APPENDICES
APPENDIX - I

MOTURPHA

A tax on looms known as Moturpha was collected by the Company's government, since its inception in this country. The loom tax was up to 1820 termed as "Swarnadayam" included under the head of the Land Revenue. By the order of the Board of Revenue dated 1st June 1820, this loom tax as well as several other taxes were separated from the Land Revenue and entered under the new head called Moturpha. The weavers had to pay this tax during the Company's regime and it was a harsh one.

It is said that, in order to, encourage the weavers, the Company declared after its establishment of government in the Carnatic in 1801, according to which the weavers who enlisted as Company weavers were to be exempted from this tax. We do not have any source to show how many weavers actually were enlisted. Moreover, this loom tax was levied, demanded and collected from those weavers who did not come under the Company.
It appears from the Fort Saint George records that, "the tax levied differed not only in different districts but also in different parts of the same district while in some places the weavers enjoyed a total exemption from all tax."\(^1\) Moreover, there was no rule existed by which the rate was fixed by the commercial department. The rate always fluctuated as the number of looms employed varied and hence no definite arrangement could be made.

Goldington, Collector of North Arcot district, in 1844 states that there were 128 different rates of tax was levied on 5,828 looms in his district and he wanted the government to reduce the number of rates.\(^2\)

In some districts this tax was not levied. For instance, in Madura district from 1806 onwards, Mr. Peter, the Collector, says that this tax was abolished.\(^3\) We have a number of evidences in the

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3. *Letter from Madurai District Collector to the Board of Revenue*, 22nd November 1820.
Board of Revenue records to show that some looms were exempted from paying this tax as Enam looms to village Totis, Enam looms to Roman Catholic Church and Devasthanam looms. In the Enam looms to village Totis and Roman Catholic Church the tax was paid to totis and church respectively for their maintenance. The Devasthanam looms produced goods for Devasthanam and paid no tax to the government. Before 1856, there was no census of looms in the presidency. But for the purpose of levying loom tax, this number has been given in the Board of Revenue records. The looms were distributed throughout the region in a large number of centres ranging from capital city to small villages.

In Trichy district, for ten years from 1822 to 1831, the total number of looms on which tax levied was 7286 of which 589 looms were Enam to village totis, 19 were to Roman Catholic Church and the rest were levied the loom tax. For all these looms an average of Rs.4691-12-0 per annum was collected as loom tax for these ten years. The records further reveal us that

the loom tax collected from Tinnevelly district weavers from 1816 to 1820 was increased from Rs. 6651 to Rs. 16,061. This is because of the increase of looms from 3650 to 5484.

Mr. Cook, Collector of North Arcot furnishes the information that he had collected Rs. 7705 average per annum for five years (1816-1820) as loom tax from the weavers. An average amount of Rs. 30/- was collected from the Cumbly weavers for the same period.

The Tanjore district Collector, Mr. I. Cotton states that there were 1409 looms employed in the Nagore factory and 6737 looms by individuals. The tax collected from these looms an average of Rs. 10,042.65 per annum for five years from 1816 to 1820.

5. Consultations of Board of Revenue, 30th November 1820, Vol. 872, pp. 2544-5161.
6. Consultations of Board of Revenue, 29th May 1820.
7. Consultations of Board of Revenue, Vol. 870, 30th October 1820.
In the Coimbatore district, Mr. Whish, the Collector, states that this tax was levied only from 1829 onwards. For two years (1819 & 1820) he collected Rs. 59,091-1-3 as loom tax from the weavers. A meagre amount was collected from the Trichy district weavers. The average amount per annum comes to only Rs. 3068 for the period from 1816 to 1820.

In 1833, Mr. I. Dent, Collector of South Arcot, prepared a statement in which he gives the information about the loom tax collected for 10 years from 1822 to 1831. The net amount comes to Rs. 1,80,869-8-6 after deducting the salary of village toti, remission and the Devasthanam tax.

Usually, the loom tax was collected in one instalment in the month of October. But at times,

9. Letter from the Coimbatore District Collector to Board of Revenue, 28th October 1820, 6th November 1820.


tax remission was allowed to the weavers when they did not work till April. For instance, in Trichi district 13 weavers came and settled after the month of April in 1844. So, they were asked by the Collector to pay only one third of the tax. But the Board of Revenue instructed that this should not be a precedent to other districts. 12

Montgomery Martin, Collector of Tanjore, writes, that there were 16147 looms in Tanjore and the revenue realised from taxes on these looms was Rs.18,701.13 Thus if we compare this tax with 1820's, the amount is much higher. Moreover, the transit duties collected on cloths was amounted to Rs.1,05,063 in 1844.14

PETITION AGAINST MCTURPHA:

It is an interesting case in which a Vakeel by name Canagasabai Pillay, sent a petition to the Madras


14. Ibid.
government on behalf of the Cuddalore weavers, praying to discontinue the collection and refund the moturpha tax. 15

CONTENTS OF THE PETITION:

The authorities of the Fort Saint George's government were pleased to grant a Purwanah 16 to one Magoodam Nynar Muslim nominating him on 21st of July 1691 to be head of the Town of Cuddalore and its vicinity and authorizing him to colonize the said town with merchants, weavers and other inhabitants granting "Cowlnamah" 17 to them with his seal and signature thereto, declaring that they would may be subjected to the payment of any tax of any kind whatever to the cirkar, same duties on piece goods and cloths as per government order. 18 The weavers

15. Letter from the Collector of South Arcot to Board of Revenue, 20th October 1833.

16. Purwanah from the Persian - Meaning A License or Pass.

17. A promise on the part of the superior. Especially a document granted to a holder of land, specifying terms of tenure.

and others who were settled at Cuddalore enjoyed privileges for about a period of 134 years until 1826. In 1827 Mr. Drury, Collector of South Arcot District issued the Takkeed and collected Loom Tax from the weavers at Cuddalore, still even excepting the other traders from this tax.

The weavers at Cuddalore, therefore, through their vakeel, Canagasabai Pillay, submitted a petition in 1833 accompanied with the original Purwanah granted to the grantee and that of his Cowlenamah also, and requesting the government to refund the sums collected on account of loom tax in Cuddalore from 1827 and also the abolition of the same.

The Board of Revenue, after analysing the case very seriously, first doubted the authenticity of the document and then declared that there is nothing to show that the person who gave it was authorised by the Government of Fort Saint George to grant immunity from the payment of Moturpha to the weavers of Cuddalore. Finally, the Board passed orders stating
that the weavers should pay the Loom Tax and their original documents were transmitted to the petitioners.\textsuperscript{19}

**Conjeevaram Weavers' Struggle Against the Loom Tax:**

Conjeevaram was a principal weaving town in the Chingleput district. The weavers of Conjeevaram were famous for their silk and cotton piece goods production. For a long time, a considerable number of looms in Conjeevaram and villages in Chingleput district were exempted from paying loom tax and it was later found by Mr. Maclean, the then Collector of Chingleput in 1834. Moreover, the principal Collector of North Arcot District in his Extra Revenue Report for the year 1842 (Fasly 1251) attributed diminution in the duty on cloths in his district, in part at least to the emigration of the North Arcot weavers to the adjoining villages in Chingelput where their looms were free of tax.

\textsuperscript{19} Board of Revenue Proceedings, Vol.1389, 18-11-1833, pp.14539-14540.
This anomaly appearing to the Board to demand a remedy, in their proceedings of 26th January 1843, they communicated to the Collector of Chingleput to levy a tax on looms which had hitherto been exempted.

Accordingly, the Collector, issued orders for the collection of loom tax from the weavers of Chingleput. As a result, the weavers in Conjeevaram, about 4000 in number, resisted the recently imposed tax on them and submitted a petition in August 1843 to the Government petition number 1681 of 1843, in which they stated that the weavers had been exempted from this tax from long ago.

Then the government wanted to know from which year onwards they were exempted from the recently imposed tax. At last the government found a letter written by the Collector of Chingleput dated 23-12-1834 in which he states:

"After the most particular enquiries it appears they have no valid ground or document warranting exemption. On the contrary, it is ascertained that
they actually paid Moturpha prior to the year 1780 and
that subsequent to the war (i.e., with Hydar) the
collection was suspended to enable them to resume their
trade and re-establish themselves and families."

So, the Board felt that it could not extent the
relief beyond a few years. Hence the Tahsildar of
Conjeevaram was instructed to collect the tax from
the weavers. The weavers petitioned the government
for six times from 1834 to 1843, but the problem was
not settled.

TAHSIL DAR OF CONJEEVARAM:

On the rejection of the Petition by government,
orders for the realisation of the Tax were again
issued and nearly full amount had been realised in
each taluk except Conjeevaram, where the weavers
still refusing to comply with the orders of Government.
On November 1, 1843, the Tahsildar proceeded to seize
the property of the weavers. About 2000 weavers
prevented the Tahsildar by force. On knowing this,
the Collector sent 100 armed peons to seize 15 Ring
leaders who were responsible for this struggle. However, a body of 6000 weavers had collected armed with sticks and stones and the Tahsildar considered it impracticable to do anything without the aid of Troops and he wanted the collector to send the same infantry force.

ARMY IN CONJEEVARAM:

As desired by the Tahsildar, the collector sent a detachment of troops which reached Conjeevaram on Sunday, the 5th November 1843. With the help of the Troops, the weavers were suppressed and the leaders concerned were arrested. Moreover the weavers feared in mere presence of the Troops. Thus the weavers movement in Conjeevaram was suppressed. In this connection, the Collector Mr. Frese wrote to the Government, on 8th November 1843,

"The heads of the weaving villages have since been to wait upon me and have themselves realised and paid into the Treasury - a considerable portion of the amount due, and I hope during the next two or three days that the total demand will be realized."
Thus the three months long struggle (from August to November 1843) of the weavers against the loom tax had come to an end without any fruitful result for them.

