CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

II. Review of Literature

A systematic review of earlier studies on the subject provides the basis of the ideas and interpretations of the present work and make the findings more wide and meaningful. Hence, an attempt has been made to present a brief resume of research findings related to the labour problems. While analysing various aspects of this problems, emphasis has been laid on the role of socio-economic forces influencing the economic and working conditions of the workers. The review has been categorised into three sections first books as well as doctoral theses both published and unpublished, second reports, proceedings, research projects, case studies etc, and third journals, articles and working papers etc.

II.1 Books and Doctoral Theses

From time to time, various publications have been made by different institutions and individuals on different aspects of the labour problems in cotton mill industry, comprising spinning mill, handloom and powerloom sectors. Similarly, a number of scholars and institutions have analysed various aspects of labour problems in many other industries.
Channa analyses the early beginning of the Indian cotton industry and makes a comparative study of textile industry in different regions and states. According to him, the cotton spinning and weaving mills are most widely spread and are interwoven with the economic life of the country. Wages in spinning department are standardised, but owing to the absence of organisation among the workers, the standard is often disturbed to the detriment of the workers. His findings are that the conditions of health, sanitary, and housing as well as the standard of living of workers in cotton textile mills are not up to satisfaction.

Thakkar examines the different aspects of labour force in cotton industry of Bombay. In this connection, he analyses the factors responsible for contraction of female labour force, the method of recruitment of workers, various problems of the mill administration and working conditions as well as the social welfare facilities of workers etc. While he finds an improvement in the standard of literacy of the labour force, he concludes that various factors have been responsible for the downward trend in labour turnover.

Shah takes up about 30 cotton mills located in Bombay, investigates into their methods of workers’ recruitment and tries to measure the extent of labour turnover in these mills. His study concludes that a number of factors like restlessness, instability, absenteeism, village-link, methods of recruitment etc. are responsible for labour turnover. Finally, he suggests various remedial measures.

Pandit who analyses the life of female workers inside and outside the factories, suggests a number of measures for improvement. She urges the employers as well as the Government authorities to make
provision for maternity and sickness benefits and suggests improved provisions for housing, education and transport facilities for women workers as well as the appointment of lady inspectors inside the factories.

Ghose observes in his study that the absolute dependence of weavers on the moneylenders and middlemen for their supplies of yarn creates the necessity for setting up of spinning mills in and around the weaving districts. He also suggests that the spinning mills should be set up either by weavers themselves or by the Government in order to ensure adequate and necessary supplies of yarn at reasonable price.

Young, in his *Understanding Labour Problems* observes that no labourer is free from problems such as getting enough take-home wages to meet family expenses or having adequate savings to meet unforeseen contingencies. The labour class people are suffering from a sense of insecurity due to the fear of unemployment which is the result of the introduction of new machines and new technology.

Mitra, in his work, *The Cotton Weavers of Bengal* studies the trends in Bengal’s economy between 1757 and 1833 as well as the nature of the impact of decline in general economy of Bengal and the search on the part of cotton weavers for alternative employment.

Das, studies in detail the development of handloom industry vis-a-vis state economy in cooperative and non-cooperative sectors. The author also offers some concrete suggestions for further development of handloom industry.

Mehta and Shanbhag, in their study, *Indian Textiles: An Inter-Sectoral Perspective* mention that working conditions in small
powerlooms are full of hazards. The survey which they had conducted in the smaller powerlooms at Surat reveals the serious nature of the workers' problems. This prompted the authors to remark that had these workers been working in bigger units, their employers would have been compelled under the Factories Act to provide for better working conditions for them. The authors also focus on the impact of fluctuations in textile economy on labour which becomes the centre around which the textile policies revolve.

Poddar\textsuperscript{10} traces the important technological developments that have taken place in the textile industry during past five decades in his project \textit{Fifty Years In Textile Industry}. He concludes that the compulsion of constantly rising labour costs has led to shortening of sequences and a very high degree of automation.

For his project, \textit{Industrial Labour in India},\textsuperscript{11} Panandikar has had the opportunity of studying first hand the labour conditions in a number of industries. According to him, the main obstacle to industrial and economic progress of India is the absence of an efficient, steady and contented labour force and these hurdles can be overcome by the adoption of certain measures. He also observes that the workers are rapidly becoming more conscious of their powers and of their new needs and desire.

