 " " between Rs. 9 and	12	"
9 " " " " 12 " "	15	"
5 " " " " 15 " "	18	"

making 95 per cent earning less than Rs. 12 a month, which agrees with the results obtained by the present inquiry. According to the 'Report on Wages and Hours in the Cotton Mill Industry in the Bombay Presidency, August 1923,' published in the *Bombay Labour Gazette* of May 1925, to which we were referred for particulars by one mill, the average of wages actually earned was Rs. 8-9 per month as against a possible Rs. 10-11 for the full working month. These figures, it is stated, do not include the grain allowance; therefore another Rs. 2 per month must be added to each of the above figures, making Rs. 10-9 and Rs. 12-11, respectively. Rs. 10-9 as the figure for actual average earnings is considerably higher than that given in August 1928, either by the women themselves or the mills furnishing returns, mentioned above. Whatever the cause it is evident that the average wages to-day are considerably less than those given for August 1923.

Comparing the scale of wages here given with those of Bombay or Ahmedabad it will be seen that they are very low indeed in Sholapur.

Economic Independence. Where the women were married, they without exception handed over their wages to their husbands. If widows, the pay was handed to the male head of the house if such existed. Of the 86 women who were not living with their husbands 80 retained their wages in their own hands and six handed them over to a male relative. Out of the 80 who kept their own wages the following table shows the number of persons supported by each. These were in every case the woman's own children.

No. of cases	...	...	...	1	2	3	4	5
No. of persons supported	...	...	...	12	28	30	8	2

On an average each woman supports 2.4 persons. While in the case

of wives their wages may be held to be supplementary to their husband's earnings, the figures quoted above refer also to all those women upon whom falls the whole burden of supporting the home. They cannot possibly be made adequate to supporting an adult and two or three children. That this is a cause of direct and very severe temptation to women who are without husbands was brought to my notice several times by being brought in contact with its results.

Family Earnings. Besides ascertaining the women's wages an attempt was made to discover the total income of the families. Too much reliance cannot be placed on these figures as there was no means of verifying statements as to the total family earnings, and it is evident that in some of the larger families every source of income was not given. Yet when all allowance has been made, the fact that 87 per cent of the families are shown as earning less than Rs. 30 per month, and that 58 per cent of these have from four to eight persons in the family, the low standard obtaining is clear.

The average for all families, irrespective of size, was Rs. 22-6, excluding grain allowance. In cases where there were workers in the family, other than the woman concerned and her husband, particulars of where they worked were not obtained. Thus the amount of grain allowance in these cases could not be calculated, so it has been omitted in all cases. Where the grain allowance is given it is sufficient for the needs of one person throughout the month as far as this grain allowance is concerned. There may even be a small surplus if several in a family are receiving it.

The family incomes were as follows :

	NUMBER IN FAMILY									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Income below Rs. 10	5	6	7	4	...	...	...	...	...	...
" " 20	2	17	39	58	24	7	...	...	...	...
" " 30	...	10	41	69	64	31	12	1	...	...
" " 40	...	...	7	6	14	15	10	5	...	...
" " 50	...	...	...	...	2	3	...	1	1	...
" " 60	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
" " 70	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3

One joint family of 13 members were earning a combined income of Rs. 90. Fourteen cases were rejected as doubtful. These represent cash wages in every case.

Debt. Thirty-one of the women questioned did not admit to being in debt, but the unanimous opinion of those who knew the local situation seemed to be that debt was universal. Besides those incurred for marriage, religious ceremonials, etc., including old debts incurred before joining the mill, purchase on the instalment plan seems very common and most clothing seems to be bought in this way.

Family Budgets. As previously stated, no attempt was made to go thoroughly into this subject as it was too complicated a one to be handled

in the time at my disposal. Also the Government report is available. Twenty typical budgets were collected by way of comparison. Four of these were rejected as incorrect; sixteen were tabulated. According to incomes they are as follows :

INCOMES	NUMBER OF BUDGETS	AVERAGE NO. IN FAMILY	
		Adults	Children
Below Rs. 10 ...	2	1.5	2
„ 20 ...	10	1.9	1.6
„ 30 ...	3	3.3	2
„ 40 ...	1	3	3

PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE BY INCOME GROUPS

	INCOMES			
	Below Rs. 10	Below Rs. 20	Below Rs. 30	Below Rs. 40
No. of Budgets ...	2	10	3	1
Food ...	50	47	43	55
Fuel and Light ...	14	16	13	10
Clothing ...	17	15	15	10
Rent ...	17	6	11	11
Drink, Tobacco, etc. ...	...	4	11	10
Miscellaneous ...	2	12	7	4
Total ...	100	100	100	100

Christians. Some effort was made to ascertain the position of the Christian women in the mills. Their number is small and they are distributed through three mills; nevertheless no complaint was made of unfair treatment or discrimination against them either on the part of the mill management or on the part of their fellow-workers. One or two hold the position of *mukadam*, or forewoman, in charge of a varying number of women and these earn good salaries according to Sholapur standards. On the other hand, some of those working in the mills are widows and on the low wages obtaining they cannot keep themselves and their children and a roof over their head. They also feel the need, as do all Indian widows, of protection. For these reasons there are some sad cases where

character and self-respect have been lost in an attempt to get protection, house-room and food.

Conclusion. Except for the fact that the whole scale of wages is lower, general conditions as regards women in mills in Sholapur may be taken as typical of those in the cotton industry as a whole.

Their earnings are absolutely necessary to the family, as the husband's wages are not sufficient to give even a bare subsistence.

The better paid men, such as weavers, rarely allow their wives to work. Among them is quite a proportion of women who have to support themselves and their families unaided.

Not a great many come from the hereditary weaver caste as this is still a flourishing occupation. They have been driven to the mills by scarcity and by the attractiveness, often illusive, of a cash wage.

Their children are quite definitely worse off than those of the hand weavers or the agriculturalists. In the former case the workers are in their own homes and can keep an eye on the children; in the latter the children can often be near their parents and are in open fields.

APPENDIX III

HANDLOOM INDUSTRY, SHOLAPUR

BY IRIS WINGATE

ACCORDING to the Government Families Budgets Report, 1928, 'There is no other important occupation for the working classes in Sholapur except cotton spinning and weaving'.

In different parts of the city colonies of handloom weavers are to be found. Speaking generally, the men do the weaving and the women and children do all the auxiliary processes. The bulk of the weavers are Sadis, a Hindu weaver caste, but a certain number of Mohammadan weavers from the adjoining State of Hyderabad have also settled in Sholapur and there they ply their trade. These are newcomers, but the Hindu weavers have been there for many generations. As a rule the weaving is done in workrooms varying in size from the largest, which employs 300 hands to numerous small workshops where two or three men are employed, the former having fifty looms, the latter usually four. All are pit-looms, even those up on the first floor. The entire production is confined to women's *saris* and bodice pieces. All the yarn is got either from the local mills or in the bazaar, in which case it may come from Bombay or Japan or, in the case of artificial silk (much used) or gold thread, from England or France. All the dyes come from Germany.

As no power is used none of these workshops come under the Factories Act and hours of work depend on trade, usually from about 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with a more or less regular stop at noon and irregular rests in between. In many cases the primitive method of throwing the shuttle backwards and forwards by hand is still in use. In other instances an improved loom is used, which about trebles the output.

One workroom is run by a relative of Tikekar's, and displays the same ingenuity. All the machinery is modelled on modern textile machinery, but made locally of wood, tin and nails! He used to employ power, but has discontinued it and uses hand-power only, thus avoiding the Factories Act. He has another similar establishment outside the city which has a 'model village' attached. The women do reeling and pirn winding by the same method as in the factory, only the machine is turned by a man instead of power. They weave up to 40 and 60 counts. The place is a curious cross between the old loom industry and a modern mill. The wages were stated to be from Re. 1 to Re. 1-8 a day for weavers; it is all piece work. The women earn As. 4 to As. 6 a day. All the dyeing is done in a village nearby, where most of this work is done for the whole

of Sholapur. The workshop has its own shop in the town for selling its goods. In the largest workshop already referred to, the auxiliary processes are all done in the old primitive way, the warp is set up in the open street, every bobbin is wound separately by a woman, and it is the same organization precisely as the little four-loom cottages, except in the number of people employed. The earnings were stated to be As. 14 to Re. 1 a *sari* and it was possible to make a *sari* in a day. Women get As. 6 to As. 8 a day. Work hours were from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. Workers seemed to come and go as they liked; there were no regular shifts. A Bombay firm took the whole output. The light in the rooms was good, a contrast to many smaller homes where the people work in such darkness that it is hard to see how they can turn out good work. The women worked on the verandahs and in the open courtyard, and they had their children with them. Some of the people were from Hyderabad State. Each had to pay a deposit of Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 before being allowed to start work.

The four-loomed hut. This was the smallest number found and usually one or two outsiders were employed for the looms, the family doing the supplementary work, if there were enough of them. Wages are about Re. 1 a *sari*. Women get As. 2 for sizing if they are employed, and they can do two or three a day, making As. 4 to As. 6. They work from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with pauses for rest and food. One of the poorest weavers found had four looms which he worked himself with two hired men; one loom was idle. He supported thirteen persons, himself, two women, two men, and the rest children. The yarn was obtained from a money-lender who also took all the cloth made. They were weaving women's and small girls' *saris*. The men received As. 6 to As. 14 a *sari* according to the size.

The Tikekar type of reeling machine was met with occasionally. In one case about thirty women were working in a small room that was entirely filled with the machinery and the women. There was only very inadequate means of exit; the air was absolutely full of fluff and we all coughed violently on entering.

In another case of a large work-room, wages were stated to be Re. 1 to Rs. 2 a *sari*, and a *sari* took one to one and a half days to finish.

There were stated to be 20,000 looms in Sholapur, though this may be an exaggeration. Very few are purely family concerns. Women weavers are occasionally met with, but not often. Weavers all require additional help and it is customary to have young boys, either one to each man or one among four or five looms, to assist the weavers. These are paid direct by the master and not through the weaver. The whole industry struck one as prosperous and very well organized. They did not consider that they suffered any competition from the mills. It is certainly true that they do not manufacture the same things.

