Presidency also contain information on caste, community and their organisation.

Among the official publications, District Manuals and Gazetteers of the Presidency are also very important. Hence it is to be noted that the greater part of the material has been obtained from official records and reports.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

For the proper study of the handloom industry, the importance of the travellers' account cannot be exaggerated. The accounts of travellers consulted for this work are: Buchanan's Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar (London, 1807); Elijah Hoole's Personal Narrative of a Mission to the South of India (London, 1829); and Abbe Dubois's Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies (Oxford, 2nd ed., 1899). Besides, D.M. Amalsad's, Handloom Weaving in the Madras Presidency, (Madras, 1924), presents details on spinning and other processes of the industry.

The other important secondary sources such as B.S. Baliga's Compendium on History of Handloom Industry in Madras, (Madras, 1960) which provides information on the condition of the weavers in the nineteenth century
and A. Sarada Raju's *Economic conditions in the Madras Presidency, (1800-1850)*, (Madras, 1940) presents various general informations about the industry.

A number of secondary source books have been consulted. The list of secondary source books has been included in the Bibliography. With these available sources, an attempt has been made in the following pages to study the Handloom Industry in Tamil Nadu in the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER I

HANDLOOM INDUSTRY PRIOR TO 19th CENTURY
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Next to food, the fundamental need is clothing. Dress as shown by anthropologists served the purpose of decoration and later on developed to be looked as something necessary for hiding human nakedness. This view is very well brought out in Tirukkural.\(^1\) Thiruvalluvar compares the instant help of a true friend, to the hand which rushes to keep the clothes in position when they slip away so as to make naked before others.

As regards the Tamil Country the art of weaving was not only a major craft but also an indispensable cottage industry in which almost all the members of a weaver's family took part as a matter of course. The technique of weaving was consciously and gradually developed in the ancient days both by men and women. Women engaged in spinning the cotton were called Parutti-P-Pendir during the Sangam age.\(^2\) The old women and widows usually earned their living this way.

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1. *Tirukkural*. 788
The Tamil literature speaks about the fineness of the threads produced and used in weaving cloths. The threads of cloth were so fine as to be not traced, just like the sloughs of serpents, the outer tissue of bamboo and the vapour of milk.

**WEAVING IN SANGAM PERIOD:**

The Sangam poems bring before our eyes various kinds of industrial workmen, the goldsmith, the blacksmith, the coppersmith, the conch-cutter, the carpenter, the leather-worker, the potter, the sculptor, the painter and more than all, the weaver.

We get ample references in the twin epics of the period about these men. Garments with floral designs are frequently mentioned and a great homage is paid to the art of weaving. It is interesting to learn that the dressing material was woven not only from cotton,

3. Puram. 383; 9-11
4. Ibid.
5. Perumpanarru-P-Padai, 469.
silk and wool but also from rat's hair. There is a
reference in Jivakacinthamani about the peculiar
variety of rats and it must be different from the
ordinary variety. It was apparently larger in size
and very hairy (Pannayer pirali). Dyers are mentioned
along with weavers and the process of colouring yarn
was known. The workmanship of the weaver was of a high
order and fine fabrics were made. The Roman merchants
were surprised at the indescribable fineness of the
Indian silk and the Tamil poems compare them to the
slough of the snake, the falling cascade and the vapour
emanating from boiling milk.

The weaving industry in ancient South India was a
domestic industry, in which all the members of the family
were engaged in that profession. There are frequent

8. Rat's hair cloth is mentioned twice in Silappadikaram.
Once while describing the bazaar in Puhar (V, 16-17)
and the second time describing the shops in Madura,
(XIV. 205-07).


10. Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Roman
Empire, p.93.


references to women working at the spinning wheel and Narrinai mentions that women who had lost their husbands (alil pendir) specially engaged themselves in this work.\textsuperscript{13} Herodotus, the father of History, mentions about the Indian cotton as "hair growing on tree better than wool" this makes us aware of the rarity of cotton in early times. South India during this period produced many kinds of cotton and cotton goods both in white and colour. Purananuru refers to carded cotton of fine variety.\textsuperscript{14}

There could be therefore little doubt that there was no dearth of clothing material for people in the country and they dressed themselves with decency. Besides for making dress, cloth was also used for various other purposes like curtains, bedspreads, canopies over beds etc.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{EXPORT IN 2nd CENTURY A.D.:}

Cotton cloth was exported during the 2nd Century A.D. to Egypt and Palestine from Tamilagam. Besides cotton cloth, Indian cotton was taken to Egypt "where the Emperors possessed imperial weaving and dyeing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Narrinai, 353.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Puran. 125.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Manimekhalai, III, 165-68.
\end{itemize}
factories, some worked by the priests. The Egyptian, mixed cotton and linen wove cloths, the weft being of cotton and the warp of linen. Indian cotton was also used in Egypt for various sacred purposes. Many coloured cotton fabrics have been found near Memphis at Panopolis and some of the fabrics contain Indian elements in their design. 16 It shows that in the 2nd Century A.D. itself the Indians exported cotton fabrics to Egypt and Palestine.

Moreover, cotton cloth was one of the main items which was sent to foreign countries from South India. The 'Argaritic' muslin sent from Uraiyur (now Trichinopoly), called Argaru was the chief item of them. "The edict of Diocletian shows that stuffed mattresses and pillows were made from Indian cotton." 17 To the north of Uraiyur lie the Salem and the Cuddappah districts, and they were also famous centres for cotton manufacturing. 18

17. Ibid., p.209.
Kautilya refers that precious stones reached the royal treasury of Magadha from Tamararappar, Pandya-kavada and Curna (which latter explained by the commentator as a river near Musiri). In addition to precious stones, the excellent cotton cloths, blankets, black and soft surface were sent from Madura, which Shyama Shastri, the translator of the Arthasastra says, were of Pandiya manufacture.

RAW MATERIALS FOR WEAVING:

Weaving was an important industry in ancient India. The raw materials used were mainly flax, hemp, cotton, wool and silk. All textile fabrics are classified under four heads in Sanskrit dictionaries (i) balka (bark - fibres) (ii) Phala, made of hair derived from fruits, (iii) Kanseya (made of fibres derived from Kosa, the cocoon) and (iv) rankara, made of hair derived from ranku or deer, also known as 'iomaja'. Let us enquire with the textile industry which manufactured these fabrics with different types of cloth, fine and coarse

20. Translation, p.90.
from the coverings of beds and musical instruments and coarse fabrics to fine garments like 'dukula' and 'tasara'.

**BARK FIBRES:**

Ksauma was one of the most important bark fibres manufactured into 'Ksauma' cloth, frequently met with in sanskrit and Pali literature. According to many scholars, Ksauma is linen made of Ksauma or Uma (flax) and atasi (linseed). Kautilya mentions 'atasi' along with 'malati', 'murva', 'arka', 'sana' and 'gavedhuka' as fibre yielding plants. Kautilya explains 'Ksauma' as a cloth made of 'atasi' fibre.

We get references in Ramayana about the Queens of Dasaratha (Ksauma-Vasanah) who were clad in Ksauma, while welcoming Sita to their home. Janaka offered Ksauma clothes during Sita’s marriage. From this we may infer that Ksauma was a superior type of cloth, usually worn by royal families and fit to be worn during festive occasions.

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occasions. Arjuna brought away valuable Ksauma clothes after conquering Uttara-Kuru beyond the Himalayas on the West. Susruta mentions Ksauma as one of the stuff to be used for bandages.

Dukula was the usual name for the finest Ksauma. Kautilya mentions both Ksauma and dukula together in connection with the custom duties 1/10th or 1/15th of the price was the duty to be levied for the goods of Ksauma, dukula etc. It seems that 1/10th is meant for the yarn and 1/15th for the finished product. Kautilya refers to 'dukula' of Vanga as a white and soft fabric', that of Pandya or Pundra as a "black and soft as the surface of the gem" and that of Suvernakudya as "red as the sun" and "as soft as the surface of the gem, woven, while the threads are wet and of uniform or mixed texture". He speaks of varieties of the same, "single, half, double, triple and quadruple". We learn from Arthasastra that Bengal, Assam and Kasi were centres of manufacture of Ksauma and dukila in the Mauryan Age.

The use of the Ksauma cloth, evidently of coarser type,

23. Arthasastra, 11, xi.
soaked in oil and thrown into enemies camp after ignition for destroying them is also heard of in the Mahabharata.  

