

**CHAPTER**  
**TOWN-COUNTRY NETWORKS:**  
**A MARXIST ANALYSIS**

Changes in the mode of distribution of means of production in Dharmavaram

Production of objects of labour in the hinterland and its effect on the production relations and on the growth of silk industry and town.

Ownership of means of production by various groups in silk industry of Dharmavaram.

Distribution of productive forces in Markapur and surplus appropriation in slate mines.

**Non-commodification** of labour-power in slate mines

Distribution of productive forces and non-commodification of labour-power in slate industry of Markapur.

The "Sub contracting system" between factories and companies in slate industry of Markapur

Multiple leasing system in Natural slate factories

**Piece-rate** system

Labour saving technology

Many studies on small towns show that the growth of towns **depend** on the vitality of its hinterland and the linkages with it. But these **studies** fail to explain why some towns grow and others decline despite their intense inter relationship and inter linkages with their **hinterlands**. This may be because, most of the studies while dealing with the **town-country** interrelations focus on the **inter-sectoral** linkages particularly their spatial configurations but paid little attention towards the nature of linkages and their impact both on town and hinterland. This necessitates the study of the social relations *of* production between the various groups involved in the town-country linkages. This aspect has been bypassed by numerous urban studies. Scott's comments are relevant in this regard. He says:

"Apart from the Marxist literature, in which the concept of social relations of production plays a vital **part**, relatively little attention has been paid to this area either at the theoretical or the empirical level. The key concepts of orthodox sociological research have usually been occupational status and role, concepts **which** focus on technical rather than social relations of production.

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse the pattern of production relations between various functional groups spread over in town and country. This is done mainly by explaining the mode of distribution of the means of production among various sections. This is because **the** mode of distribution of the means of production among people determines the pattern of appropriation of **the** results of production. Marx says

**"Historically** and logically capitalism is tied to the private ownership of the means of **production**, which allows private appropriation of produced **commodities**, **thus**, private appropriation of surplus value **and** thus private appropriation of **capital**

The study of the mode of distribution of means of production among various functional groups both in **Dharmavaram** and **Markapur** enables **the identification** of types of networks that exist between various groups **in** these regions and the pattern of appropriation and flow of surplus **among** various groups. Further, efforts are also made to identify the objective conditions of labour by explaining the dependency and **domination** processes in the relations, the conditions for commodification and **non-commodification** of labour-power of various groups.

A description of the changes in the mode of distribution of the means of production among various functional groups in both the regions explains the nature of relationships between various functional groups and how these relationships in turn nurture the growth and decline of a town vis-a-vis hinterland. Since the description will be presented in Marxist terminology, the definition of terms is given below.

Labour-Power: The aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical **form**, the living personality of a human being which he sets in motion whenever he produces a use-value of any kind.

Labour-power is the commodity which its possessor or the **wage-worker** sells it to capital in order to live, ie. to secure his means of subsistence. **Labour-power** becomes "**commodity**" in **Marxian** terms. **only when wage-workers** have absolute freedom in disposing their **labour-power** **with** out being subject to any preconditions.

According to Marx, the commodification of **labour** power occurs only under the following conditions.

1. The exchange of commodities implies no other relations of **dependence** between the exchanging parties.
2. **Labour-power** can appear on the market as a commodity only when the labourer sell it as a commodity. For this he must be the free proprietor of his own **labour-capacity**, hence of his **person**.
3. The labourer and the owner of the money, **capitalist**, meet in the **market**, and enter into relations with each other on a footing of equality as owners of commodities with the sole difference that one is a buyer and other a seller, both are **therefore** equal in the eyes of the law.

For this labourer must sell his labour-power for a **limited** period only. The labourer must constantly treat his labour-power as his own **property**, his own commodity and he can do this by placing it at the disposal of the **buyer** (capitalist) only for definite period of time, temporarily.<sup>4</sup>

The other essential condition which allows the owner of the money (capitalist) to find **labour-power** in the market as a commodity is that the possessor of labour-power instead of being able to sell commodities in which his labour has been objectified is rather compelled to sell his labour-power itself as a commodity.