Mohammadan Weavers. These, as already stated, are immigrants. They were driven by poverty from their State and are settled on the outskirts of Sholapur. They are altogether poorer, and their work is more primitive than that of their Hindu neighbours. They hang on the outskirts of a closely reorganized guild and find competition severe.

One house had six looms and another sixteen, in rooms surrounding a

courtyard. The looms in the former were of the old type with the shuttle thrown by the hand, thus taking four days or so to finish. In the large establishment both varieties of loom were to be found. Real and artificial silk were both found in use. The yarn was Japanese, which was stated to be stronger than the local product. Both men and women worked at the looms and were paid Re. 1-8 per *sari* on the old type and As. 14 on the new. The men made about five *saris* in a month on the former, the women four to six. Women on other work got As. 2 to As. 8 a day. Hours were more or less from dawn to dusk. Some of the women employed in the larger establishments were of the Hindu weaver caste.

One house was found where the looms were standing idle because the people could not afford to work them. Two men in the family had gone to the mill, though so far only as extra hands. There were six adults and some children in the family. The women were all *purdah*, so none of the Mohamadan women could get any work outside their own house.

Both Hindu and Mohamadan complained that the price of *saris* had dropped from Rs. 13 a *sari* some years ago to Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 now, so that the work was not nearly so paying as it used to be. If it is due to the competition with the mills, it is indirect and not direct, as the mills do not manufacture *saris*. On account of the demand for variety in the borders, and their comparative complexity in design it does not pay so well to make *saris* with cloth as with silk.

APPENDIX IV

HANDLOOM WEAVING IN INDIA

BY R. MANOHAR LALL

WEAVERS are to be found in every nook and corner of India. Every village, every town, has its weavers, the majority of them weaving specialized types of cloth. Benares is known for *saris* with gold texture. The towns in the Central Provinces, in Gujarat and in Maharashtra weave a number of distinct types of cloth, but South India is really the bee-hive of the handloom industry. In the Madras Presidency alone there are more than 170,000 handlooms working, employing about a million people. This Presidency produces about one-third of the total handloom production in India. Besides *saris*, skirt cloth, *khaddar*, shirtings and suitings that are produced on handlooms, there are other cloths also which are specially made for export, such as *lungis*, Madras handkerchiefs, *safas*, *gajis* for Burma and Singapore, and the turbans and Arabian ticking exported to Arabia, Persia and Africa. These articles are manufactured out of cotton, silk, wool, coir, kora, aloë, jute and plantain fibre. The Central Textile Institute at Madras is the centre of light for the weavers of the Presidency.

In the Punjab there are about 200,000 adult weavers actually engaged in the trade, the total number of handlooms at present working is 176,393; of these only 2,973 are improved types of looms. The value of their total production for one year is about five crores of rupees, and the goods are exported to Persia and Afghanistan also. In the Punjab itself are consumed large quantities of cotton, silk and woollen fabrics. There are four District weaving schools and one central weaving institute in the Punjab.

In Bengal are manufactured the famous Dacca *saris* which have been made for hundreds of years from handspun yarn of 80 to 300 counts as well as many other varieties of cotton cloth. The Central Government Weaving Institute at Serampore has introduced a special type of fly-shuttle loom which is extensively used.

In 1921, in Bihar and Orissa, including the Indian States, the annual output, manufactured mostly out of coarse counts, was of the value of 5 crores, while the consumption of mill cloth, both foreign and inland, valued 7½ crores.

Altogether it is estimated that at the present time there are not less than 20 lakhs of looms at work, supporting about 60 lakhs of people. This industry is therefore easily the most important industry after agriculture, and employs the largest number of people engaged in any cottage industry in India.

It may be mentioned that sufficient yarn is not being produced in India because a large amount that is produced is consumed by the mills themselves which in the majority of cases have their own weaving sheds. In spite of all that is imported from Japan, England and other foreign countries, the yarn is too dear for handlooms. In 1916 and the years that immediately followed it the raw material was not sufficient. The *charkha* has an unlimited possibility in this direction. The handspun yarn is rapidly improving and it is expected that within a short time a large majority of the spinners will be able to spin yarn of desired counts. There are about five million *charkhas* in the country. *Charkha* spinners should not only be able to earn for themselves, but also keep the weavers from entering the mills in big cities. It is in order to provide mutual help for the spinner and the weaver that *khaddar* is based on hand-spinning, and it is also intended to eliminate middlemen so far as the transactions of villagers are concerned.

In the minds of those who are not in touch with the weavers and their trade, there is an impression that the handloom is passing away, giving place to power looms, in spite of the increasing amount of propaganda that is being carried on for the *charkha* and handloom *khaddar*. But the fact is that it is still holding its own in the throes of a great struggle. In 1924-25 the total consumption of piece goods in India was reckoned at 4,930 million yards, of which 36.5 per cent came from Indian mills, 35.5 per cent from imports, and 28 per cent from handlooms. This 28 per cent meant 1,380 million yards.

The appliances and looms of the weavers are as primitive and crude as their methods, although the textile departments of the different Provincial Governments are doing their very best to introduce new types of looms and methods to enable the weavers to increase their earning capacity. A brief description of some of the crude methods of the weavers may here be given.

There is more than one way of preparing yarn for weaving, but the common method is as follows:

The yarn that is brought from the bazaar in bundles is immersed in the sizing material, made of rice or wheat gruel, and dried in the sun. It is next stretched on pegs and with the help of a big brush the threads are separated, the excess of sizing material removed and a smoother appearance given. The necessary quantity of yarn is then wound on warper bobbins and fixed on a small wooden creel. The threads then are drawn through the reed for the purpose of keeping each thread apart. These are further passed through two healds, each having an alternate thread passing through it. These healds are lifted alternately by the foot for the shuttle to pass through.

Another method is to put the hanks of yarn on a *charkha* or swift and wind on reed or bamboo spools on the spindle of the *charkha*. The warp is then prepared by fixing sticks in the ground in rows two by two facing each other at a distance of three feet or so, while a woman carrying two short sticks with spools attached unwinds them as she walks, passing the yarn in and out of the sticks. The yarn may be warped from ten to twenty yards: if it is ten yards, she may have to walk about ten miles to finish the job; usually she has to walk an average of about 15 miles. The



WAYSIDE SPINNERS

warp is then taken off and either immersed in a sizing solution for about twelve hours and then stretched in the sun to be dried, or it may be stretched by means of strong pegs on the ends and the size applied with a brush. The weaver then brushes it to separate the threads from each other. After this it is attached or knotted to the old warp which is still fixed on the loom, and pulled out; this process saves the time that would otherwise be taken by the drawing in of the yarn through the healds and the reed.

Still another common way of preparing warp is by winding the thread on pegs on a wooden frame. This process is used for indoor work and is done sitting. Here in place of walking, the left hand of the woman covers almost as much distance by moving back and forth as the feet cover by walking in the other method described.

II

The following detailed information has been collected from different provinces to enable the reader to form an idea of the actual expense incurred and the number of days spent by the weavers in manufacturing articles of different types, and to give an idea of the difficulties and handicaps from which they suffer.

Only some representative facts concerning the actual cost of running a handloom are given, as obviously it will be impossible to deal with the matter fully in this short report.

1. In the Central Provinces, a nine yards cotton *sari* with silk border requires:

				Rs.	A.	P.
Yarn, dyeing and sizing	...	...	...	...	3	0 0
Border silk	...	...	...	...	5	0 0
				Total Rs.	8	0 0
Sold in bazaar for	...	...	...	Ra.	10	0 0

This *sari* is prepared in four days including dyeing, sizing, etc.; the average earning is Rs. 8 per day.

In this region a movement is on foot to stop fellow weavers from using the fly-shuttle; in fact in one village nearly all those using the fly-shuttle are socially boycotted. The reason is that with a tendency to sell as much goods as possible in order to earn more, the quality of goods is not maintained on account of hurry; owing to overproduction the margin of profit becomes extremely low and the merchant does not care to receive the weaver in his old courteous way. By curtailing production, that is, by using *kaitha* (hand-thrown shuttle) instead of *palta* (fly-shuttle) it is hoped that the prices will soar, giving higher profits with better quality work; for the common impression is that hand-shuttle cloth is stronger. It may be mentioned here that in the towns and villages the women usually wear set types of *saris*, so that each town knows what to make. For the same reason the lower classes buy from the local market. If the weavers curtail production the prices in that market will rise. Moreover goods made in Khapa (Central Provinces), for instance, will sell in the Khapa market only and not in the Nagpur market. Similarly, Nagpur goods will sell

in the Nagpur market only and not elsewhere for the *panchayats* of the weavers will not allow such a thing.

The Hindu weavers here have introduced a system of stamping for their goods. They have elected their own committee whose job is to mark goods of a particular quality and grade. A charge of one pice is made for such a 'trade' mark. This means that a uniformity of quality is maintained and no further questions are asked by the merchants or middlemen. Thus, if Nagpur *saris* become noted for durability and this mark remains, the continuity of demand for their goods will ensure the livelihood of the weavers.

Once when prices began to go down, they readily joined a co-operative society. From the society they received advances in yarn, etc., and sold their goods through it. But in better times they began dealing with middlemen who offered a little more, and they would steal society yarn, get inferior goods made in out-stations, bring them to the society in order to get them passed as their own production manufactured out of the yarn provided by the society, and thus receive good rates. The society then resorted to the use of some distinctive marks, but the weavers used the same marks falsely. Eventually the co-operative society marked the cloth while still on the loom. This Weavers' Co-operative Society, however, had to be liquidated, for they would persist in their dishonesty. Similarly, when the rates for yarn went down in the bazaar, they immediately purchased this and the yarn of the co-operative society would remain unsold.