Saxena\textsuperscript{12} for his work, \textit{Labour Problems And Social Welfare} investigates into various aspects of labour problems in several industries. According to him, except in some cases the working conditions of the workers in small units are poor, and the quality as well as quantity of the production during night shift in the industries are not upto satisfaction.
Kumar analyses in detail the technical, economic and institutional factors which broadly determine the extent of utilisation of installed capacity in cotton textile industry. As regards the night shifts in the mills, his observation is that "workers are generally reluctant to work in the third shift." He also finds that neglect of duty, loitering, absenteeism and general indiscipline are very high among workers.

Patterson surveys the general background of labour problem arising in industries. His study convinces him of the disruption of family life when women are employed in the factories and of the importance of the role of the State in providing social security, improving the working conditions, and reducing excessive hours of work through labour legislations. He also stresses upon the role of organised labour and gains made through collective bargaining.

The ILO, in its publication, *World Textile Industry*, Vol I focuses the size of the textile industries in many countries, their complexities and the intricate structure of their trade relations. The study also attempts to inter-relate the economic and social factors in such a way as to indicate the economic conditions upon which an improvement in labour standard depends.

Broughton studies the conditions of workers in connection of his project *Labour in Indian Industries*. He forms the opinion that the workers suffer from many types of diseases as they live in insanitary conditions and excessive overcrowding. Obviously this affects not only health but also the family life of the workers. He also observes that the deleterious effect on health of women workers is more as they have to
do double duty, one, long hours at factory and another, coming home to attend to the needs of the family, and for that the infant mortality rate among them is very high.\textsuperscript{18}

Sabbarwal\textsuperscript{19} attempts to evaluate the role of management of industrial organisation of cotton textile industry. His observation prompts him to comment that there is a downward trend in terms of production, expansion and profits. The author quotes in his work 'The Varshney Study Team Report of 1975' which mentions that wornout machineries, dependence on monsoon, preferential treatment given to decentralised sector by the Government, sluggishness in demand, controlled cloth scheme, rise in cotton prices, power shortage, labour unrest are the causes of sickness in the textile industry.

Abhyankar in his \textit{Industrial Labour and Social Security}\textsuperscript{20} argues that the State through legislation should protect the workers from long hours of work since short hours tend to promote efficiency and output of individual worker. He categorically states that any attempt to impose minimum wage in a particular industry without accurate data is bound to undermine its competitive strength and this does more harm than good to the workers themselves.

Mehta\textsuperscript{21} examines the historical dimension of how the Gujaratis utilised the indigenous institutions in promoting the textile sector of Ahmedabad and what compulsion led them to undertake industrial activity.

Goldar\textsuperscript{22} takes up five industrial groups textiles, metals, chemicals, engineering and other industries in his study for the period
1951-65. He examines the trend in partial and total factor productivity. His study reveals that the growth rate in total factor productivity for aggregate industry has been positive but quite low, and performance of some modern industries like metals, chemicals etc. have been poor as compared to traditional industries.

Karnik’s collection of essays on labour problems written over a period of years deals with problems and prospects of trade union, constructive labour-management relationship, economic development and women workers in industry.\textsuperscript{23}

In his project “\textit{Indian Industrial Labour with Special Refernce To Textile Labour}”,\textsuperscript{24} T.N. Rostagi examines the economics of labour welfare, industrial housing, employer-employee relationship, labour legislation etc. According to him, textile mills should formulate their labour policies in collaboration with the Central and State Governments as well as the trade unions; and should be motivated by the principle that all measures should guarantee the conditions necessary for stable employment. While M.P. Gandhi\textsuperscript{25} makes a careful study of the magnitude and different problems of handloom industry, S.Mishra makes a policy analysis of India’s textile industries.\textsuperscript{26} P.C. Mahapatra, in his The Economics of Handloom Industry,\textsuperscript{27} though confines himself to survey the handloom industry of Orissa, speaks on the disadvantages for the Orissan spinning industry. He observe that spinning mills of Orissa depend upon other states for bulk of their yarn requirements, and consequently the Orissan weavers get yarn at higher cost due to transport charges and imposition of taxes.
Trivedi and Desai,\textsuperscript{28} have made a case study of the operating performance of NTC mills in Gujarat as a whole with regard to production, sales, inventory, capacity utilisation and provision of facilities for employees and their participation in management during the period from 1974 to 1985. Their findings are revealing. The management of NTC mills could not provide facilities for labour welfare beyond those which were obligatory. The participation of workers in management was limited to routine decisions of NTC mills. There were no major strikes or lock-out during the period, but from the view point of operating performance, NTC mills have failed in controlling wage cost and utilising the installed capacity at a higher level.