The cultivation of atasi as a winter crop is referred to in the Arthasastra.  

Sana (hemp) is another bark-fibre. Kautilya refers to 'Sana' along with atasi as wild fibrous plants and this indicates that sana is other than atasi. He directs the superintendent of arms to collect it for use as bowstring. Manu says that the girdle of a vaishya should be made of sana threads. According to Divyavadana, sana-cloth was used by the cultivators. Sanasura, which finds mention in the Amarakosa of the later period means thread or string of sana and the commentators explain it as a string fit for fishing nets. Hence we may infer that sana served as rough dresses for common people.  

Banga is another type of hemp. Buddhaghosa while commenting on the Vinayapitaka says, "some say that a single fibre of plant is bhanga but it is not. It signifies a thread spun of five fibres". This indicates that a pretty thick twist was used to weave into cloth.  

24. Udyog, 154, (Mahabharata)
Bhanga is not mentioned in the Arthasastra, as a fibre yielding plant but it might have been included within the generic term "balka". It is a field crop, according to Amarakosa and it is mentioned immediately after "atasi" are related to each other in some respects, both being field crops and yielding fibres. Sri. J.C. Ray accepts the 'banga' of the Amarakosa as 'cannabis'. Watt says that 'cannabies' is still cultivated, throughout the Himalayan region from Kashmir to Assam, for its fibre and oil.

The 'balka' of the Arthasastra denotes all fibres including coarser ones which were manufactured into ropes and bow-strings. The Mahabharata mentions a list of fibres, evidently for ropes, viz., sana, vattan, cane, munja grass, ballaja grass and skins and catgut. Manu speaks of girdles, made of kusa, asmantaka and ballaja as substitutes for munja, murva and sana. Guduchi, mentioned in Sasruta has its aerial roots, yielding fibres used as cords in surgery. From the above study we learn that flax, hemp and cannabis were plants yielding fibres which were used for bark-textiles in ancient India.
II. SEED FIBRES

Cotton was the most important textile fibre, used for cloth almost everywhere. It was used in the period of the Indus valley culture, as attested by the remains of the woven material, found out at Mohenjo Daro. Merodotus refers to clothes made by the Indians, of wool grown on wild trees, meaning thereby cotton and speaks highly of Indian cotton. Its earliest mention seems to be in the Asvalayana srauta sutra in connection with the sacred thread of the Brahmanas and also in Panini IV.3 143. Cotton is also mentioned in the Buddhist and Jaina texts.

Kautilya gives us a full account of the textile industry. His reference to Aparanta (konkan), Kalinga, Vanga (East Bengal), Vatsa (Kausambi), Kasi, Manisa (Jabalpur) and Madura (Madurai) as seats of best cotton fabrics, shows that cotton was produced and manufactured in different parts of India in his time. He mentions

25. Mackay, Further excavation at Mohenjo Daro, pp.441-42.
27. Ibid.
how cotton seeds were stored in time for cultivation and
how trade in cotton and cotton fabrics yielded revenue
to the state. 28

Theophrastus 29 of the 3rd Century B.C. and Pliny 30
compared Indian cotton plants to other places. They
opine that Indian cotton is brighter and whiter than
that of the other places. Cotton industry rose to its
highest pitch in the shape of Indian muslins, held in
high esteem and fetching high prices in Roman markets
at the beginning of the Christian era. The Periplus 31
records that "Indian cotton cloth, the broad cloth called
'monache and that called sagmatogenes and a few muslins"
were exported from "the districts of Ariaca" to East
Africa. It speaks of the country of Ariaca as reported
for cotton and cotton cloths of the coarser sorts" with
Barygaza as an outlet for exportation to the West.
Baryagaza was fed with muslins and ordinary cloths
from Ozena 32 and Tagara. 33

28. Ibid.
29. History of Plants, IV, 4, 8-10.
30. Natural History, XII, 38-40.
31. Section. 6.
32. Section. 48.
33. Section. 57.
The Tamil literature of the earlier centuries speaks of cotton fabrics found in Kaverippattinam and Madura. The Silappadikaram describes the streets of Madura as being peopled over with cloth merchants dealing in cotton fabrics. It speaks of Puhar, where weavers dealt in fine fabrics, made of silk, fur and cotton. Aragar (Uraiyur, the old Chola capital) owed its name to a local variety of muslin. From the above study we can infer that cotton industry flourished in India in the earlier period.34