2. Central Provinces.—

			Rs.	A.	P.
Thirty-two hanks warp white	...	...	12	4	0
Sixteen hanks weft white	...	...	7	10	0
Dyeing warp	...	...	3	0	0
Dyeing weft	...	...	1	8	0
Winding on bobbins for warp, per bundle	...	...	1	0	0
Warping and drawing through heald, 160 yards	...	...	2	0	0
Winding on shuttle for weft at one anna per piece					
of eight yards. 160 yards cost	...	...	1	4	0
Warping for border	...	...	8	0	0
			Total Rs. 36 10 0		

This takes one day. The whole process of preparing the warp and weft and beaming takes four days. The winding of weft for shuttle for 160 yards, which is done by women or young boys, costs one anna for a quantity sufficient for a piece of eight yards: therefore the total amount paid for this purpose is Re. 1-4. If done by a woman of the family, she winds every day enough for an eight yard piece. The merchant pays him at an average rate of Rs. 2-10 per piece of eight yards, less As. 1½ as commission to the broker. (A merchant will not buy except through a broker and this will be paid to him by the merchant.) Therefore the total amount earned by the weaver is Rs. 50-10. Out of this he gets for himself Rs. 14 for 20 days' work—at eight yards per day—plus two days that he himself spends on the preparation of yarn. For the other two

days' work he pays in cash which should not be counted. Four full days are taken for the preparation of yarn for a length of 160 yards. Thus for 22 days' work he earns Rs. 14 or for 30 days' work Rs. 19-6. As in the majority of cases his children or his womenfolk do the winding for the warp and the weft his cost of labour of Re. 1 and Re. 1-4 may be deducted and added on to his income, which will be a total of Rs. 21-5-6. On account of family sickness, festivals and other social obligations a weaver usually does not work for a full 30 days; he either works shorter hours or takes some days off and thus he may properly be said to work at an average of 26 days in a month. His earnings, therefore, will be Rs. 18-8 and his daily average earnings As. 10 a day, which includes his profit as well as the wage.

- (a) Husband and wife and three young children: average income: As 10 per day.
 (b) Husband and wife, and two young children: As. 10 per day.
 (c) Husband and wife and one boy of 12 years: Re. 1-2 per day.

These Mohammadan weavers who weave cotton only are having a hard time. Unlike the Koshtis (Hindu weavers) they are not trying to introduce a trade-mark under the supervision of a central body and to maintain a first class uniform quality. The Hindu weavers have decided to use 60s. with pure silk edging from 10 September 1928.

3. Central Provinces.—A small town, full of Hindu weavers manufacturing Maratha *saris*; about a thousand sold in the bazaar every day. Husband and wife working together can earn As. 12 to Re. 1 per day by using a fly-shuttle. (Among these people there is a movement to stop using the fly-shuttle in order to curtail production and earn more profits. Moreover, the purchaser here considers hand-shuttle cloth stronger than fly-shuttle.)

4. Maharashtra.—Ordinary cotton *saris* of nine yards take one day to weave, and two days for the preparation of yarn equals three days. One day's wage for weaving is As. 12. Total cost of this *sari* is Rs. 3-8 or Rs. 3-12 and it is sold for Rs. 3-12 or Rs. 4 respectively, net profit being about As. 4

Thread for shuttle bobbins is prepared by women and usually kept ready for a full month's use. For such work a woman earns between Rs. 6 and 10 a month.

Example: A man uses an automatic handloom; three *saris* of this kind can be woven in one day. He uses Japanese yarn which he—like scores of others—considers stronger and smoother than Indian mill yarn. He does not manufacture *khaddar* because there is no demand for it.

A *sari* of nine yards with artificial silk threads running through it costs Rs. 8-2 and sells for Rs. 9-6 and net profit is usually between As. 6 to As. 10. This *sari* takes one day to weave; its yarn requires four days' preparation.

He has to sell his production at low rates because of competition due to fly-shuttle, for the supply exceeds the demand.

5. Gujarat.—To one weaver the merchant supplies the artificial silk yarn and the weaver is paid Rs. 50 as wages for a length of 175 yards of *sari* cloth which takes one month to complete. Besides the help of his

wife and children, he employs a winder on Rs. 15 per month; pays Rs. 3 for sizing and As. 10 for drawing-in. He therefore earns Rs. 31-8 per month.

Another makes Burmese *lungis*. For 75 yards he gets Rs. 40. The man has one servant, a boy. He himself does not work the loom, but works on the warping frame from which is prepared the warp beam. He had a large number of bundles of ready-made warp lying in his room and from that one gathered that he paid more time and attention to selling prepared warp in the bazaar. It was his wife who worked the loom and finished the whole piece in two months. She takes so long a time on account of the complicated design.

It was said that the Hindu weavers called Khatri were heavy drinkers, one reason for this being fatigue. Their servants start work at about 8 a.m. and finish at 5 p.m. Almost all these weavers get their material from the merchants. The gold thread used for *saris* is made at Surat.

A third is the proprietor of a factory having 60 looms. He paid an average of Rs. 15 per month to winders while the lowest amount earned by a weaver was Rs. 20. On an average his men earned between Rs. 15 and Rs. 30, though some earned as much as Rs. 50 per month.

A few years ago, here as elsewhere, the handloom industry was flourishing. Even now, not only *saris* but *lungis* for far away places such as Akyab and Singapore are manufactured. In the hope of earning higher wages or profits some Mohammadans of Benares have also come down in large numbers. These workers from Benares complained of hardship from lack of work. As people could not afford to purchase their goods, the merchants paid them low wages. They do not sell their goods directly. All the material for *safas*, *lungis* and *dupattas* is provided by the merchants. They have only to size and dye it.

6.—A *safa* of 11 yards (used by Hindus in Surat on occasions of marriage) if completed in two days will bring them about Re. 1-15, that is, about As. 14 a day. A man working very hard can earn Re. 1 per day, but it is not done usually. The merchant sells the *safa* in the bazaar for Rs. 4, but pays for the cost of material and As. 10 for the drawing-in work at the heald. In the case of *dupattas*, this man is paid Rs. 2 which is considered fair, because the *dupattas* are cut out of a length of 75 yards.

The man who furnished this information was teaching the art of weaving to his son. He said that on an average he earned Rs. 15 per month, but it appeared that he really got Rs. 20 per month on an average.

The rent of the one big room with a tiny cell attached to it was Rs. 9 which was shared by three families for the purpose of accommodating looms and cooking places.

7.—Two brothers with two servants worked in a room with four looms, for which they paid Rs. 12 rent. Their old mother helped by winding; the same complaint was made, the lack of sufficient orders. One loom earned As. 14 per day. The demand for their *safas* and *dupattas* has gone down during the past seven years.

These men being Mohammadans spent more on food and clothing, while their womenfolk, unlike Khatri women, could not help them much

in their work because of purdah. The Khattris spent a good deal on drink.

It may be mentioned that an additional As. 4 per yard is earned when the warp is of real silk and weft of artificial silk, and As. 8 per yard for all real silk work.

A. makes bed tape, three yards long and two and a quarter inches wide, takes three hours, cost of yarn, etc., for 125 yards is Rs. 4 and sells for Ra. 7-8. So the amount gained including wages is Rs. 3-8. For working nine hours a day this length will take a little over five days, which means earnings of As. 11 a day.

	Rs.	A.	P.
8.—Carpet weaver. Carpet, size 6 ft. x 6 ft., sells for...	20	0	0
Cost	14	0	0

Profit, including wages for 4 to 6 days' work Rs. 6 0 0

A beam for 50 towels can be prepared by a boy in one day. If sent to the bazaar, charges for it are Re. 1-8. An adult or a boy can weave 12 towels of a yard each in a day of eight hours. Wages and profits are Rs. 3. For 50 towels the amount earned will be Rs. 12-8. In other words, if a towel-maker devotes three days to the preparation of yarn and four days to weaving he will earn Rs. 12-8 for seven days' work. His average income for one month calculated at 26 days' actual work will be Rs. 47-12 or Re. 1-9 per day.

In a small handloom factory, women reelers got As. 6 a day; weavers got Re. 1-4 a day. One of them being a woman earns only As. 10 a day.

Two women and one man engaged in gold and silver border weaving earn among themselves Re. 1-8 a day.

9.—Bengal. Like many other places, there is hardly any *khaddar* weaving here. The weaving is entirely of *saris*, and these are of two principal varieties, namely those with gold thread and those without. They are all cotton or mixed. The hours of work are eight to nine daily. The monthly earnings of a weaver may be reckoned at Rs. 17 to Rs. 18.

The cost of material is Ra. 4 per *sari* without gold thread, and the cost of labour may be roughly calculated at Rs. 3-8-0. The average price is Ra. 8-0-0 so that profit on each finished article does not seem to amount to more than As. 8 at the most. The women folk here usually do not help in the preparation of yarn, etc. They say that their general condition is bad on account of the competition of cheap foreign goods and the higher qualities of Benares stuff.

10.—South India. For 20 yards of *sari* cloth, taking three days to weave, warp yarn Ra. 3-8-0; weft yarn Ra. 5-0-0; total Ra. 8-8-0; wages for weaving Ra. 3-0-0; gold work As. 10½; winding As. 5. The total cost Ra. 12-7-6. Sold at the rate of As. 11 per yard, the net profit for three days is Ra. 13-12-0, minus Ra. 12-7-6 = Re. 1-4-6; for one day about As. 6.

11.—South India. Silk *saris* of nine yards, to be sold in bazaar for Ra. 130-0-0. Weaver's net profit Ra. 20-0-0. The *sari* takes eighteen days for weaving and four days for the preparation of yarn, warp and weft, dyeing, sizing, etc. The weaving of this *sari* is a slow process; because of the check pattern, time is spent lifting the warp-threads to make the design.

A *sari* having gold lace in addition to checks in the middle part requires the service of two boys, who keep lifting the warp-ends for the border. Such a boy is paid at the rate of An. 1 to As. 1½ per day. Here in a small room the weavers had two looms working, one on top of the other.