Gharjale in his \textit{Economics of Cooperative Mills in India},\textsuperscript{29} makes a case study of the spinning mills in the Latur district of Maharashtra. His analysis proves that by undertaking different phases of expansion programme, it enables the cooperative spinning mill to get economies of scale and minimise cost. One startling fact he points out is that ratio of cotton cost to total cost is falling.

A survey was undertaken by INTWF on socio-economic conditions of powerloom workers in Bhiwandi. According to the survey report, housing conditions, working conditions, sanitary conditions are very poor; and the level of income is very low, other facilities are unsatisfactory and the role of absenteeism is very high.\textsuperscript{30}

A joint study was made by the RMMS/INTUC on the problems of powerloom industry by undertaking a survey of powerloom centres
in different parts of India. The findings of the survey report reveal that due to the slack implementation of the labour legislations, the exploitation of the workers of this sector on matter of wage payments, working conditions, social security, living conditions etc continues and there is also no fixed duty hours.

The Textile Enquiry Committee initiated by the Government of Bombay had submitted its report in June 1941. During the enquiry, it was found that loitering of workers during working hours was a common sight, absenteeism and labour turnover was very high, and consequently efficiency suffered. The report points out that if the industry is to prosper, the workers must be taken into confidence and earnest endeavours should be made to remove their just apprehensions while introducing rationalisation in respect of unemployment and adequate increase in earnings. The report also suggests that the authorities and employers should provide certain facilities such as cheap housing and sanitation, and take some measures of welfare like health, primary and vocational education, proper utilisation of leisure hours by the workers.

An enquiry into family budgets of the cotton mill workers at Solapur had been conducted by the Labour Department of the then Government of Bombay in 1925. The enquiry report reveals that nearly half of the expenditure of a worker was on food and the next important item of expenditure was miscellaneous which included the payment of interest on loans, travelling expenses, remittances, medicines, education etc.

The Labour Investigation Committee, appointed by the Government of India, found out during its adhoc surveys that there was evasion of rules and regulations in respect of hours of work and overtime,
employment of children, safety, health and sanitation. Its report says, “In the cotton textile industry appointments for higher posts are very often made from amongst relatives of the employers or of the Directors of Joint Stock Concern” The report reveals that in the process of realising the objective to create a permanent labour force, preference for employment is given to the sons and relatives of the employees of the mills. The report concludes that the evils of nepotism, communalism, and racialism cannot be eradicated unless and until recruiting is done on the merit basis through employment exchanges.

Very often, different project reports have been prepared in Bombay relating to various aspects of labour problems in cotton textile industry. These reports such as “Life and Labour of Weaving-shed Workers working in Birla Spinning and Weaving Mills of Delhi” by A N Gupta, “Welfare Activities in Three Textile Mills in South India” by D Rajgopalan, “A Study of Socio-Economic Conditions of Workers in a Textile Mill” by R Patil, and “Life and Labour of Workers in the Spinning Department of Swadeshi Mills at Kurla with Special Reference to Health” by B D Shroff reveal many interesting aspects of the labourers working in different cotton mills.

11.3 Journals, Articles and Working Papers

Tul pule, in his paper on textile workers, points out that lack of systematic training adversely affects the efficiency and productivity of workers as well as the quality of output and proper operational care of machineries and equipments. His analysis points out that powerloom employers, averse to their workers getting unionised, very often attempt to trample the trade union rights of their workers.
S.R. Despande surveyed 400 odd units in the textile industry and came to the conclusion that except some centres, wages are standardised and housing conditions of the workers are dismal. According to him, a feature more prominent in South India than in other centres of the industry is the compulsory medical examination of workers and insistence on a standard of literacy before recruiting the workers.\textsuperscript{40}

The fourth issue of \textit{Textile Industry in South India},\textsuperscript{41} observes that in general the labour relations in the textile industry have improved considerably. It also points out that since the goodwill of workers is an asset, conscious employers attempt to earn such goodwill.