Wages: Wages are the prices of the commodity labour-power.

Changes in the **Mode of Distribution of Means of Production in Dharmavaram:**

In Dharmavaram (as explained in chapter VII) before 1970s, objects of labour, (that is, raw materials like raw **silk**, zari) and instruments of production, (that is, looms) which together constitute **the means of**

production were entirely in the hands of few master **weavers**. The master weavers procured the raw silk from Bangalore **and** zari from Surat **(Gujarath)**. They employed thousands of weavers who worked under their total dominance and were paid low and meager wages. Even those weavers who own their looms were exploited since they did not own raw materials and were mostly dependent on master weavers for their employment and supply of raw material. Each master weaver assembled looms under a single roof where weavers worked. In some cases weavers settled in the hinterland were also controlled by their master weavers through supply of both looms and raw material. These weavers from the hinterland regularly visited the town for collecting and returning raw materials and finished products respectively.

As weavers had no hold on their means of production they were subjected to the dictates of the master weavers. They owned nothing but their labour-power and even on that they had no hold, as they were forced to submit it to their master weavers for low wages. They had very little bargaining power with their master weavers as they were completely dependent on them for the means of production and for means of subsistence.

From late 1960s with the nationalisation of banks and with the **advent** of the twenty point programme, the Government of India started **giving** loans to weavers to buy their means of production. Weavers slowly began availing these loan facilities from early 1970s. **In** order to provide raw materials, that is, raw silk and zari to weavers **directly**, raw **silk and zari** distributing centres were established in **Dharmavaram**. Thus, **with** the ownership of means of production the erstwhile labour weavers who were

completely subordinated to their master weavers began to weave **sarees** independently and thereby the institution of **"independent weavers"** began to emerge and this led to the declining role of the institution of **master weavers**.

Of the 150 weavers interviewed, 83 percent of them started their career as labour weavers by joining under the master weavers. Of these, 20 percent are still labour weavers. These might be the weavers who joined under master weavers in recent years i.e. in late 1980s and in early 1990s. Of the remaining 80 percent who became independent, not even a single weaver became independent before 1969. Weavers started becoming independent only from 1970s more particularly from mid 1980s. Of the 62 percent weavers who became independent (from the total 83 percent weavers who joined under master weavers) though 20 percent of them became independent during 1970s, most of them turned independent in 1980s and 1990s. Also, various government schemes like establishment of cooperative societies, house schemes and others helped weavers. This shows that, as the various Government schemes began increasing from 1970s and the local availability of objects of labour and means of production **facilitated** labour weavers to become independent weavers.

Presently, in **Dharmavaram** region. 79 percent of **weavers** are independent. Of these, nearly 40 percent of them **bought looms** on government loans. **15** percent each bought **either** on their **own** or got **from** their father as share of his property. Of the remaining 11 **percent**, 7 percent bought from private loans and the next 4 percent **bought from other sources**.

With the development of independent weavers the erstwhile monopolistic dominance of master weavers on weavers **declined**. Weavers began weaving sarees on their own and selling to the master weavers. Thus, the role of master weavers declined in the process of **production**. Their role has become limited to marketing the product.

Production of Objects of Labour in the Hinterland: Its Impact on the Production Relations, Growth of Silk Industry and Town.

Another significant development which made the networks between various functional groups more equal and remunerative and brought tremendous impetus to the development of silk industry vis-a-vis the growth of town is the production of cocoons (raw material) in the hinterland of Dharmavaram. Earlier, as already mentioned the raw materials were imported from other regions.

The production and easy availability of raw silk locally, decreased further the dependence of weavers for their raw materials on their master weavers. It also decreased whatever little dominance erstwhile raw silk dealers had on weavers.<sup>7</sup> With the production and easy availability of raw silk locally, the number of raw silk centres increased, **consequently**, the competition among raw silk dealers **increased**. Coming to the other raw material, that is, **zari**, is neither produced nor manufactured in Dharmavaram region. It is exclusively brought from Surat and **Bangalore**. As the institution of independent weavers developed, to make **zari** available to these growing number of independent weavers, various **zari selling** units were established. This removed the dependence of all **weavers** for **zari** on master weavers.