Wages of the weavers range from As. 12 to Re. 1-4. Cotton twists are imported from England and gold lace from France and synthetic dyes also come from abroad. The profits must necessarily be small. Local competition and importation of foreign cloth add to their difficulties. The use of the fly-shuttle is discouraged for fear of breaking the fine twists.

Here the other main industry is dyeing, especially the red colour. Young girls tying knots on white cloth earn about As. 2 a day (As. 1½ per thousand knots) while a clever woman earns as much as As. 6 a day; when these knots are untied after the piece is dyed, they leave white dots on the red ground. The women, here as elsewhere, help their men folk by unravelling the skein and preparing the warp.

One big community called the Saurasta Brahmins migrated from Gujarat and Malwa a few hundred years ago and now devotes itself entirely to weaving and dyeing.

12.—South India. About 20,000 in the weaving industry. Between As. 6 and As. 8 is the average wage for a weaver. Silk weaving is done by Saurastras, cotton weaving by other castes. The former are engaged solely in silk weaving with rich lace brocades. Some of these cloths are used by Mohammadans in South India and sent as far as Afghanistan as prayer cloths and for marriage ceremonies. The price of pieces of four yards each ranges from Rs. 12 to Rs. 25. Cotton cloth of an extremely fine type is woven and embroidered. Both foreign and Indian mill yarn is used. Women help in subsidiary work of weaving. The tendency on the part of weavers is to be independent of the middlemen and to purchase their own yarn. Saurastras manufacture cloth mostly for Mohammadans. One or two young boys or girls are employed to lift the ends of the warp. A girl of eight was seen sitting at the loom quite late in the evening looking tired out.

These weavers work regularly with off-days on festivals. They earn a net profit of about As. 8 a day.

Here as in many parts of India, the weavers do not wear cloth made by themselves. Ordinarily they use mill-made cloth.

13.—South India. In a handloom factory here (mostly fly-shuttle) the weavers earn about As. 12 a day for nine hours' work. Women employed on reeling and winding earn about As. 4 to As. 5 a day.

The weavers working at home earn about As. 10 a day for manufacturing *angavastrums* and Re. 1-4 a day on *safas* used on marriage occasions. They are experiencing great difficulties because of lack of work.

A. has a small factory and sells a silk *sari* at Re. 1-8 per yard, spends for material and wages Re. 1-6 per yard and earns a net profit of As. 2 per yard; pays wages about Re. 1-0 per day.

B. makes an eight yard pure silk *sari* in eight days with the help of his family and gets Rs. 12 as making charges. Material is supplied by the merchant. Therefore daily wages were Re. 1-8; but his average daily wage is usually not above Re. 1-4-9 if he takes an average of four days a month off.

C. makes a silk *sari* of eight yards in 15 days with the help of his family and receives Rs. 20 as wages. The material is supplied by the merchant and the wages are paid according to the weight of the silk plus the weight of the gold used in the texture. Though according to calculations this man earns Rs. 40 per month, actually perhaps he does not earn more than Rs. 34-12 per month.

D. is a rich man, buys his own yarn, and manufactures *saris* with the help of his family and servants. He pays Rs. 35-0 to his servant who makes two *saris* of eight yards each and two bodices of about one yard each. This amount can be earned in a month even by a young boy who knows weaving; but actually the weavers take about a month and a half to complete the job.

E. living as a tenant in the big house of the above-mentioned rich weaver, said that he could easily earn Rs. 35-0 as wages for a silk *sari* of eight yards. The *sari* he showed was of gold with a square of two feet solid gold ground in the middle, and gold flower designs on both ends.

14.—South India. Skilled weavers earn As. 7 a day for weaving a carpet of 8½ x 54 inches. Those who are less skilled earn As. 4 to As. 5 a day for smaller sizes.

If a skilled weaver weaves and sells his own carpet, his expenses and earnings are as follows:

			Rs.	A.	P.
Cost of 10 lb. yarn for warp and weft	...	...	4	12	0
Cost of dyeing	...	...	4	2	0
Wages for reeling	...	...	0	2	0
Wages for weaving two carpets	...	...	0	14	0
		Total Rs.	9	14	0
The two carpets sold in bazaar realize	...	Rs.	10	8	0
Net profit	...	...	...	10	0
Net profit for one carpet	...	...	...	5	0

Therefore a carpet weaver can earn about Re. 1-8 as wage and profit in two days, that is, As. 12 a day as wage and net profit.

15.—Mysore. A weaver earns Rs. 3-8 per loom per week for weaving *khaddar* which is about As. 8 a day.

16.—United Provinces. In a small handloom factory, the weavers were earning about Rs. 15 per month; *gharans*, *dosuti* and towels, etc., were being woven. Out of 80 looms only 30 were being worked because of insufficient orders. The manager who was in touch with the surrounding country said that the weavers were having an extremely hard time. This was corroborated by a Mohammadan weaver who has a small factory in the town. He said that the independent weavers in the town could hardly earn As. 6 a day. These latter made *khaddar* and sold in a small market ten miles away. A Mohammadan cloth seller sold a piece of 12 yards which hardly secured him a profit and that with the help of his wife. If the yarn is provided by the shopkeeper, he earns a profit of As. 3 to As. 4 on the whole piece. If the weaver himself takes his goods to the bazaar and sits on the pavement or at the place where the weavers sell their goods every evening, he does not earn even half, the

amount of the profit earned by the shopkeeper, for the buyer knows that the weaver, unlike the shopkeeper, cannot afford to wait as he must sell to buy yarn or food for the next day. So he sells at hardly any net profit. If the *mahajan* (moneylender) supplies the yarn, he purchases it at the rates he thinks proper and the weaver remains a slave. The *mahajan* advances him money for marriages, funerals and other ceremonies at an exorbitant rate of interest and the debt remains there from father to son for generation after generation.

17.—United Provinces. The goods of one *durrie* weaver are in great demand; the striped ones are for local use only and the small ones are sent to Kaaba, the holy place of Islam in Arabia, where the pilgrims (Hajis) purchase them as prayer mats, and bring them back to India as souvenirs. He gets his yarn from the shopkeeper or the agent. For a *durrie* of 6½ feet by 3½ feet he is paid Re. 1 for making charges. If he has only a few to make, he and his son work together and are able to make two in one day, earning about Rs. 2 per day. When the demand is large, he employs servants to whom he pays As. 8 per day, and on each *durrie* he earns a net profit of As. 8 a day. There are few other *durrie* makers of this kind in the town. When asked why other weavers do not take to making *durries* he replied that they did not know how to weave one properly; they would not be able to produce the same texture, thickness and evenness as he could. He had no complaint to make and he looked quite satisfied.

18.—United Provinces. Interviewed a group of 12 weavers; all complained of the inadequacy of profits, and want of ready cash. All have a very hard life. The profits hardly ever exceeded As. 6 per day. One weaves eight yards of *khaddar* cloth in a day of ten hours, and his expenses for a length of 52 yards warp, and weft of 16 are Rs. 13, plus As. 10 paid to a woman labourer for preparing bobbins for weft, plus Re. 1-12 for sizing, and warping by stretching of sticks on the ground, which process takes about two days. So preparing a piece of 52 yards of *khaddar* a man works nine days. *Saris* are not woven in this town. The only other kind of cloth that is manufactured by them is *lahgna* cloth (used for women's skirts) and although the profits are a little higher, they have to put in more yarn and labour.

F. can hardly earn As. 6 a day and if he himself sells the cloth in the market he can earn a profit of As. 1½ to As. 2 per piece.

G. begins work at 4 a.m. and goes on working till 9 p.m. and is able to earn As. 8 a day.

It must be remembered that the monthly income of a weaver will be much less than 30 days' earnings per month because of sickness, festivals and social ceremonies.

Most of these weavers have taken up other work, such as cooly work on building and roads; others have become cart drivers. They never heard of co-operative societies or an industrial inspector.

They all use the ordinary primitive type of loom; they have not the cash to get it fitted with a fly-shuttle which should not cost more than Rs. 6. They did not know who was going to teach them to use it, for they could not spare time and money either to earn or pay for a new article, being too poor and living from hand to mouth.

They do make *gabroom* for shirting, etc., but there is not much demand, as mill-made cloth is preferred. These weavers cannot hope to go on at this rate, as they do not specialize as the *sari* makers do in other parts of India. They are really suffering a great deal. All use mill yarn.

19.—United Provinces. H. by working nine hours a day with the help of his wife makes two dozen dusters a day. The contractors—the middlemen—sell such dusters to a local mill for Re. 1-14 per dozen. The weaver earns wages only As. 12 per day. Three hundred yards of warp make thirty dozen dusters.

Thin *jharans* (dusters) have a width of 26 inches. The weavers sell their own product at the rate of Re. 1-4 per dozen. As they usually make 50 dozen every month, the total amount received by them is Rs. 75. As told by the weavers themselves, they work 25 days in a month and manufacture two dozen a day. Their wage per dozen *jharans* is As. 4, so for two dozen a day they earn As. 8 daily; which means Rs. 12-8. Further, they say their net profit per dozen dusters is As. 6½. Reckoning at six pias for 50 dozen it would be Re. 1-9. Therefore the total earning in a month of twenty-five days is Rs. 14-1. Their average earning did not appear to go beyond Rs. 15 per month.

On actually calculating the cost of yarn for a warp of 300 yards of cloth and weft, besides sizing, winding, beaming and weaving, it was found that a weaver could not earn more than As. 14 a day including his profits.

Here, as in many other places, if the weaver himself goes to sell he wastes half a day and sells his goods at about cost price, for the purchaser knows his real economic condition. If, on the other hand, he takes it to the merchant he has not even the slightest chance of bargaining, for he too knows him well. He must, therefore, sell at a very low rate, but he saves his time and energy.

These people are Hindu weavers called *Khatri* or *Sutiyas*.