III. WOOL AND HAIR:

The use of skins as clothing is shown by the terms 'ajina' frequently used in the Vedic literature and epics. Kautilya refers to a large number of animals from which skins and furs were obtained, viz., a big lizard called godh, leopard, lion, tiger, elephant, buffalo, rhinoceros etc. Hides were used as war material. The trade in hides and fur was of much value. Pliny says that "the most valuable products furnished by the coverings of animals are the skins, which are seres dyes. "The term "seria" might have meant 'Cera' and if it was so, the skins or

34. Silappadikaram, XIV, 180-200.
hides might have been Indian products, sent through the parts of the Chera kingdom. The Ramayana also refers to carpets, made of the fleece of ranku, of sheep and of hares.

The Greco-Romans (yavanas) obtained wool and woollen clothes in Indian markets like Kaveripattinam in Tamil country. There is a reference in Periplus that furs were exported from Barbaricum which perhaps came from South India. The raw wool was exported to Mediterranean world from Karakoram region through the ports of the west coast of India in the first four centuries after Christ. From the above references we learn that wool weaving was fairly developed in different parts of India and this industry met the local needs and the foreign demands.

36. Pillai, p.25.
37. Section, 39
39. Ibid., p.160.
SILK:

Silk was also another raw material for weaving. We have a lot of references in the Tamil literature about the weaving of silk cloth in Tamilagam. In Ahananuru and Silappadikaram it is mentioned that silk cloths of fine varieties were also manufactured in Tamil Nadu. Silk cloths though woven in Tamil Nadu appear to have been originally introduced from China. With regard to the textile centres, Pattukotai (Tanjore district) seems to have served as flourishing centre for silk industry in the earlier centuries. This has been well attested by the discovery of Chinese coins datable to 3rd century B.C. in Pattukottai. The very name also indicates that it was a Kotai (fortress) for Pattu (silk). Silk was the product of mulberry silk worms. The Mahabharata also speaks of two types of silk, Koseya as Kitaya and patta as pattaja. The Sakas of the north west frontier regions of India brought as presents, in Yudhisthira.

42. Mahabharata, 11. 49-22.
various garments including tasar and patta. The Ramayana states that Rama and Sita were dressed in 'Koseya' even at home.

It is difficult to determine when and how the mulberry silk was introduced in India and whether it was an indigenous plant or imported from outside. Some think that 'Pattaja' referred to in the Mahabharata stated above meant the pure or mulberry silk as a contrast to the Kitaja (Kanseya or tasar) and that it might have "come to Bengal via Kashmir as well as via Manipur". N.G. Mukherji, while writing on the silk industry of Bengal says that the sericulture industry of India is traceable not to China but to the Himalayan country, where the mulberry grows wild and that it travelled from north-west to south-east. And the other person Watt also opines that "in India the mulberry worm has been systematically reared for many centuries, though it seems probable that there have been two independent sources of the knowledge and stock possessed by India, viz. (a) Northern India, very possibly from Central Asia or Persia and (b) Assam to Bengal via Manipur.

43. Ayodhya. 37.89.
The Periplus\textsuperscript{44} mentions that "raw silk, silk yarn and silk cloth" were brought on foot through Bactria from Thinese to Barygaza and were also exported to Daminica through the river Ganges. It also refers to the exportation of silk yarn and silk cloth through Barbaricum and Barygaza, which might have included indigenous silk goods. This trade, we may infer, might have given an impetus to domesticated silk-industry in India.

**THE INDUSTRY IN THE PRE-MOHAMADAN PERIOD:**

India was the original home of cotton manufactures. From very early times it was well known as the cotton producing and manufacturing country and even it was the second cotton producing and the third cotton manufacturing country in the world, at the end of the last century and the first decades of the present century.\textsuperscript{45} The arts of cotton spinning and weaving were in a high state of efficiency even two thousand years ago as recorded in the memories of Herodotus and Pliny. Dr. Ananda,

\textsuperscript{44} Section 64.