When the competition within raw silk and zari dealers **increased**, they in order to attract more customers (weavers) began providing their product at competitive prices. The relation between them and weavers **became** more amicable in the sense that **profit** margin of raw materials was reduced and even credit was **offered** to the **weavers**. The relations of production thereby became more egalitarian, more remunerative to all participants in the production process.

With the elimination of domination of master weavers and with local availability of objects of labour, weaving became economically more remunerative and socially more honorable as they are no longer dependent on others and are masters of themselves. The demand and enthusiasm for weaving increased. As the weavers strength increased, production of silk sarees increased rapidly, which again triggered the growth of silk merchants. Previously the entire marketing of silk sarees was in the hands of a few silk merchants. However, due to the above developments and rapid production of silk saris, people from various castes both **from** town and **its** hinterland began entering into silk business. These ever growing strength of silk merchants in order to guarantee themselves regular and reliable supply of sarees began to establish permanent and regular relationships with weavers. **In** order to see to it that weavers were not attracted by any other merchant they began to supply loans to independent weavers **in** advance for weaving saris. This, facilitated some weavers **who failed** to get government loans to buy the raw material on their own and weave **the** sarees and supply them to the merchant.



Thus, the weavers in Dharmavaram do not form a uniform **and identical** group. Every person starts as an apprentice weaver **then become** a labour weaver and finally become an independent weaver. However, **with** the rapid changes that are occurring in the Dharmavaram silk **industry, the** scope **for** the development of silk weavers is wide with the easy availability of means of production and with the increasing demand for the weavers. However, **a** brief description of the three classes of weavers would help in recognizing the changes that facilitated the rapid development of weavers.

Apprentice weaver: He is a new entrant into the field of weaving, who join as an apprentice with an established weaver, learns from him the art of silk weaving within a period of six months to one year. He again serves under him for one more year where fifty percent of his wages are owned by his master. This additional stay with his master provides him the opportunity to learn the finer techniques of silk weaving and equips him to weave on his own.

Labour Weaver: **Here** weaver neither owns instruments of labour nor object\* of labour. Both loom and raw materials **are** supplied to him by his master weaver. He only gets wages for his labour.

In Dharmavaram, most of the labour weavers work under **independent** weavers and very few of them directly work under **silk merchants**. **Independent** weavers who own looms either establish locos **in** their **houses** or fixes them in labour weavers house, supply them ail the **required raw** material and pays wages for his **labour**. Weber **calls** these labour **weavers** as **"wage workers"**.

Independent Weaver: The weaver owns his means of **production**. He weaves sarees by buying raw materials on his own and he directly sell to silk merchants and sometimes to outside traders who come **from** various **major** cities of **India**. Here weaver not only owns his **labour-power**, means of production but his product also. He is independent **enough** to sell his product at his desired rate and in no way dependent on **others**. **Thus**, here weaver is not a wage-labour as in the case of apprentice and labour weaver but is a self-employed worker where he acquires a greater amount of surplus. Weber calls these kind of weavers as **"Price workers"**

These three kinds of weavers can be looked as three stages through which weavers pass. However, with the availability of objects of labour locally and due to the greater demand of silk sarees vis-a-vis weaving, the domination and exploitation of weavers by others decreased and the process of developing weavers as independent weavers has become smoother. **In** fact the trend that is visible is more towards the growth of independent weavers. The various functional groups located in town and country of Dharmavaram region are at the same time independent and dependent on each other. Independent in the sense that, within each group every one owns hi\* own means of production and product and dependent in the sense **that** everyone in each group is dependent on other groups in order to acquire hi\* objects of labour and selling or supplying the **product**