In this locality the Mohammadan weavers earn between As. 8 to As. 10 per day for weaving ordinary *durries*, and As. 12 per day for *jharans* and towels. If they purchase their own yarn, usually they earn a net profit of As. 1½ to As. 2. They are having a hard time in spite of hard work.

20.—United Provinces. The weaver manufactures 36 yards of *khaddar* of mill yarn (cost of yarn Rs. 6) in about twelve days and sells for Rs. 12; thus earning As. 8 a day. This little amount includes his profit, if any, and the wages of his wife and himself for the preparation of yarn—sizing, warping, drawing-in and weaving. The actual weaving of 36 yards takes six days of eight hours each.

21.—Punjab. The weaver was supplied with yarn for warp and weft and his remuneration for turning it into a 20 yard piece of cloth was Re. 1-4, the weight of yarn being three seers, consisting of 500 threads (ends) for warp. He wove this length in three days, working ten hours a day; thus earning As. 10 a day. For calculating his monthly wages, consideration must be paid to the off-days taken for festivals, family sickness, etc.

1. makes *AAs* (plain white thick bed sheet or bed cover) 126" x 29". Length cut into half and sewn together and turned into the proper

size of 63" x 58". Weight of the hand-spun yarn, one and half seers. The cost of preparing the *khes* is Re. 1-8, and it is sold for Rs. 3. It takes one man four days to prepare the warp and weft, sizing, etc. Therefore a man earns As. 6 a day. If he has a wife to help him, he will earn As. 10 to As. 12 per day, for in that case a *khes* will be ready in two days.

J. along with his wife makes honeycomb towels, weight of one being, four *chhataks*. They take one day for preparing the yarn and two days for making six towels. Therefore he makes six towels in three days or two towels in one day. As the making charge for one towel when yarn is supplied by the customer is As. 5, the husband and wife earn As. 10 a day between them.

K is a young man who prepares coarse quality *khaddar* of 20 yards, with no one to help him, and the wages earned in five days were Re. 1-6.

22.—Punjab. The weaver earns As. 12 as a day on a piece of 12 yards *khaddar*, making it in two and half days. The shopkeeper earns a profit of about As. 4 on each piece. He complained of hard times. He wants ready cash. He himself cannot sell at a profit. The people will not buy *khaddar*, hence his difficulties. He uses mill yarn and his impression is that only a few weavers use hand-spun yarn, the reasons being, firstly, that it is not available in sufficient quantity, and secondly, if available, it is not brought to the weavers for sale. Mill-spun yarn is sold in the bazaar, but not the hand-spun which could be used at least in *khes* and *durries*. As already said he thinks that hand-spun yarn is not being produced in sufficient quantity. The yarn that is spun by the women in the town is usually consumed by themselves for getting small *durries* or *khes* made for home use. The village women usually get their cloth made for wearing purposes.

The following list gives an idea of the approximate cost of the different kinds of looms that are recommended for use with their approximate production per day :

	LOOM	Cost	PRODUCTION PER DAY	
			Rs.	Yards
1	Pit-loom fitted with fly-shuttle slay ...	51	8 to 15	
2	Fly-shuttle loom on frame ...	50	8 to 15	
3	Automatic handloom ...	360	20 to 25	
4	Jacquard attachment fitted on country loom ...	260		6
5	Jacquard attachment to fly-shuttle loom ...	265		10
6	Jacquard attachment to automatic loom ...	300		15

III

As one looks back over this sub-continent of India, picturing the hundreds of thousands of weavers plying their looms, and their women-folk unravelling the skeins, and winding and warping the yarn, one can see a real struggle for existence. One can see it on their faces. The

majority of them work extremely hard and long hours to eke out a bare living, living from day to day, depending for the supply of yarn and the sale of goods on the merchants, traders and middlemen. Their poverty does not give them enough time to look around and derive inspiration from those who are better off, to take up new ideas and suggestions. Illiteracy and ignorance add to their misery. If there is no sickness in the family, social and religious ceremonies and other occasions take away much of their valuable time. In case of sudden prosperity, the temptations to strong drink and gambling may take away the extra sum that might be kept for the rainy day. About three years ago in a big city of the Central Provinces the Koshtis (Hindu weavers) along with others began to indulge in *sulla* (cotton speculation), at a time when they were not prosperous, and as a result they lost heavily and were obliged even to sell their possessions. About nine years ago when they were prospering, strong drink and excessive expenditure on marriages and funerals took away most of their savings. While on the one hand the competition of mill-made cloth diminished their earnings, and the world conditions their real wages, on the other hand their primitive crude appliances combined with equally primitive methods of work have pressed them down more and more. They are often unaware of labour-saving devices. If some are too poor to purchase fly-shuttle slays that can be fixed on country looms costing about Rs. 5, others have not even heard of them. This kind of loom alone will increase their output by 50 to 100 per cent, while their effort and cost will be much less. At present the weavers are in the clutches of the brokers and middlemen who charge a commission of As. 1½ to As. 2 per rupee from the weaver and the same amount from the merchants, with the result that the handloom cloth becomes dearer by nearly 25 per cent simply because of the middlemen. It must be mentioned here that a weaver's constant effort is to extricate himself from such an arrangement, but the truth is that the broker is much more clever than the ignorant weavers. The latter have neither the time, the patience nor the means to be independent of him. They want ready cash for food and yarn. The merchant who advances yarn sells it to the weaver at a bigger profit and similarly buys the ready-made goods at his own rate, with the result that the weaver suffers both ways. He has no organized market either for buying yarn or selling his cloth. He is at the mercy of the *soucar*. Ignorance, illiteracy and poverty are at the root of their real difficulties.

It may be mentioned here that the cloth which is in direct competition with mill cloth is of medium and coarse counts. Silk and cotton gold embroidered *saris*, *lungis* and Madras handkerchiefs, and scores of different types of other articles are still free from direct competition. The difficulties of their makers may be simply due to the low purchasing power of the intending buyers. Hardly any advertising on modern lines is done to bring the costlier goods to the notice of those who can afford to buy; ordinary quality goods can be and are sold locally, but this is not the case with specialized goods of dearer type. A wider market is needed. But without technical knowledge and efficient and rational methods of work the weavers will continue to work harder and harder and, comparatively speaking, will be less and less able to withstand the

onslaught of the competition of the power-loom, and the contracting of the world economic situation.

During the War the handloom industry suffered greatly for want of the dyes that used to be imported from Germany.

If the weaver's time were not taken up by the process of preparation he would have more time to devote to the actual weaving. Though this would throw the womenfolk into partial unemployment, it would tend to bring down the prices of their goods, thus creating a wider market and more demand. One of the reasons why pure *khaddar* is not being bought in such a large quantity as it ought to is that it is dearer than mill-made cloth in spite of all the extra expenses that are inevitable in the way of overhead charges, insurance, taxes, etc.

Whatever improvements may be deemed to be necessary in other directions, nothing can be done unless there is a sound and effective organization. Things are being carried on in a crude and haphazard way throughout India. The same pit-loom that was being used two thousand years ago is still in use and the methods are equally primitive.

These are some of the main difficulties on account of which the weaver is suffering greatly. But there are other causes also over which he has no control, such as : the exchange ratio at 1s. 6d. instead of 1s. 4d. per rupee which gives an added advantage to foreign manufacturers ; the fluctuation in world prices of cotton ; the simplicity of life and the low standard of living in India, and the low purchasing power of the villagers who form 90 per cent of the population of India. Not only the handloom industry but all other cottage industries in India are suffering simply because the purchasing power of the masses is so low.

IV

Why is it that in spite of the competition of mill-made cloth and other circumstances the handloom industry has not died out? Some of the reasons are : (a) The poverty of the masses, which has prevented foreign cloth from being imported in large quantity. (b) There are still places left where mill-made cloth has not yet penetrated. (c) Cloth made on the handloom is still considered more durable. (d) Cloth, especially *saris* which are made in the villages where the purchasers live, must be purchased locally either for convenience or out of necessity—on credit or on payment made in kind. (e) There are certain kinds of cloth to be used on ceremonial occasions which must be made on a handloom. (f) The complicated designs of the borders of *saris* and the comparatively smaller number of any one pattern required prevent the mills from undertaking their manufacture. (g) The handlooms that formerly manufactured *saris* or other ordinary cloth for purposes of wearing apparel have now begun to manufacture towels, dusters, plain thick bed sheets and bed covers for which there is a growing demand. A cotton mill may get such types of cloth manufactured by the handloom weaver and may sell it as its own product. (h) There are thousands of looms in India which manufacture a number of different types of cloth for export only and for which the demand is constant, such as, *lungis*, Madras handkerchiefs, *safas*, etc. for Burma, Singapore, Arabia and other foreign places. (i) *Khaddar*

which must be of hand-spun yarn and must be made on the handloom, is being used in much larger quantity than a few years ago. In some parts of the country it has infused new strength and enthusiasm in the hearts of thousands. This *khaddar* movement was born in 1921 and it has given work to thousands of spinners and as a result about twenty-four lakhs of rupees worth of *khaddar* is sold every year. It is estimated that there are four million regular consumers of *khaddar*. But the number of those who buy handloom cloth made of mill yarn is eighty-eight millions. (j) One main reason why the weaver in certain parts of India continues to make a living is the *dastur* (custom) of wearing a particular kind of cloth or *sari*. (k) Weavers being a caste the tendency is to stick to their caste work even if it is unprofitable. While some work as daily wage earners on the looms of middlemen or merchants, others are too poor to free themselves from the clutches of the money-lenders, or the merchant who supplies yarn or money and receives manufactured goods. Quite a large number have joined the nearest textile mills; others have taken up entirely different work. (l) Mill yarn has also exercised a steadying influence on the handloom industry as the majority of the weavers consider it to be stronger and smoother than the handspun yarn.

It will be realized that the economic condition of the handloom weavers in the country is extremely unsatisfactory, and this state of affairs is not of recent growth. Apart from such fluctuation as is common to all economic transactions, the difficulties of the weavers have continued to increase with the rapid introduction of mill-goods. During the Great War they did a roaring business, but it has been dwindling since. If it were not for the non-co-operation movement, coupled with the boycott of English cloth and the great strides made by *khaddar*, quite a number of them would have been driven out of employment long ago. It was not, however, only on account of the movement for buying indigenous goods that they were saved; it was due mainly to the circumstances mentioned above.

