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AN ECONOMIC SURVEY OF THE
WEAVING INDUSTRY OF ICHALKARANJI
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PREFACE

Ichalkarnji was a feudatory Jahagir in the Kolhapur State until its merger in the Bombay State on 1st March 1949. It is situated midway between Kolhapur and Miraj, and six miles to the south of the railway line connecting these two cities. It has an outlet which runs north to Hatkanagale, its railway station, which is six miles away. It is connected with Kolhapur, Miraj and Hatkanagale by motorable roads.

Although Ichalkaranji had made rapid progress in handloom weaving towards the close of the 19th century under the enlightened leadership and patronage of its ruler, Shrimant Narayanrao Babasaheb Ghorpade, who ascended the Gadi (throne) in 1892, it came into prominence as an important powerloom weaving centre during the decade 1930-40.

The main purpose in undertaking an economic survey of the weaving industry of this town was to attempt a descriptive and analytical study of the main influences governing the growth and development of a small town into a highly flourishing weaving centre of Southern Maharashtra. The choice of this centre for the survey was dictated by the fruitful possibilities it offered for the study of a number of important problems connected with the industry, such as the factors governing the location of the industry, the impact of the spirit of initiative and enterprise on the structure of the industry, the problems created by the existence of a technically advanced and more

efficient sector side by side with the comparatively backward sector of the industry, the problems of transition and the effects of governmental policies and controls on the pattern of development of the industry. With the data collected in the survey, these problems have been analysed and discussed. In the light of their analysis an attempt has been made to indicate the lines along which the future development needs to be reorientated.

The study of the industry which relates to the calendar year 1954 is divided into 8 chapters.

The first chapter traces the main stages in the evolution of the weaving industry at Ichalkaranji from its modest beginnings to the advanced stage which it had reached at the time of the survey and attempts an analysis of the main factors governing its location at Ichalkaranji.

The second chapter deals with the sources from which the industry secures its raw-materials. It also attempts a description of the processes through which yarn has to pass for being converted into marketable fabrics.

The third chapter is mainly based on the statistical data collected for the survey. It seeks to attempt an estimate of the size of the industry and deals with its various aspects such as labour structure, technical structure, capital structure, marketing structure, types of goods produced etc. It also briefly summarises the main conclusions derived from the study of the statistical data.

The fourth chapter attempts a critical analysis of the problem of conflict between the handloom and powerloom and indicates the lines along which the conflict should be resolved.

The fifth chapter analyses the working of the co-operative associations and other bodies working in the field of the industry. The sixth chapter deals with governmental controls and policies in relation to the industry ^{and} attempts to review their effects on it.

The seventh chapter indicates the lines along which the reconstruction of the industry must be attempted in the future.

The final chapter is intended to sum up briefly the changes which came about in the powerloom industry while I was completing the main thesis. The beginnings of these changes were broadly indicated by the statistical data collected for the survey. But the changes that actually occurred after the completion of the survey were on such a large scale that I thought it desirable to indicate their nature at least in a broad way.

The English translation of the questionnaire used for the survey has been appended as Appendix A. Bibliography has been given at the end.

I express my grateful thanks to Shri K.A. Bhosale, the then chief officer of the Ichalkaranji Borough Municipality¹

¹ In the chapters that follow the shorter form 'Ichalkaranji Municipality' has been used.

who helped me in carrying out the census of the handloom and powerloom karkhanas by placing at my disposal the services of an experienced clerk and a peon from his office. I also take this opportunity of thanking the Textile Commissioner, Government of India, the Collector, Kholhapur District, the various Associations at Ichalkaranji connected with the industry for having supplied to me the information available with them.

It is really impossible to name all the persons and agencies who helped me in different ways in connection with the survey. In addition to the statistical data collected from the completed questionnaires, I had to collect a good deal of non-questionnaire information from local persons connected with different aspects of the industry - yarn merchants, owners of dyeing houses, itinerant dyers, manufacturers of handlooms, owners of repair workshops, wholesale dealers in sarees, trade union leaders, members of the Managing Committees of the various Associations in the industry, small and big handloom and powerloom karkhandars and elderly people connected with the industry. My discussions with them were highly useful to me in meaningfully interpreting the statistical data. To all these persons are due my grateful thanks for having given me the benefit of their ideas and views regarding the industry.

Finally, I take this opportunity of expressing my deep sense of gratitude to my guide, Prof. N.V. Sovani, for the valuable suggestions and guidance he gave me in completing this work.

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