**TABLE:8.1**  
**Ownership of Means of Production by Various Groups in Silk Industry of Dharmavaram**

| Group            | Means of production                                  |                                   | Product           |
|------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
|                  | Objects of labour                                    | <b>Instruments</b> of labour      |                   |
| Mulberry farmers | silkworm eggs<br>mulberry crop<br>mulberry shed etc. | silkworm plates<br>chandrikas     | cocoons           |
| <b>Reeler</b>    | cocoons  | spinning wheels<br><b>cherkas</b> | raw silk yarn     |
| Twister          | raw silk yarn  | spindles                          | twisted silk yarn |
| Weaver           | dyeid raw silk<br>and zari                           | looms                             | silk sari         |

However, as given in the table 8.1 each group owns his means of production and works independently in his own working conditions. He can work according to his own convenient working hours. At his work he is the master of himself. But, at the same time his work is related and dependent on other functional groups. Thus, there is enough independence and at the same time interdependence on the other groups thereby mutual cooperation is essential for survival of all groups. Thereby the relations are not characterized by unequal exchange or dominance or surplus appropriation at the cost of others, but of mutual interdependence, equality and cooperation where everyone appropriates his own share of surplus

One important thing to be noticed is **that**, the product of each **group** is merely a step towards the final form, that is, **silk sari, which is the combined** product of their specialized **labours**. But, **each groups** respective product (like reeled **yarn**, twisted **yarn**, **raw silk yarn**, etc) is a commodity having a market, and a saleable value

**MARKAPUR:**

The activities in the **Markapur** region can be divided into two broad categories. They are:

1. Slate Mining
2. Slate **manufacturing.**

Mining activities are completely undertaken in **the hinterland** of Markapur and industrial production occurs within the **premises** of **Markapur** town.

**Distribution of Productive Forces and Surplus Appropriation in Slate Mines**

The lease rights of entire slate mines are in the hands of a few individuals, more particularly in the hands of eight persons. However, there is sub-leasing of mines to numerous people who in turn lease the small areas of mines to numerous persons who are locally called as pit owners, as they have lease rights over small pits. Thousands of workers work under the control of these pit owners and have no formal relations with the sub-lease holders and to the actual lease holder. However, **there** are two large mine owners who directly maintains their mines and workers work directly under their control and supervision.

**TABLE:8.1**

**Ownership of Means of production in Slate Mines of Markapur**

| Group        | Means of Objects of Labour | Instrument of Production                               | Product                 |
|--------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Mine owners  | Slate stone                | <b>Cranes, Motor engines<br/>Iron bars. Plates etc</b> | <b>Raw slate stones</b> |
| Mine workers |                            |  | ---                     |

The mine workers own nothing other than their labour. They have no control on the raw material that is extracted and own no instruments of production. That is, the workers **have** no hold on the means of production and own only their labour-power. However, one has to study whether they really own their labour-power? How far do they have control over it? Answers to these questions are crucial in order to understand the entire gamut of relationships between mine owners, pit owners and workers.

**Non-commodification of Labour-power in Slate Mines:**

The conditions in the slate mines of **Markapur** and the reasons for the **non-commodification** of labour-power are as follows.

Though apparently it appears as if mine owners/pit owners and workers are entering into the market for the exchange of labour-power and capital on equal basis, in actuality there are many unequal conditions behind this interaction. Here, Marx rightly says

"With the **existence** of capital (in few hands), **the** intercourse (relations people enter into in production process) itself becomes fortuitous for the few. With the holding of capital all intercourse becomes intercourse of individuals particular conditions but not of intercourse of individuals as individuals.

**Thus,** the conditions of equality between capitalists and workers **in** the labour market are crucial for the **commodification** of labour-power

**In** slate mines the workers do not own **the** means of production **They** have no hold on their means of production nor **on the product they are** producing. Further, the massive **unemployment, underemployment and** landlessness forces them to the slate work as it is the **only means** of

**subsistence**, thereby they **are** more compelled to work in the mines and are therefore dependent on **mine** owners for their sustenance. Under **these** conditions of **non-ownership** of means of **production**, poverty and **concomitant** dependency, the question of equality between the workers and mine owners does not arise and thereby the value of labour-power of mine workers is drastically reduced much below their actual value. The workers have little scope to bargain on their wages and are unable to enter into the labour market on equal grounds with mine owners. Further, the presence of reserve army of unemployed decreases the strategic position of mine workers and their dominance on labour market. Marx here says that

"the presence of massive **unemployment** and underemployment decreases the value of **labour-power**".