\textsuperscript{45} World's production of cotton in 1930-31. From the Indian Finance Year Book, 1932.
K. Coomarasamy, after a careful study of the historical material writes "Cotton weaving was a true domestic industry, practised even by ladies of high rank as a part of their household work. But in most part of India weaving was a different profession and carried on largely, though not exclusively, by men. The export of Indian cotton fabrics was also important during this period.\(^{46}\)

**FOREIGN TRAVELLERS' VIEW:**

The importance of the weaving industry has been noted by many foreign travellers and historians. Renandot\(^{47}\) a French writer, Chao-Ju-Kua,\(^{48}\) the Chinese traveller, and Marco Polo,\(^{49}\) the Italian have recorded the glory of the Indian cotton industry. Before the rising of the Mughal power, Gujarat, Cambay, Telingana, Malabar, Bengal and the Coramandal coast were fully developed cotton manufacturing centres. The Dacca and the Broach Muslins, the Masulipatnam chintz and Palampores, the coloured Chintzes of Gujarat and


47. Renandot has translated the Journal of an Arab, named Suliman, who visited India in the 9th Century A.D.

48. Chao-Ju-Kua travelled through Bengal in the beginning of the 13th Century.

49. Marco Polo visited India at the close of the 13th Century.
the Calicoes of Coromandal coast were world famous. It is accepted that India was not merely an accredited birth place of the cotton manufactures but it had the practical monopoly both in the production of raw material and in the manufacture of finished cotton goods.  

**DOMESTIC INDUSTRY**

Cotton weaving was a true domestic industry which was practiced in every household spinning and weaving and other processes were done only by hand. Even the best fabrics were made with crude tools by the people in their own homes. Foreigners wondered at the very simple methods of the Indian weaver which were far superior to the elaborate mechanical devices of the western countries. These methods received an encomium of foreign writers. In spite of the raw material not being brought to its high state of cultivation, despite crude machinery and little division of labour, the products were fabrics of exquisite delicacy, unrivalled by any other nation even those best skilled in the mechanical arts.  


EARLY EXPORTATION

Even in early times the Indian export trade in cotton fabrics was not negligible. The Arabs and the Greeks traded in cotton manufactures which they carried from Patiala, Ariake, Baryagaza (said to be modern Broach) and Masalia the present Masulipatam to the Red Sea.\(^{52}\) Pliny in his natural History describes how the Indian trade in luxurious, especially in cotton fabrics, was draining the wealth of the great Roman Empire.

The nature, extent and conditions of the weaving industry are described in the book called "The Indian Textile Industry". That the industry was wide-spread can be seen from the fact that almost every household prepared cloth, at least sufficient for the needs of the family. The industry was exclusively a cottage industry and the members of the family helped the weaver in the preparation of the cloth. Craftsmanship did hold an inferior status and was supposed to be under the special protection of the kings.... The handloom industry and spinning industry afforded excellent bye-employment in ancient times. It is, however, rather difficult to

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\(^{52}\) The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.
believe that this industry which reached such a high pitch of excellence could really be the occupation of leisure time only. The best artisans must have been whole time workers who spent their whole life on this industry and earned their living from it. There was no exploitation of labour by capitalists since setting up of looms was the normal thing for the artisans of those days. 53

THE INDUSTRY DURING THE MUSLIM PERIOD

It is generally felt by historians that during the Muslim rule in India chaos reigned everywhere and that, with the growing political insecurity, social anarchy and economic disruption followed, all arts and handicrafts declined, and that cotton manufacture shared the common fate. This is not wholly true, at any rate as regards the later Mughal period. During the earlier years of the Muslim invasion, each industry suffered as it was inevitable in such time of unsettled life. But with the beginning of Mughal power, the cotton industry, along with other handicrafts, recovered its former

stature. All the Mughal Emperors, Aurangzeb with all his religious bigotry not excluded, were great patrons of handicrafts. Moreland, a severe critic of Mughal administration, observed that the cotton industry was at this period much the most important handicraft in India. Another historian wrote, "on the coast of Coromandel and in the province of Bengal it is difficult to find a village in which every woman and child is not employed in making a piece of cloth. At present much of the greatest part of the provinces are employed in the single manufacture. The progress of the linen manufacture includes no less than a description of the lives of half the inhabitants of the Hindustan." The writings of other historians, foreign travellers and ambassadors indicate that the industry was universal and that the cotton manufacture was carried on in villages and towns to meet

54. 'The waves of conquest which commenced from 11th Century no doubt greatly hampered Indian Industrialists and Industries for some time. But the establishment of the Mughal Empire and the safety and security of the reign of Akbar seem to have fully revived Indian Industries and handicrafts'. (Industrial Commission Report, p.296).