V

The Government have done a good deal in the past to ameliorate the economic condition of the weavers, notably the Madras Government, who from the beginning of the present century have been making systematic efforts to improve their lot by introducing fly-shuttle slays, better heads and reeds, frame and automatic looms, cheaper dobbies for designs, Jacquard machines for intricate patterns, combined warping and sizing machines; and generally by improving the primitive looms of those who cannot afford to incur expenditure on purchasing the best kind of looms. First peripatetic weaving parties were formed in 1913 and 1914 which went from village to village, demonstrating the working of the fly-shuttle looms. The weaver's own pit-looms were fitted with fly-shuttle slays, and other improved appliances, and the parties stayed a sufficiently long time in each place to get things actually started. Such places were revisited to see whether the weavers were carrying on their trade on new methods or not.

All the bigger provinces have Government textile institutes which provide instruction in all the processes of handloom weaving, dyeing and

textile testing, hosiery, etc. They arrange for the manufacture of weaving appliances and serve as a permanent museum for the display of improved appliances, machinery and products. These institutions are like laboratories where experiments are conducted along all lines of handloom industry for the benefit of the weavers. Here both the literate and the illiterate are given training to enable them to be better workmen either in their own homes or as managers of their own handloom factories.

The Government have, in addition, organized weavers' co-operative credit societies in order to provide the necessary facilities. In some places where weavers' co-operative societies supplied the members with yarn and accepted the goods thus produced, the members dealing with the society were not honest. In times of difficulty they would co-operate freely, but whenever they found the bazaar prices a little higher than what were paid by the society they would begin to take orders from the merchants in the bazaar and occasionally make a cloth of inferior quality for the society. Similarly they bought yarn from the bazaar if the prices were lower even by a few pies. There is no doubt that they resorted to such tricks through poverty and lack of education.

Though the Government has thus been encouraging the use of the handloom, their efforts have not borne much fruit.

VI

The general impression created on the mind of the writer is that the economic condition of the weaver in India is bad. His average daily earnings cannot be said to be above As. 10. Those manufacturing specialized types of cloth or of cloth above 40 counts are better off than those who weave ordinary cloth which suffers through the direct competition of mill-made cloth. The economic problem of the weavers is capable of solution, and although already serious attempts are being made to improve their lot, they deserve still more serious attention and protection. The appointment by the Government of an All-India Committee to study the condition of handloom weaving and to suggest measures for its improvement is very desirable.

The weaving industry ought to be progressive to be able to keep its head above water and therefore should be conducted with all those business methods which are used in organized industries. To achieve this education among weavers is necessary, but in the initial stages a co-operative society is equally indispensable, especially to provide new appliances and the application of scientific methods and to put weavers in touch with new markets and their agents. There are practical difficulties in keeping the weavers combined in a co-operative society year after year. It would therefore be better if the Government industrial inspectors for a stated period^c devoted themselves to the study of different markets in India and abroad, and as a result guided the weavers of their respective localities as to the types of articles that might be in demand, or for which markets might be created. Just as the Commercial Department of the Government through its Trade Agents supplies necessary information to those who seek it, the inspectors should guide the weavers in the sale and manufacture of their

articles and in everything that pertains to the weaving industry. As far as the supply of yarn or the advance of money is concerned, a few *sowcars* may be specially licensed to conduct such business, their books of principal and interest and the supply of yarn to be made subject to official inspection, the idea being to see that the licensed *sowcars* advance money on a fair rate of interest and yarn at market price. The greatest difficulty that arises is in the disposing of the goods. The *sowcar* must accept them at market rates, but he must be helped in turn in disposing of his goods by the inspector. His will be a steady and large business and with a fair profit. Though the non-licensed holders will be free to do business in this industry, the licensed *sowcars* will be the accredited agents of the people as well as of the Government in this respect. The weavers will be made to feel quite at home in dealing with them. Co-operative societies have not been very successful in the past, mainly because of the comparative business inexperience of the co-operative inspectors and also their bureaucratic irresponsibility which is absent in the case of merchants who pay their undivided attention to their business. Another reason for the failure of co-operative inspectors to tackle such business matters is the absence of personal contact in other things besides the official business in hand—the kind of relationship that a *sowcar* has with his customers. The markets are shrinking and production is increasing owing to improvements in looms and methods and the greatest caution is therefore needed to steer the handloom industry safely. To attain the desired end, the creating of markets for new designs and new types of articles, study of foreign markets, foresight, knowledge and general business acumen are necessary for the successful conduct of the most important cottage industry in the country.

That the handloom industry requires protection there is no doubt in the mind of the writer. The details of such protection should be worked out carefully. Weavers might be granted cheap loans, and *takavi* loans like those given to peasants might prove extremely useful in the case of handloom weavers also.

The conditions of work in handloom factories are usually not bad, but occasionally houses are met with where men and women work in dark, dingy and stuffy rooms. Children help their parents in preparing the yarn and on those looms on which *saris* of complicated designs are manufactured they are often made to work for long hours. Some children were noticed to be working at dusk when they should be out and playing, and their faces showed extreme fatigue. When compulsory education comes into force, such children will be free from this task, at least during the day.

The womenfolk are constantly busy. They run about from children to cooking, to preparing the yarn, or in the case of some, to weaving. If the handloom took its warp from a central warping factory, and if such a factory were started in every big weaving centre of India, the womenfolk would not have to work, and the money which they earn now would go to the warping factory. But they would then be able to devote the time thus saved to weaving on an extra handloom or to some subsidiary industry such as gold thread preparation and dyeing in fancy designs; or they might be taught some home industry having a local market.

It may be repeated that the weavers ought to be organized in order that they may purchase yarn cheaply and without the interference of middlemen. The thing that requires the most careful attention is the sale of their goods. What they want is more and more work and opportunities to utilize the labour of their families. The aim of the weavers should be to weave more and more of set and specialized types of cloth, for herein lies their salvation to a great extent. Therefore the first essential is the finding or creating of markets. The Salvation Army, which makes specialized types of goods, have well-conducted depôts in important centres of North India, besides selling goods by advertisement and by catalogues. This method of marketing goods can be followed in a modified form in the case of a large number of specialized types of the goods manufactured on the handloom.

The weaver communities deserve the sympathy and moral support of Christian Missions in India, even if no other form of help can be given. For the village homes ought to be kept intact against the drift to the big industrial areas in search of work in cotton mills, and the family life of the weavers in the cities should be prevented from disintegration due to lack of work. The Missions will thus be tackling the problems in the right way, that is by keeping the people independent and by preventing them from crowding to the slum areas of Bombay, Ahmedabad, Cawnpore and other big manufacturing cities. It is better to strike at the root of the evil than to do patchwork later on when it is not effective. The industrialization of India is not possible in the same sense as in the west nor is it desirable. Denmark can give many lessons to India.

The training of Indian Christian men as weavers, except when they desire to have such training for the purpose of qualifying themselves as demonstrators, weaving-masters or managers of small handloom factories, is not desirable. In girls' schools, attended mostly by village girls or by daughters of poor men, the teaching of handloom weaving should be compulsory, so that these future wives may be an economic help to their husbands either by weaving cloth for their own requirement or for sale. For an average Indian Christian woman there is no home or cottage industry which is more paying in the long run, for in the case of lace-making, embroidery, etc., the articles made are usually meant for sale only, while handloom weaving will be of equal service for home consumption. Though such girls or women will be taught more than weaving of simple cloth, it should be considered a Christian duty by the Missions to advise them to use as much and whenever possible, handspun yarn, enabling them to give opportunity to millions of men, women and children who can earn at least one meal a day by spinning on the *charkha*. Those acquainted with the abject poverty of India will realize that even one anna a day, if that is all that is earned by hand-spinning at present, is not a sum to be considered negligible.

APPENDIX V

THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF WOMEN WORKERS IN COTTON MILLS

BY R. MANOHAR LALL

THIS report is the result of an investigation conducted among the women mill-workers of an industrial town in the Central Provinces for the purpose of securing reliable information regarding their wages and expenditure, hours of work, working conditions inside the mills, the socio-religious environment in which they live, and such other matters as would throw light on the position of women workers in the industrial life of India.

Six *bastis*—residential areas—inhabited by the Mahars¹ were selected for this enquiry. They have settled down in this city, as in other industrial towns of the Central Provinces, in order to earn more money, their life in the villages being one of great poverty. There they did not own any property. Even their houses were built on other people's land, which could be pulled down any time by the landlords. On enquiry they stated that they would never have come to the city if they had had any property in the villages—land, houses or cattle. Those who were not weaving tilled rented land. Obviously they could not all take to weaving as it was not paying, even if they adopted it in addition to the tilling of the land. If every Mahar made his own cloth, there would be no market for his surplus and the produce from the land was not enough to keep him and his family. So they have sunk deeper and more hopelessly into debt incurred for betrothal, marriage and funeral ceremonies, and other religious and social customs. And hence those of the more adventurous kind drifted to the cities where they began life anew, getting hard cash for their labours; paid off their debts and settled down, about 90 per cent owning their own houses built on Government or Municipal land given on lease. Now they have no incentive to go back to their villages, but occasional visits are paid to see their friends and for festivals, ceremonies or business. Quite a number have gone back to assist their relations at the time of sowing and harvesting, and it is one of their desires to return permanently, buy land and settle down. But this is not always possible in the case of Mahars. After having thus given a brief background

¹ A low caste of Hindus, their jobs in villages being weaving, field-labour, cultivation and carrying of carcasses. In the cotton mills of the Central Provinces they work side by side with the higher castes, and in this city their strength is about 60 per cent of the total number of mill operatives.

of the community from which the womenfolk have come who work in cotton mills in large numbers, it will be easier to follow this inquiry, which covered 378 women, 8 of whom were unmarried. Most of these worked in the reeling, winding and folding departments,

Reeling Department. If a woman works at 12 counts, she earns Rs. 5 per bundle.¹ In a day of ten hours, usually not actually working more than 9 hours, a woman can make about 20 bundles of 12 counts. The average number of working days in a month is 26, minus days of absence for sickness and other reasons.