Thus, in Markapur region under the objective conditions of non ownership of means of production, extreme unemployment and ungainful agriculture, mine workers have no freedom to sell their labour according to their will and are compelled to work for the wages and conditions prescribed by the mine owners. Under these conditions the mine owners exploit the workers by paying them extreme low wages **besides** making them work for longer hours. The workers have no **minimum** facilities in their work place and have no hold over their working **conditions**. Their employment itself depends on the whims and fancies of their employers **and** workers are denied their basic **rights**. The conditions of **low wages make** them debt ridden under their employers which further empowers the **employers** to dominate them. **The** workers lose even their minimum and basic **freedom of** leaving their jobs as they have to repay huge debts to their **employers and** therefore are forced to work as bonded **labours**

The situation is the same **even** with respect to the relations **between** the mine **owners/pit** owners and raw slate **cutters**.

As Marx says, the rate of surplus-value depends on the exploitation of labour-power and the mass of the surplus-value produced is determined by the number of workers simultaneously **exploited**. According in **Markapur** the mine owners and pit owners accumulated huge sums of surplus by exploiting thousands of slate workers.

Distribution of Productive Forces and **Non-Commodif i cat** ion of Labour-power in Slate Industry of Markapur:

Before 1980s the entire production of slates in Markapur was based on the raw material supplied from the hinterland. That is, all the factories were producing stone based slates. Here workers neither owned objects of labour (slate stone) nor means *of* labour (large scale *machinery* in the factories nor small tools in the companies). That is, **workers have** no hold on means of production.

**TABLE:8.3**

Ownership of Means of Production in Slate Industry of Markapur

| Group                | Means of Production                     |  | Product                          |
|----------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|
|                      | Objects of Labour                       | Instruments of Production                  |                                  |
| Factory owner        | Raw slate stone                         | machinery (electricity <b>based</b> )      | <b>Slates</b>                    |
| Household unit owner | Raw slate <b>stone</b> (may or may not) | machinery ( <b>Non-electricity based</b> ) | Slates ( <b>may or may not</b> ) |
| Factory worker       | ---                                     |  | —                                |

They own nothing but their labour-power. Due to the presence of massive unemployment and underemployment and in the absence of gainful **agriculture** there was abundant supply of cheap labour force both in town and countryside of **Markapur** thereby decreasing the value of labour-power of workers. Under these conditions, the functioning of slate industry is characterized by numerous dependency relations and exploitative processes as described in the following pages.

The "Subcontracting **System**" between Factories and Companies in Slate Industry of Markapur:

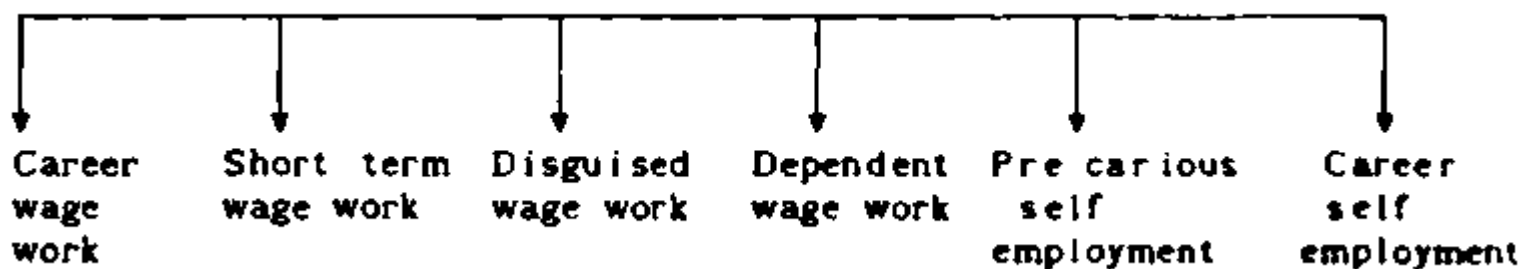
The "subcontracting"<sup>13</sup> system is widely present in slate industry of Markapur. Before 1980s when natural slate industries were healthy and booming, the large-scale units, that is, factories used to sub-contract certain phases of slate manufacturing to small scale units, that is. slate companies. Slate companies in Markapur are dominated by casual labour. They in fact are sweat shops where cheap labour in the **form of women and children** is engaged without provision of any welfare **benefits**. These slate **companies** under the subcontract system perform specific stages of slate manufacturing and supply slates back to large scale units. Slate companies get a fixed price for each finished structure that it **produces**. **Thus,** here, workers of small firms, that **is,** companies are converted **into** disguised wage workers of the larger **firm**.