**DEVASTHANAM CHARGES:**

Devasthanam charge was collected from the weavers and other artisans to support the native religious institutions. It is said that this Devasthanam moturpha was originated under the native government. In Chidambaram, as in other places, the Devasthanam moturpha was collected with the loom tax by the government servants and later the Devasthanam moturpha was sent to the Temple trustees. Here in, Chidambaram, there was a quarrel between the Trustees and the weavers because it was found that the weavers paid the major portion Rs.897-4-6 out of Rs.1441-10-7 Devasthanam moturpha in 1852.  

Therefore, the weavers wrote a letter to the District Collector to relieve them from the

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Devasthanam moturpha and stated that they were going to make their arrangement for the pagoda moturpha. Then the Collector referred this matter to the Board and the Board in its letter dated 23rd December 1852, requested the government to exclude those weaver who were not interested in paying this Devasthanam moturpha. Thus, the weavers were relieved from this tax.

We have referred in our previous chapter that the Company weavers were exempted from Moturpha Tax, but at the same time all the other weavers and traders were levied this tax. In all districts of Tamil Nadu, a large amount was collected from the weavers. But, the weavers were demanding for the abolition of this vexatious Moturpha Tax. At last, the Moturpha tax on trades and professions was abolished by the government in 1853 all over India, except in the Province of Madras.


The Madras Native Association took it as a challenge and submitted a Petition to the House of Commons. It described the Moturpha as a "tax upon trades and occupations, embracing weavers, carpenters and all salesmen. While levying this tax, the cost of the goods frequently exceeded six times. It falls more heavily upon the indigent than upon the wealthy. Often the defaulters are resorted to imprisonment. And the whole sum raised by this impost is but little above £ 1,00,000 Sterling." 23

The Madras Native Association, thus, by submitting Petition pleaded for the abolition of Moturpha in Madras Province also. After the Parliamentary enquiries of 1853, it was abolished in the same year in the Madras Province also. 24

23. House of Commons First Report, 1853, Appendix. 7

APPENDIX - II

VARIETIES OF HANDLOOM CLOTHS IN TAMIL NADU

1. ALLAJARS:
   A Silk Cloth.

2. BAFTA:
   Plain Cotton Cloth, average length 15 cubits; either white or dyed.

3. BELLILAS:
   From Portuguese beililha: 'Veiling'. A muslin much in demand in Europe. Could be dyed red and sometimes striped or flowered 14-15 yards long, 1.25 yards wide.

4. CALLOWAYCOOS:
   A kind of flowered chintz.

5. CAMBRICK:
   A fine cotton or linen fabric.

6. CHINTZES:
   Dyed or Printed Cotton.
7. **DIMITIES:**
Probably from Persia Dimyati, a cotton cloth. Calico woven with raised stripes or fancy figures used for bedroom hanging etc.

8. **DRAGONS:**
Cheap dyed cotton cloth. Usually described as black and red, presumably either striped or chequered.

9. **DUNGAREES:**
Plain white, coarse calico.

10. **GHINGAMS:**
A kind of fabric made from cotton yarn dyed before being woven. Patterned in the loom, either striped or chequered.

11. **IZAREES:**
Tamil word Istree - Pressed. Possibly because the cloth had a smooth finish. The cloth was mainly used for the making of drawers and trousers and hence a more likely derivation is from Tamil Nizar, which means drawers. Usually 8 yards long and 1 yard wide.
12. **LONG CLOTH:**

The ordinary staple cotton cloth of the Coromandal coast, esteemed for its unusual length - about 37 yards long and 1.25 yards wide.

13. **LUNGEES:**

Cotton plain or painted cloth similar to the dhoti, reaching below the knees, very different from longotee or loincloth.

14. **MOOREES:**

Superior cotton cloth used as base for chintz making. Generally 9-10 yards long and 1 yard 8 inches wide manufactured in Chingleput district.

15. **PALAMPORES:**

Printed calico or chintz produced at Walajanagar and used mainly as covers and coverlets in England.

16. **RAMBUSTANS:**

The term is not listed in any of the glossaries but is found in the list of goods from Conimeer Tanjore District. Rambustan is a Malay word and probably, like all other cloth produced in this region, was an item of barter in the Archipelago.
17. RUMALS:
A towel and a Madras Handkerchiefs: 0.75 yard square.

18. SALEMPORES:
Staple cotton cloth produced on the coast ranging from coarse to very fine - either plain white, blue or brown. Usual dimension: 16 yards length, 1 yard width.

19. SULLAH:
Inferior muslin dyed either blue and black or just black, average length 2 vadams 5 spans width 1 yard.

20. SASTRAGUNDES:
The origin of the word may be from Sahasragranthi (A thousand knots). The material is a sort of spotted muslin, probably patterned in the loom, i.e., tie-dyed before weaving.

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