Though a woman can earn as much as Rs. 12 to Rs. 13 per month the average earnings are Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 per month, and Rs. 9 per month or about As. 5 a day may be considered a reliable average for all working women.

Winding. If at 20 counts, a woman can wind about 1½ bundles a day, earning about As. 5, rates for other counts being adjusted to bring earnings to about the same figure. The average earnings come to about the same as in the reeling departments. In artificial silk winding the rate is about As. 8 per bundle, a woman preparing about one bundle per day. A half-time girl earns Rs. 4-12 per month for five hours' work a day. The total number of such girls working in the folding departments is very small.

In the Nagpur cotton mills the women work in an atmosphere which is not much humidified. Mostly water is used for damping the thread. The sheds are less noisy than other departments and are clean and well ventilated. But in many other parts of India the working conditions for women workers are very far from ideal. Dust, fluff, and noise affect their health considerably.

These women get up at about 4 in the morning, light the fire, put something on it, go and wait their turn at the latrine or go a distance in the open, wait their turn again at the water tap, or struggle at the well, come back and prepare the meal, look after children and feed them. A woman wakes her husband at 5-30 a.m.; he returns from outside at about 6 a.m.; takes tea or something that was left over from the previous evening, or some freshly cooked food, and leaves for the mill, reaching there about 6-30 a.m. The wife, having finished her washing of utensils, locks up the house—if nobody is at home to look after children—and carries a child and the food, reaching the mill at 7 a.m. It is not in every mill that a woman is allowed to come late. At 11-30 a.m. she comes out, goes to the tap, gets drinking water, and spreads the food in front of the husband in some corner of the mill compound. She waits while he eats. He smokes or goes away to chat to friends while she eats her breakfast of food that is meagre and un nourishing for a mother, in fact for any one; washes the plates and is easily in time to go back to work after having fed the child. She comes out of the mill a few minutes earlier than her husband, rushes home, fetches water and prepares the meal. The husband wants something to eat immediately after his return. After eating this he goes out,

¹ Eight hanks = one reel ; three reels = one bundle ;
one bundle = forty small reels.

perhaps to the bazaar, and she starts preparing the evening meal; according to the personal observation of the writer she is hardly ever free before 10 p.m. at night. Hers is an unending life of drudgery with no recreation. Even on festivals she is naturally the one who works most. All her hardships are due firstly to abject and desperate poverty and secondly to ignorance. And yet, in spite of what has been said above, when the writer suggested to the different groups of women the reduction of working hours, they protested vehemently, as this step would bring down their earnings considerably and that would be calamitous. But, they said, they would be extremely happy if the income remained the same and the hours of work were reduced. One woman said that in no circumstances should the hours be reduced seeing that hundreds of widows depend for their livelihood on their mill work. Another woman complained that no one sympathized with the women workers in their strenuous work at home and at the mill. The strain of wifehood and motherhood made them look quite old at 30 years of age.

As mentioned above, 378 women were covered by this inquiry. Information was sought under the following five heads:

1. How many are self-dependent.
2. How many help others.
3. How many are adding to their husbands' wages.
4. How many have relatives to help with housework.
5. How many young children per woman.

It was found that only 91 out of 378 women were self-dependent. There was no one to help them in case they were thrown out of their jobs. There were 20 women who worked to help others. Two hundred and seventy-five women, or about 73 per cent, were adding to their husbands' wages. In other words, 295 women, or 78 per cent, worked either to help their relations or husbands. Out of these 378 women, only 140, or 37 per cent, had relatives to help with house work.

These 378 women have among them 638 children under 12 years of age, or 1.7 children per woman; 114 or 30 per cent had either no children or none under twelve; 97 or 25 per cent had one child each; 23 or 6 per cent had four children each; 19 or 5 per cent had five children each; 4 or 1.7 per cent 6 children each, and 3 or 1.3 per cent 7 children each. Besides the facts given above, the following information was also gathered individually and from groups of women living in the different *bastis* of the city.

Almost the whole of their earnings was spent on food and clothing and payment of their long-standing and unending debts. If any money is saved as a result of the earnings of more than one member of the family, it flows into other channels. If not spent on drink and gambling by the men the social rivalry will oblige them to spend more on marriage or funeral ceremonies, not without the addition of further debts. Their saving usually takes the form of jewellery.

Their usual food consists of boiled rice, or *chappaties*, pulse or vegetable fried in oil and occasionally some pickle, or chutney. It has been noticed that if a family man earning Ra. 20 a month begins getting Ra. 40 per month as a result of working in the weaving departments, the

quality of food and clothing does not rise proportionately except in the case of children who are perhaps given a little milk to drink, though in general he is able to look after his family in a little better way. Usually he will continue eating the same quality of food and clothe himself, in the same old way, except during marriages or festivals. This absence of proportionate rise in the standard of living is due mainly to ignorance and lack of education, and also to his past accumulation of debts which must be paid off as soon as possible. No appreciable change takes place even if a man by reason of his becoming a *mukadam* (foreman in charge of about fifty men) begins drawing about Rs. 80 per month. The quality of his food does not rise in proportion, nor the number and quality of his clothes, but such a man feels quite in a position to marry a second and a third wife. The more wives the merrier because they are an economic asset, in so far as they get employed in the mill and earn enough for their own livelihood. It must be remembered that the inquiry was confined to the Mahar community only, a typical mill-working community scattered over the industrial towns of the Central Provinces and Berar. A man working in the weaving department, where he earns more because of piece work and better rates, usually has a great desire to own a house of his own, to excel in social ceremonies and go to places of pilgrimage.

In reply to questions regarding drink, the women said that they never drank except for three evenings during the confinement period. As for their menfolk the following information was given by different women :

1. The husband drinks occasionally—usually when offered by friends or at festivals and funerals.
2. The husband quarrels with his wife on some pretext or other if prevented from taking a drink any day; the wife has therefore allowed him to drink daily.
3. The husband, two grown-up sons and a widowed daughter work in the mill. The widow earns for herself and her daughter of fifteen. The income of the sons who are married and living with their parents is spent in the house. The father contributes Rs. 5 per month for food, the rest of his earnings, Rs. 25, is spent on drink.
4. The husband a drunkard, she works to maintain the family.
5. The husband a total abstainer—probably belonging to a sub-caste, prohibited from taking strong drink and meat.

On inquiring whether they would work in the mills or elsewhere, if their husbands earned enough wages, they said they would not, provided there were no debts to be paid off.

'If you got all the money you wanted, what would be the first thing you would do? What is your chief ambition in life?' On the supposition that they got Rs. 1,000 each, they said that the first thing they would do would be to pay off their debts; secondly, they would immediately leave off *oily* or mill work; and thirdly, they would open some business in order to be independent.

Their chief ambition was to live a happy and contented life.

In reply to the question 'What would you do if turned out of the mill?' they said they would work as :

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1. Coolies in the streets.
 2. Coolies on road repairs.
 3. Coolies on house-building works.
 4. Field labourers at harvest time.
 5. Sellers of fruits, etc.
 6. Domestic servants.
- } Usually treated leniently by the
contractors.

In reply to the question 'Do you ever speak to your children on moral and spiritual subjects, in the way, for instance a Christian mother would according to her light?' they said that they do not. They, however, point to the pictures of the gods and goddesses and explain what is depicted therein. The women themselves learn from mendicant teachers or local men who occasionally give religious discourses. According to the light that there is in them, they do influence the lives of their children. Their example teaches them self-sacrifice, tolerance, charity, worship and family love, though the aim and object and the method may be different from Christianity.

It has been shown above that as a result of a woman, especially a mother, working in a mill, the home life of the family is destroyed. The father is away, the mother is away and the children are either left behind unattended, or if carried along to the places of working, inhale the dusty atmosphere of the compound of a mill, while in the case of jute mills infants and children of tender age play about under the machines and in the passages that are very heavily laden with dust and stuff. In a small number of mills provision is made for crèches, but the women workers through their ignorance are not making full use of them. The wages being low, the wife must earn to supplement her husband's income.

It is not fair to hold the employers of labour in India responsible for such a state of affairs, except to this extent that they should pay higher wages, if they can, and provide better working conditions. But higher wages must go hand in hand with a capacity to spend on appropriate and useful objects. Through education alone this consummation can be attained and simultaneous effort is needed from the Government and other agencies to hasten it. But it is essential that wages are raised first, even though they may for a time be wasted on unproductive and undesirable objects. The experience of spending will not only educate the workers, but having freed them from semi-starvation will enable them to spare energy for the higher things of life.

Probably organised industries in India will suffer no irreparable loss if women workers are withdrawn, for in quite a number of cotton mills that were visited by the writer recently throughout India, men work as winders and reelers and generally do the work that is commonly being done by women. The objection will be raised by the women themselves who will naturally be most unwilling to forgo the little amount so necessary for their bare living, especially widows and deserted wives who depend entirely on their own earnings.

The writer visited quite a number of institutions in different parts of India for the purpose of finding out what alternative occupation the women could engage in if turned out of mines and mills; but he did not come across any suitable home industry that could be taken up immediately

and by a large number of women, except *charkha* spinning. Already lakhs of women spin in their spare time and get *durries*, bed covers, towels and clothing woven by weavers. Other home industries could be adopted by women if they were not too specialized and technical, and the market not too small. One of the main difficulties is that cottage or home industries are as a rule the monopoly of respective castes and the few exceptions that are left do not afford much scope for profit. The Mission agencies have a great chance of doing lasting service. On the one hand industrial missionaries could devote themselves to the cause of the industrial workers in industrial areas, the women missionaries could open afternoon schools (for two hours only) in the localities in which the mill-hands reside, where they could teach plain sewing, some home industry, singing, games, and conduct infant welfare centres in co-operation with other organizations.