The main point to be noted **is that** the large firms are **able** to decrease their fixed capital costs, and to **remove as many workers as possible** from their pay roll. **Thereby decreasing the cost of product ion,** evading factory legislations and **minimum wages**. Thus, **the subcontracting** system is exploitative to the wages labourers. **Interestingly in Markapur,**



there is also the reverse way of sub contracting, where, the small-scale units buy the raw material directly, gets done some stages of production through large-scale units, gives the finishing touches to them and directly sell the products themselves. This is possible in the recent years because of the existing multiple sub-leasing system in factories.

These subcontracting relationships between large and small enterprises and vice-versa are paralleled by the various intermediate employment relationships between the two polar extremes of "Career wage work" and "Career self-employment". These intermediate relationships can be collectively described as "casual work" and they are characterized by the lack of even a moderate degree of stability and security of income and work opportunities .



The above typology of social relations of production and appropriation of casual labour is not only useful in examining the employment of individual workers but also in examining the structuring of firms and relationships between smaller and larger enterprises and the various working groups located in these units.

This two way subcontracting system between large and small units is leading to dominance over casual labour. This sub-contracting system is thus a deliberate means by which the owners of capital can increase the diversity and profitability of production without substantially increasing

their own long-term commitments like provision of **minimum wages**, Employment Security Insurance, Provident Fund and other social and monetary benefits to workers.

The mutual understanding and sharing of the **manufacturing** process of slates between slate industries and companies is one way of evading the provision of numerous benefits and facilities to be given for a factory worker. Further, the concentration of workers in companies gives factory owners a relief from trade union problems which would be more in slate factories than in companies. Thus, the subcontracting between factories and companies facilitates continuous production of slates and at the same time avoiding the provision of any benefits to workers.

**"Multiple Leasing System"** in Natural Slate Factories:

In recent years, there is increasing trend of "multiple leasing" of natural stone factories in **Markapur**. **Here**, different stages or sections of slate manufacturing within a single unit are leased to different people. Normally each factory is leased to four to five **people**. Here, there will be no relation between workers of different sections. Workers of each section are related to their own contractor or sub-leaser and in no way related to actual factory owner. This splitting up of factory **into various** sections protect lease holders from the **problems** of worker\*' unions and exercise greater control over labour **while reducing the labour costs** directly by avoiding the provisions of factory legislations.

J. Harris (1985) study of functioning of small **enterprises in the** engineering industry of Coimbatore, South **India**, also **makes the same point**.

However, there, the units are multiple **owned** rather than **leased**.

**Thus**, in most of the slate factories **of Markapur, employees** receive neither provident Fund nor **Employees** Security Insurance. Further, as the workers are not enrolled in factory registers, there is no security for their jobs as they can be removed easily. Thereby, most of the factory workers are daily wage workers where majority of them get wages below the minimum wages act.