56. Orme, Historical Fragments of the Mughal Empire, p.413.
the demand of the home and abroad. Gujarat supplied Persia, Tartary, Turkey, Arabia, Ethiopia and other places with silk and cotton stuffs. Some centres specialized in the production of certain varieties chiefly for exports to foreign countries. Bengal, the coromandal coast, Cambay (drawing goods from Ahmadabad, Baroda, Broach and Surat) and the Indus valley (drawing its supply from Lahore, Multan and Sukkur) supplied the foreign markets. The superior muslins of Dacca, called in admiration, the Evening Dew, the Textile Breeze, the Running Water, the printed calicos of the Coromandal, the plain white and coloured cloths from many parts of the country, the celebrated handkerchiefs from Madras and the gold and silver embroidered silks and cotton fabrics of Ahmedabad and Benaras formed the bulk of the cotton manufacture of India.

EXCELLENT MANUFACTURES:

During the period of the Mughals the cotton goods were manufactured very excellently. The causes for the excellence of cotton manufacture were not far to seek.


Baines noted, "the climatic conditions, the environment, the inherited skill of workers, the patronage of kings and nobles and the discipline of the guilds explain the unique superiority of the Indian manufactures. It was then a physical organisation of the natives, admirably suited to the processes of spinning and weaving, to the possession of raw materials in the greatest abundance, to the possession also by the most brilliant dyes for staining and printing the cloth, to a climate which rendered the colours lively and durable and to the hereditary practices by particular castes, classes and families, both of the manual operations and chemical process required in the manufacture:—it was to these causes with very little aid from science and in almost barbarous state of the mechanical arts, that India owed her long supremacy in the manufacture of cotton fabrics." 59

Silk weaving was having a little opportunity for expansion. It was restricted in scope during the Mughal age, as the weaving of silk cloths was confined to the upper classes who formed a mere fraction of the total population and the products of Indian looms had to face the competition of silk goods imported from the far East,

Central Asia and Persia. Akbar's patronage and interest in this industry provided a considerable stimulus to the demand from the court circles. His influence was likewise felt in the carpet weaving industry. Abul Fazl speaks that Akbar himself acquired a practical knowledge of the whole weaving trade. Akbar ordered people of certain ranks to wear particular kinds of cloths locally woven, an order which resulted in the establishment of large number of cotton and carpet weaving manufactures in India.

**PATRONISERS OF THE INDUSTRY:**

The industry received the special patronage from the Mughal rulers. There is an evidence to show that there were palace Karkhanas where silk brocades, fine muslins, gold embroidery etc., were made by artisans. 60 There were no large-scale industrial enterprises in the modern sense of term. But, it is no exaggeration to say that every Indian wore cloth produced locally. 61

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Kharkhanas:

The kings, nobles and high officials of the state maintained their own workshops. The organisation was that the craftsmen in different fields of industry were assembled in a Karkhana which was placed in charge of a Malik over whom there was a State General Superintendent of Arts and Crafts. 62 The royal factories of Delhi sometimes employed as many as 4000 weavers of silk alone, besides manufacture of other kinds of goods for the royal family. Muhamad bin Thuglag employed no less than 4000 manufacturers of golden tissues for brocades used by ladies of the Royal Harem. 63 Dr. Ibn Hussain said that the Central Government not only fulfilled all the needs of the State at a low price but gave an impetus and encouragement to different industries of the country. 64 These State factories (Karkhanas) used to be run by Indian Muslims. 65 In the Ain-i-Akbari, Abul Fazl has enumerated


64. Ibn Hussain, The Central Structure of Mughal Empire, p.251.

65. Md. Yasin, A Social History of Islamic India, p.29.
thirty three qualities of silk and thirty of cotton, which were manufactured in India. Regarding Karkhanas he stated that His Majesty paid much attention to various stuffs. 66

ORGANISATION:

It is instructive to study the economic organisation of the cotton industry at that time. Originally caste was the sole economic factor in industry. Different professions were carried on by separate castes and weaving was confined to a few only. But with growing external trade other castes as well took to weaving. These castes, while maintaining their entity and subject to their own caste guilds in respect of their social life, became members of the craft-guild which regulated the industry. There was little division of labour from the point of view of internal technical organisation of the industry. The weavers and their dependants, working for themselves, caused a fusion of labour approaching almost the modern co-operative production which avoided all conflicts between labour and capital. 67

Side by side with this there were also guilds. Each trade had its guild representing many castes and the business by the guild was carried on by chiefs called Natamakarans in the South, Sheths, Gunastas or Nagarsbets in North India. Under this system the workers in an industry pledged themselves to protect one another. Membership of the guild was regulated but was hereditary. The guild perfected the system of apprenticeship which, while safeguarding the interest of the craftsmen, secured efficiency and accounted for the Indian pre-eminence in arts. 68

Production in this period was on a small scale. At first there were not many intermediaries between the producer and the market. But with the expansion of the market, the individual artisan could not cope with the demand which required a larger capital and a greater specialisation of functions. These were beyond the means of the weavers. Several classes of middlemen-Sowkar, Chettis-sprang up who provided the capital and acted as the link between the producer and the consumers. This, while accelerating production, had reduced the

68. Ibid., p.13.
artisan to the position of a wage earner depending on the middlemen for work. This formed the domestic system and marked a distinct state in the industrial evolution and was intermediate between the old and much praised system of the independent craftsman and the modern system of the workshop and the factory.

THE INDUSTRY UNDER THE EAST INDIA COMPANY:

The industry developed very much under the East India Company. During the eighteenth century, the company was more interested in securing commercial and trading rights than political power. It, therefore, developed a lucrative trade in cotton manufacturing and other East Indian specialities in spite of the growing opposition of certain interests in England. The Director of the Company sought to encourage the Indian industry by sending out hemp dressers, spinners and weavers from England to train the Indians in the manufacture of sail cloths. For instance, in 1838, a skilled personnel was sent to Madurai to develop the weaving industry.\(^{69}\) All this indicates the sympathetic attitude of the Company, though

the measures were of doubtful benefit to the Indian artisans for they were far more advanced than their masters in their technique.

During the 17th and 18th Centuries in spite of the political turmoils in the country the cotton manufacture was thriving and expanding. India after clothing her vast population exported to the west 1½ million pieces of muslins, calicoes, handkerchiefs, longcloth etc., valued at £2.9 millions. The manufacture and export of cotton goods began in very early times and continued through the ages. The seventeenth and the greater part of the eighteenth centuries marked the heyday of the Indian textile industry. Cotton piece goods were the staples of the export trade of various European companies in India. Due to cheapness of Indian piece goods, in England, there was a craze for Calicoes and Chintzes among all the sections of the people. The British woollen manufactures were so seriously affected by the importation of Indian piece goods that they started an agitation which led to the adoption of a protectionist policy by British. In 1700 and 1721 a number of laws

were passed prohibiting the import of Indian goods and even the wearing of calicos. From this time we find a series of Acts and Regulations were passed in England to protect the home industry.\textsuperscript{71} This law, however, passed of little or no avail against the prodigious importation of cheap and attractive Indian piece goods of that time.\textsuperscript{72} In fact the whole of 18th century and the first half of the 19th century must be regarded as a period of boom for the handloom industry.

The uninterrupted prosperity of the foreign export trade of India in cotton manufactures during the last quarter of the 18th Century and the extent of the same from Bengal, Surat and the East Coast and also from China (Nankeen) can well be understood from the following table prepared from the Reports of the Select Committee appointed to take into consideration the export trade from India to Great Britain upon the subject of cotton manufacture, published in 1793.

\textsuperscript{71} A. Sarada Raju, \textit{Economic conditions in the Madras Presidency}, (Madras, 1941), p.163.

