The textile industry is acclaimed as mother of industries in our country. However, the composite textile mills have not been faring well in last two decades. The debacle of textile mills started in Maharashtra since the Bombay Textile mills strike of January 1982. Since then it has been a boon for powerlooms in decentralised sector, wherein a lot many varieties, including cloth made from man-made fibres, started getting manufactured. Baring few composite mills, which got modernised and automotised in right time, the other textile mills have closed forever. The textile mills in Solapur also are not an exception to the same.

The textile industry in Solapur is more than 100 years old. It has been number two textile centre after Mumbai. Earlier, there were five textile mills in this city giving employment to almost one lakh workers. Now only two are working, out which one is in paralytic condition. The Solapur spg. and wvg. mills popularly known as “Old Mill or Juni Girani” was closed in 1947. The Laxmi & Vishnu Mills were closed in 1995. Now the textile industry in Solapur is alive due to powerlooms & Co-operative spinning units.

When Juni Mills was closed in 1947, many small scale entrepreneurs, most of them coming from Padmashali community migrated from Andhra Pradesh Purchased looms of old mill and started weaving chaddars, a unique variety of Solapur Powerlooms which is now popular all over India and abroad as ‘Solapur Chaddar.’ There are approximately 30,000 powerlooms in Solapur, giving employment to two lakh workers.
The Padmashalis with their inherited skill in weaving have created a variety of designs and colours to give an attractive look to the chaddars and bedsheets. In the 1990's after globalisation process many of the powerlooms have shifted to terry towels, which have a tremendous demand in overseas markets. Today the name of the city of Solapur has been shining on international map due to prestige products of powerlooms viz. Chaddars and terry towels. The powerlooms are no more a monopoly of Padmashalis. Many entrepreneurs from other castes and communities have entered into this business due to its export potentiality.

Today, Solapur textile industry has a prominent place due to an immense contribution made by Chaddar Industry [ which is the part and parcel of decentralised sector ], which was once to the credit of the composite textile mills. However, this decentralised powerloom industry is being managed on traditional lines and with conventional methods. The technology and other aspects of management need a face-lift to make this chaddar industry competitive and professional. Efforts have not been made by the Government or other associations and agencies either, in this direction. Even the records of the powerlooms, the updated information on various aspects and concerned details related to technological changes, production outputs and marketing information system have not been cared for and compiled as desired. Under these circumstances it was indeed a gigantic task for me to collect the requisite data required for an extensive survey. In the absence of the apt sources, I have tried my best to probe into various aspects of the working of the Chaddar Industry.
I am confident that, this research work will become an invaluable document for the powerloom owners in general and the Chaddar Industry in particular and the government agencies related with powerloom industry in Solapur. It is also hoped that, it will act as a guideline for effective management of powerlooms to the entrepreneurs in this business. At the same time it will be valued by the researchers doing research on powerlooms in Solapur in future.

Sachin Vernekar