Increasing trend of **"Non-Specific"** labour:

Another significant practice followed in Markapur stone slate factories is the employment of few "specific labourers" who are considered as permanent registered employees and large section of **"non-specific"** casual labour who are devoid of any special benefits. Most of **these** "non-specific" labour employment is unstable and are easily replaceable. According to Bienefeld and Schmitz, this has been the predominant trend in many capitalist enterprises in the periphery. This use of large number of non-specific labour is an important means of controlling and co-opting labour while continuing to extract surplus **value**

Piece-rate System:

Another characteristic of working **conditions prevailing in slate** industry of Markapur is the presence of piece-wage system. **Though** **apparent ly** piece-wage system sounds **attractive with the notion that the** more the workers **produce, the** more the **wages**, in reality, it incorporates a very comprehensive exploitation process. **Marx commenting on the** **piece-wages** says that the quantity of **labour under piece-rate system is**

controlled by the work itself, which must be of good average quality if the **piece-rate** prices are to be paid in **full**. Since the quality and intensity of work are here controlled by the very form of wage, superintendence of labour becomes to a great extent superfluous, thereby **piece-wages** is a organized system of exploitation and oppression. Further, piece-rate system makes the worker strain his labour-power as intensely as possible thereby capitalists can increase the yield of the working day by intensifying labour.<sup>18</sup> Besides this, because of piece-wages, in the slate industry workers have no paid holidays. Even when work is stopped due to no fault of workers like, lack of power, irregular supply of raw **material**, workers are made to undergo loss of their wages, thereby the **average** working days in slate industry of **Markapur** is around 20 to 22 days in a month. Further, in the lean season, that is, from June to December the working days will become much less due to lack of demand for the product

Another significant feature of wage **system** in **Markapur** is that **wages** are paid at the end of each week. Thus, the worker advances the **use-value** of his labour-power to the **capitalist**. He lets the capitalist consume it before he receives payment of the **price**. Everywhere the worker allows credit to the capitalist. This credit **sometimes** leads to loss of **wages** of the workers. This is, **because**, when the **wages** are paid at the end of the week, the workers are forced to buy their **means** of subsistence on credit thereby paying higher prices and are **tied** to the shop **which gives him goods** on credit.

**In** these conditions of **non-ownership** of objects of labour, **means** of labour **and under** the conditions of **unemployment and absence of goods** -

agriculture the workers are unable to endow their labour as an **independent** existence as they are **dependent** excessively **on** their employers and thereby are unable to sell their labour-power as a commodity.

Labour Saving Technology:

From early 1980s the development of **enamel** and plastic industries utilising labour-saving technology put further pressure on wage earners in slate factories. If we observe the conversion of erstwhile slate (stone based) factories to enamel and plastic units it is quite clear that due to increasing demand and profit rate of enamel slate, they opted for these units. Thus, here we may quote from Marx,

"Labour-saving mechanisms are the main weapon producing and reproducing the industrial '**reserve** army of **labour**', through which wages are kept fluctuating around the value of commodity labour-power, and through which the **appropriation** of surplus is normally guaranteed to the capitalists"

We know that the presence of **massive** unemployment and **underemployment** decreases the value of **labour-power**. This is true in **Markapur** region, especially in its **hinterland**. And the same **conditions** are being achieved in the town with the development of **labour-saving** industries in the form of enamel, plastic and cardboard industries and with the decline of labour oriented stone based slate **industries**

Consequently, the erstwhile slate workers are moving to other fields particularly to agriculture work not only in **Markapur** region but also **V-**outside regions. This is reflected in the form of heavy streams of seasonal migration visible in the **Markapur** region. **Agricultural** labours is

the hinterland of **Markapur** migrate to coastal areas of Andhra and participate in sowing and harvesting of paddy, **cotton**, tobacco, plucking and transporting of mangoes etc.

Discussions with ex slate workers and agricultural workers in many villages brought to light the above facts. To mention, discussions with the people of Gajjalakonda and padamatapalli villages of Donakonda **mandal** reveal that though five to six years back they worked both in slate factories and mines, now most of them go for tobacco and cotton work in the surrounding villages. Further, in the paddy sowing and harvesting season they move to Narasarao pet and Guntur regions besides going to Vijayawada during summer season to undertake mango plucking and transporting activities.