It may be mentioned that there are quite a number of places in India where Indian Christian or higher caste women earn about Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 per month by devoting a few hours a day to some industry or other, for instance, by making *azarband*—the silken or cotton bands for pyjamas and *silvars*, embroidering *qullah* tops—the cap inside a turban worn in North India, making small carpets by whisks of dyed jute fibres, gold and other lace making, Delhi gold embroidery on women's skirts, or shoes, or cutting and sewing of plain clothes on sewing machines, hosiery, knitting, fancy dyeing, etc.

The Punjab is the only province in India which has appointed an industrial instructress to organize industrial schools for the purpose of teaching crafts to women. Already keen interest is being evinced by women in this new and extremely desirable venture.

To sum up, it is the writer's opinion that the women of India must be kept away from the mills and their family life preserved. To effect this the wages of men workers and their standard of living must be raised, ignorance and superstition dispelled by propaganda and other methods, and more attention paid to adult education among women. The Mission agencies and the Young Women's Christian Association have before them an unparalleled opportunity for service in these directions.

APPENDIX VI

THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF WOMEN WORKING IN COAL MINES

BY R. MANOHAR LALL

THE writer recently had an opportunity of visiting quite a number of coal-mines in different parts of India. One of the many impressions left on his mind is that of a black mass of humanity—men and women—digging out the graves of their souls, living lives shorn of all that is beautiful, and, in many cases living degraded lives that are mainly sustained from the fountains of liquor shops, very conveniently and considerably provided by the Excise Department of Government. There are no arrangements for recreation, so, too often, the only diversions that are available are the liquor shops and prostitution. One sight that the writer saw, that of a couple of young girls, 16 to 18 years of age, dead drunk, and reclining against the wall of the liquor shop, was pitiable. It is not uncommon for women in these areas to drink, or occasionally to be compelled to drink, by their menfolk.

In some of the mining areas of Bengal and Bihar the miners can hardly be said to have any home life. Both husband and wife work in the mine. In the evening they are dead tired and are most unwilling to cook a meal, either for themselves or for their children. They purchase some parched grain (in some places such grain is soaked overnight in water and distributed at cost price or free by the mine owners because of the unwillingness of the workers to cook their meals) or extremely cheap bazaar stuff to eat in place of cooked meals. This food is usually washed down with the help of liquor. As the standard of comfort is extremely low, not much expense is incurred on clothing and the luxuries of life. Some mine owners provide good houses, others provide kennels unfit for human beings. As a result of ignorance, bad housing, lack of education, and the absence of healthy recreation, the life of the workers is far from what it ought to be. The vitality is low, because of insufficient and unsuitable food, and the excess of liquor and prostitution. So, instead of rising gradually in the capacity to earn more and growing more efficient they slide down the scale and get weaker in every respect. They are, therefore, considered to be the most inefficient miners in the world. The output per head is 328 tons per annum in the Transvaal, whereas in India it is less than 100 tons. It is no doubt true that the Indian miner is really an agriculturist and therefore can hardly be expected to come up to the level of the skilled miners of other countries.

The mines are worked either by the aborigines or by the imported cultivators of land. At the time of sowing or harvesting there is in many mines a shortage of labour, but it is not very serious. In some mines in the Central Provinces the labour must be imported from as far a distance as the northern district of the United Provinces. In the mine itself the *sirdar* or the contractor who provides the daily labour is paid a commission of six pies per rupee of the wages earned by such labourers. Those coming from other districts do not always bring their wives with them, so that in the case of a number of people temporary and undesirable alliances take place which tend to disintegrate family life. Those who have settled down in a mining area more or less permanently work together with their wives, or with women companions, the husbands digging and the women filling the tubs with the coal so cut. As the Government intends to withdraw all women from underground work within the next ten years it was thought desirable to give definite information about some of these workers. An inquiry was therefore conducted by the writer in a group of collieries all belonging to one company in a district of the Central Provinces. These mines are situated in the midst of arable lands, the villages being not far away from the mines and the workers apparently paying equal, if not more, attention to their fields than to the work in the mines. There seems to be no unemployment amongst the agriculturists of this district. If not busy in their fields, they are busy earning in the mines.

In connexion with this inquiry the following statistics and information were gathered:

1. The total number of women employed in all the collieries of the company was 883.
2. The proportion that came from a distance, that is, not living in colliery lines was 65 per cent to 75 per cent.
3. Probably 10 per cent are unmarried girls, who live at home with their parents.
4. A few of the women support invalid husbands, but generally, probably, in 80 per cent of the cases, their earnings go towards helping the support of the family.
5. They earn on an average Rs. 2-4 to Rs. 3 per week.
6. About 80 per cent of them work in the fields during seed-sowing and harvesting.
7. Most of the women who live in the surrounding villages have someone to look after their housework and children. If there is only one woman in the house, she does not usually work in the colliery, especially if she is a stranger in these parts. Such women with infants or young children secure work on the surface. They then frequently dote their children with opium, and thus prevent them from causing any disturbance to their work. There is no doubt that miners' wives have an intense desire to go down to the mines to supplement the income of their husbands.
8. If excluded from work in the mines, probably 10 per cent would go back completely into village life; the remainder would have to search for cooly work.
9. About 30 per cent work on the surface. The position generally of

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women workers in these collieries is that only some 20 to 25 per cent are professional workers settled on the collieries and who work regularly for four to five days per week.

The balance (75 to 80 per cent) are villagers who look upon the collieries as a means of supplementing their incomes by working in the mines when not engaged in cultivation or harvesting. By this means they are able to earn good wages in cash to purchase not only additional and better food for themselves and their families, but better clothing and little luxuries which would be impossible if the collieries were not available for them to work in.

They, therefore, are able to maintain themselves and their families at a higher standard of living than those who have not the colliery to fall back upon, and it has further to be borne in mind that in periods of bad crops the mines are an insurance against want and hunger.

In this area they are usually immune against victimization because there is always a shortage of labour here, and if they are in any way imposed upon, they can immediately go to another colliery to work. The result is that no subordinate imposes upon them, for if he did, he would immediately lose their labour. But they may be oppressed in other ways.

Another thing which is not uncommon here is for a man and his family, poor villagers with little or no land, to work hard in a colliery for a few years and to save sufficient to purchase land and animals. When they have attained that end, they leave the colliery permanently—or work just when they require additional cash. In this area, as in others, the women workers would not like to be turned out of their work, for naturally they require more money. The husbands should be paid a little more for their underground work to compensate for the loss of their wives' work. A few years ago there was no doubt a slump in prices, but the trade is getting better now.

It seems to me that ten years is too long a period to wait before the women are withdrawn completely from underground work, and I think that a period of five years would be sufficient to make the necessary adjustments.

In addition to the statistics and other information relating to the employment of women in the mining areas that have been put down above, further facts were obtained with the help of a man who has lived in the midst of these and the surrounding collieries for a number of years. It may be noted that the writer considers this mining area to be comparatively better than many other mines visited by him, for here sanitation and medical attention were better, and the district itself is a healthy one.

The following additional observations were made:

The women who worked in the mines got insufficient sleep and improperly cooked food due to fatigue and overwork, and as a result they were constantly suffering from some ailment or other.

Prostitution, mainly due to the nature of the work, is common. The *sirdars* and contractors oppress the women workers indirectly and in a subtle way till they yield to them. The men who come to the mine from long distances require a companion to fill the tubs while they dig the coal. This companion of course stays with the man as his wife till she is enticed away by another man, and so the deserted man gets another

deserted woman, and so on. It is believed that about 40 per cent of the women between the ages of 18 and 30 years—most of whom have never been legally married to any one—spend their lives as kept women. A large number of them have unfortunately the tendency to earn their living by prostitution. The absence of regular and healthy recreation and amusement, coupled with monotony and plenty of liquor, is a fertile cause of immorality.

Bribery takes various forms. It may secure a regular supply of tubs to fill for full work, or other favours. Sometimes it so happens that at the end of the week when accounts are made of the number of tubs filled up by the diggers and their companions, the clerks or *sirdars* who are against certain couples purposely deduct one or two tubs from their accounts and add them to the names of those who are favourites, or those who pay tips to them. As a result some couples lose As. 8 to Re. 1 per week. It may be mentioned that the wages are paid according to the number of tubs filled by the coal cutter and his wife or companion. A coal cutter in these mines is able to earn about Rs. 40 per month and sometimes more, but the worker who keeps the account hardly ever gets more than Rs. 20 per month, hence the temptation to earn by tips and bribery.

The women fillers go down in the mines after the men at about 9 a.m. and work about 8 hours, but on busy days they remain below till about 6 or 7 p.m.

Usually the women who go first get the tubs first ; it is not uncommon for them to wait for an hour or so before they get the tubs, as sometimes the number is not sufficient to go round. In either case they lose money and time.

In case of accident in the mines of this area the employers look after them properly as far as treatment in hospital is concerned. The coolies are too ignorant to put up a fight for compensation according to the Act. But when a mines inspector is informed of an accident, he takes proper care of the case. In case of a fatal accident the Deputy Commissioner of the district pays the case personal attention.

The houses in which the imported workers are housed are 6 ft. x 6 ft. These are no longer built by this company and the usual ones are 8 ft. x 8 ft. with a verandah. No latrines are provided. The women work underground, even when pregnant, and are given no maternity benefit. No trained midwives are provided.

The mining areas are the veritable black spots of India. With notable exceptions they are neglected by the missionary bodies. The people in the mines require more attention : industrial workers in the cities have a number of societies working for them ; but in some mining areas even the trade union people are not allowed to do their beneficent work. If it were not for the Mines Act and the Compensation Act the conditions of the workers would be worse. The Missions have been pioneers along many lines. Let them provide specialists for work in these areas and open child welfare centres, schools for girls and boys, and generally help the people to improve their economic condition.

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