## Number of Cotton Pieces Sold by the East India Company in the English Market during 1770-1790

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bengal</th>
<th>Surat</th>
<th>Eastern Coast</th>
<th>Nankeen</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Value in £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>604757</td>
<td>131198</td>
<td>144710</td>
<td>17692</td>
<td>868357</td>
<td>1435475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>626160</td>
<td>147029</td>
<td>273766</td>
<td>20497</td>
<td>1067452</td>
<td>1653912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td>761489</td>
<td>58138</td>
<td>134789</td>
<td>9818</td>
<td>964234</td>
<td>1797508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>616226</td>
<td>38366</td>
<td>207086</td>
<td>12506</td>
<td>874184</td>
<td>1815008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td>517761</td>
<td>47405</td>
<td>181950</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>752116</td>
<td>1609597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>607878</td>
<td>18822</td>
<td>209538</td>
<td>6180</td>
<td>842418</td>
<td>1621777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>655332</td>
<td>83024</td>
<td>224183</td>
<td>10299</td>
<td>972838</td>
<td>1660892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>805010</td>
<td>61285</td>
<td>296182</td>
<td>14990</td>
<td>1177467</td>
<td>1663069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1779</td>
<td>338465</td>
<td>31525</td>
<td>74676</td>
<td>12537</td>
<td>457203</td>
<td>747121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>474703</td>
<td>18605</td>
<td>107130</td>
<td>8024</td>
<td>608462</td>
<td>1257869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781</td>
<td>301617</td>
<td>33144</td>
<td>95068</td>
<td>14609</td>
<td>445237</td>
<td>850703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782</td>
<td>446488</td>
<td>36597</td>
<td>72188</td>
<td>24635</td>
<td>579908</td>
<td>1287110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>437802</td>
<td>82966</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28201</td>
<td>548969</td>
<td>1143046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>516088</td>
<td>31130</td>
<td>44810</td>
<td>18698</td>
<td>610726</td>
<td>1055722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>768228</td>
<td>26767</td>
<td>45352</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>840347</td>
<td>1560847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>764173</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43240</td>
<td>37741</td>
<td>845154</td>
<td>1570217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>745449</td>
<td>41882</td>
<td>38641</td>
<td>26524</td>
<td>852496</td>
<td>1439043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>594728</td>
<td>41806</td>
<td>96455</td>
<td>12805</td>
<td>745794</td>
<td>1202871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>614839</td>
<td>44715</td>
<td>112216</td>
<td>48329</td>
<td>820099</td>
<td>1229360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>666282</td>
<td>33113</td>
<td>126221</td>
<td>29060</td>
<td>1054694</td>
<td>1752356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The export of cotton manufactures by the French East India Company in 1791 is given in the accompanying table. 73

**PARTICULARS OF THE SALE ADVERTISED AT THE L'ORIENT BY THE FRENCH COMPANY IN 1791.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Cloth</th>
<th>Number of Pieces</th>
<th>Value in £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surat and Bombay</td>
<td>65025</td>
<td>45678-1-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (Nankeen)</td>
<td>241993</td>
<td>76438-15-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Calicos (White)</td>
<td>134673</td>
<td>485137-10-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Muslins</td>
<td>37383</td>
<td>44261-8-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal Calicoes</td>
<td>93382</td>
<td>143747-15-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal Muslins</td>
<td>40727</td>
<td>318343-5-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But for the slight decline in the export trade from Bombay and Surat during the Mahretta wars and from the East Coast during the Mysore wars, the export trade has been on the whole steady. Madras contributed nearly a third of the export and Bengal had the lion's share. The exports from Madras were chiefly (a) white calicos comprising longcloth, percaulas, salempores (b) muslins comprising handkerchiefs, doreaes and betellas.

73. *The Select Committee Report, 1793.*
From the above table it is understood that even though the Acts were passed by the British parliament in the beginning of the 18th Century in order to protect their woollen manufactures, the handlooms from India were not affected. In fact the whole of the 18th Century and the first half of the 19th Century must be regarded as a period of boom for the handloom industry as the East India Company began to give encouragement to it by granting advances to weavers, organising weavers colonies etc. So, there had been an increase in the export of Indian cotton piece-goods in the last quarter of the 18th Century. During the first half of the nineteenth century, also it continued to flourish. But after 1850, the industry faced so many hurdles from such as the machine made yarns, cotton pieces which were imported heavily from Great Britain into India and from the Indian mill-made cloths. Even though the industry had to face so many difficulties after 1850, it was not completely ruined. The following chapter deals with the various communities involved in the handloom industry.