The role of **Mark a pur** slate industry is declining in terms of providing employment not only in town but also in its hinterland. Particularly in the hinterland region, this is more visible if we **observe the** declining number of villages from which workers are coming to **slate factories**. Extensive discussions with workers and trade union **members** revealed **that**, before mid 1980s, workers from almost all the **villages** of **Markapur mandal** and from majority villages of **Tarlupadu mandal**, used to work in slate factories. **However**, in the recent years workers **only from few villages** which are very near to town viz **Vemulakota, Sreerampuram, Niharampalli**, are coming. This clearly shows the declining **role of slate industry in the** development of **Markapur's** hinterland

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Alison MacEwen **Scott**, in Ray **Brombley &** Chris Gerry (**Edt**) 1979, p **108**.

<sup>2</sup> **Capital**, vol. I, 1976, 57.

<sup>3</sup> **Ibid**, 270.

<sup>4</sup> **Ibid**, 271.

<sup>5</sup> **Ibid**, 272.

<sup>6</sup> **Ibid**, 68.

Though the production of raw silk in the hinterland of **Dharmavaram** constitutes only 25 percent of total raw silk consumed, this necessitated the growth of reeling and twisting units and raw silk distribution centres. This led to initiation of raw silk selling as a separate activity in silk industry thereby people besides buying from local **reelers** also got product from Bangalore and Mysore and started establishing number of raw silk shops. This removed the weavers from dependency on erstwhile master weavers or silk merchants for their raw material and began buying product **locally**.

<sup>8</sup> Max weber in his analysis of economic change in his book "General Economic **History** ",1961,99-101, talks about two extreme kinds of craft workers They are:

Price worker and

Wage worker

Price Worker: He produces freely for the market, **stocks**, and sells his products and has command over raw material and tools.

Wage worker: He is in the service as a wage worker, not in possession of raw materials and tools but only bringing to market his labour

Between these two extremes is the one who produces to **order**, and **sells** to a merchant or to an entrepreneur who possesses the monopoly of hi\* labour power. Here the craftsman owns his tools but what he lacks is capital and an independent access to the market **This**, **Weber** calls **price worker**. (extracted from the **article** "**Weavers, Merchants & Company** The Hand loom Industry in South-Eastern **India**, 1750-1790, S **Arasaratnam**, The Indian Economic and social History Review. Vol 17, July-Sept. 1980. pp 257-282.

<sup>9</sup> German Ideology. Marx & Engels, 1984. p 94

<sup>10</sup> **Capital**, vol.1, 1976, p 69.

<sup>11</sup> **Ibid**, 747.

<sup>12</sup> **Ibid**, 757.

Note: By "Subcontracting" we refer to those arrangements **whereby:** The party offering the subcontract (parent firm, enterprise or company) requests another independent **enterprise...to** undertake the whole or part of an order it has received instead of doing the work itself, while assuming full responsibility for the work **vis-a-vis** the customer. Subcontracting **differs** from the mere purchase of **ready-made** parts and components in that there is an actual contract between the two parties setting out the specifications by the order. (**Wantanabe**, 1971, 54.). **For** details see **Wantanabe**, S. 1971 **"Subcontracting**, Industrialization and employment creation", International Labour Review, Vol.104, pp 51-76.

14

John Harris defines **"Multiple Ownership"** as "the ownership of several units by the same individual(s). This is a general feature of the ownership of small scale industries in Coimbatore. He further says that the multiple ownership reflects various forms of **"splitting"**, where a single workshop is registered as two or more separate **companies** so as to avoid payment of higher levels of sales tax or control tax. These various reasons for multiple ownership are interwoven with consideration of labour cost and control. It is also to protect against the effects of unionization and excursive greater control over labour, while also reducing labour costs directly by avoiding the provision of the factories legislation, 1984, pp 144-149.

**Bienefeld** Manfred & Schmitz, Hubert, 1976, "capital Accumulation and Employment in the Periphery: A programme of research", IDS Discussion paper No 98, University of Sussex, Brighton.

<sup>16</sup> **Capital**, vol.1. 1976, p 695.

<sup>17</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>18</sup> **Ibid**, p 699.

<sup>19</sup> **Ibid**, p 35.