Dipak Mazumdar in his paper makes a comprehensive review of the development of handloom, powerloom and mill sectors of the Indian textile industry. He evaluates the impact of the textile policy on employment, consumption of cloth, exports and technological change in large scale industries.\textsuperscript{42}

Radha Kumar who surveyed the family budgets of cotton textile workers of Bombay concludes that high proportion of widows employed by the mill owners of Bombay and the prohibition of night work for women as reported by M.D. Morris, were the reasons for decline in the number of women employed in the cotton textile industry.\textsuperscript{43}

S. Lal discusses how a sick industrial unit can be restored to economic viability without retrenching surplus staff and how in such process of restoration, the alternative idea of retaining only the required staff at an appropriate wage is also feasible.\textsuperscript{44} In another survey,
conducted by ATIRA, it is reported that cotton textile mills in Bombay
and Ahmedabad work for 26 days in a month whereas the mills in the
southern region work for 28 or 29 days per month.45

Inaugurating a three-day workshop on “Problems and Prospects
of Cooperative Spinning Mills in Andhra Pradesh,” Kumar remarked
that the overall results of the cooperative spinning mills were quite
disappointing. In his opinion, the mills not only faced financial constraint
but also suffered from managerial problems and technical deficiencies.46
M D. Maratha, in his working paper “The Textile Policy” says that the
new capacity in spinning mills, created on grounds of under development
of a region or of the people or of a caste or of a community under the
State patronage cannot be immune to the influence of the market forces
and only add to the list of sick units.47

Jaya Raman presents an analysis of the trends in man-day losses
due to industrial disputes during the period from 1973 to 1982 as an
indicator of the state of industrial relations in the country.48 The author
note that over the period there has been an increase in the total man-
day losses and the number of workers involved have come down, the
incidence of industrial disputes was much more in larger establishments
employing more than 1000 workers, and about 90 per cent of the disputes
got settled each year. He also observes that both time loss per dispute
and per worker were more due to lock-outs than strikes and as per the
official data, the time loss per worker and per dispute were more than
all-India averages for Kerala and West Bengal, and were in tune with
the national average for the rest of the Indian states.49
Reedy and Bathaih in their working paper focus the attention on the utilisation of the machineries to maximise profits. They recommend the type of products that optimises the profit from the available resources. The results of the analysis indicate that since profit contribution of the 20\textsuperscript{th} cone, 30\textsuperscript{th} hanks and 60\textsuperscript{th} hanks is low, they should not be produced and the total profitability should not be affected. The scholars conclude that since the spinning department is the most crucial one, its utilisation should be increased by reducing machine breakdowns and end brakes.\textsuperscript{50}

\section*{Foot Notes and References}


14. Ibid.


18. Ibid.


29 N B Gharjale, *Economies of Cooperative Spinning Mills in India*, (A Case Study of Latur), Publication Scheme, Jaipur, 1992

30 Indian National Textile Workers' Federation's Survey Report on "Socio-Economic Conditions of Powerloom Workers in Bhiwandi,"
31 A Joint Study by RMMS & INTUC on “Problems of Powerloom Industry in India: A Trade Union view,” (Sponsored & Financed by IGLWF), Brussels, Oct 1984

32 Report of Textile Enquiry Committee, Govt of Bombay, Bombay, June 1941

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34 Main Report of Labour Investigation Committee, Govt of India, Manager of Publication, Delhi, 1946

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36 D Rajgopalan, Welfare Activities in Three Textile Mills in South India, A project work submitted to Academy Council, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, 1960

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38 B D Shroff, Life And Labour of Workers in the Spinning Department with Special Reference to Health, A project work submitted to Academic Council, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, 1947


44 S Lal, "How to Prevent Industrial Sickness", *Navran*, Delhi, 1978, p 115


49 Ibid, pp 10-16