Although the main occupation of the Indians during the 7th century A.D. was agriculture as it is still to-day, industries also flourished during this period. Hiuen Teang casually refers to some professions, Bāna while describing the marriage preparations of Rājyaśrei and presents of Bhāskarvarma to Narāyaṇa, incidently mentions several industries.¹

The textile industry seems to have been one of the main industries of the age, textile. Hiuen Teang states that the clothing of the people was made of silk, muslin, calico, linen and fine wool of two varieties.² One variety of wool was made of sheep’s or goat’s hair. Another variety was made from the hair of a wild animal, it was fine and soft and easily spun and woven. It was prized as a material for clothing.³ The silk industry was prominent at Tekka (territory between the Sindhu and Beas), Satadru and kanyakubja where people wore garments of glossy silk.⁴ Perhaps uḍyāna, ranach and Mathura were noted for cotton industry.⁵ People of uḍyāna had clothing only of white cotton and they wore little else.⁶ People of ranach wore ordinarily cotton garments,⁷ while Mathura produced a fine species of cotton,⁸ possibly Langhān and Kāshmir produced linen. The people of Langhān and of Kāshmir
wore white linen. Kashmirians also wore leather doublets.9

Bâna, while describing the marriage preparations of the princess Kâjyasri, mentions the textures of Kshauma (linen probably made from the fibres of the plants of linseed), Bâdara (cotton) Dukula, Ìlalatantuji, Amsuka and Netra.10 Amarkosa gives the terms 'Kshauma' and 'Dukula' as synonyms. The terms 'Netra' and 'Amsuka' were also believed to be synonyms.11 But from the description of Bâna it appears that he uses the terms in different meanings. Kshauma and Dukula were probably prepared from the fibres of the plants, while Ìlalatantuji, Amsuka and Netra were perhaps different types of silk.12

Kshauma was made possibly in Assam because Bâna describes 'Kshauma cloth' as one of the presents of Bhâskarvarman to Harsha. It must have been very soft as cloths made of it were rolled up in baskets of coloured reeds.13 Bâna states that 'Dukula' was manufactured in undravardhanabhakti (undradesh). It might have been made from the bark of plants.14 Bâna possibly uses the terms 'Dukula' and Dukula in the same sense.15 From Dukula gâris, chadders, covers of pillows and utteredas were made.16 'Ìlalatantuji' and 'Amsuka' were probably made from rearing worms.17 They were perhaps a type of silk. Amsuka had two varieties (i) made in the country and (ii) imported
from China called 'Chināmsauka'. Kālidāsa, Dandin and Bāna refer to Chināmsauka. 'Netra' was also a type of silk which was produced probably in Bengal. A silk called 'Netrasājyanaka' was made in Bengal up to the 14th century A.D. 'Hinda' was perhaps a coloured variety of 'Netra' which was usually white. 'Stabareska' probably a type of silk, mentioned by Bāna, was brought from Persia.

It appears from the evidences of Bāna and Huien Tsang that knitting, embroidery, printing, embroidery and dyeing of different types of cloth were prevalent in the age of Harṣa. Spotted and red coloured sāris (chumdari) with various designs of flowers and birds are mentioned by Bāna. He refers to tie and dye work (Sanskrit word 'Bhakti', Hindi word 'Bhānta' and Gujarāti word 'Bhāta') while describing the marriage preparations of Rājyasri. Ancient city matrons prepared clothes of linen, cotton, bark silk, spider's thread, muslin and shot silk. Then the textures were dyed. Sometimes they were spotted with saffron paste. Even to-day the tie and dye work of Gujarāt, Rajasthāna and Punjāb is very popular.

Huien Tsang observes that the dress of the kings and grandees was extraordinary. Bāna
reveals that Harṣa had a lower garment (dvitiyāmbaram) shot with silk threads and an upper garment (āmbara) spangled with worked stars. In another place he states that Harṣa wore two robes of bark-silk marked with a pair of flamingoes. Bāṇa mentions that Bālāti had a gown of bleached white silk, lighter than a snake’s album and underneath a saffron reticula with spots of different colours. The silk robes worn by the ladies of Harṣa’s court were adorned sometimes with hundreds of different flowers and birds. Yasovati, while lying on her couch, saw the reflections of figures embroidered on the canopy. Wonderful umbrellas, soft woven clothes and smooth figured textures are also mentioned by Bāṇa in the list of presents sent by Bhāskarvarman to Harṣa. The above references show that knitting, embroidery and dyeing were important handicrafts in Harṣa’s time.

Through Hiuen Tsang and I-Tseng in the 7th century A.D. declared that Indian clothing was without tailoring, but this does not seem to be quite true. Bāṇa mentions that some textures were measured and cut by patrons expert in the art. Garments such as waist-coats, coats etc. worn by males and clothes like bodice, skirts etc. worn by females probably indicate that the art of tailoring was not unknown. Some of the Ajantā paintings also
suggest the same thing. Vātsayāna (4th century A.D.),
also mentions tailoring as one of the arts. Therefore
Shri Vaidya's statement that tailoring was introduced
probably after Narada's time by the Arabs in the 8th
century and perhaps even later by the Turks in the
11th century does not appear to be quite right. Both
uncut and sewn garments were in use.

Bāna and Hsiuan Tsang mention varieties
of ornaments, vessels, instruments
and weapons. Ornaments worn on the
head, in the ears, round the neck,
the forearms, wrists, fingers, the waist and ankles,
are mentioned by both the authorities and some contemporary
inscriptions. As already noted Hsiuan Tsang refers to
abundance of gold, silver and copper in different parts
in India. He also mentions iron, white jade, crystal
lenses and precious stones. Bāna states that several
gold workers were engaged in hammering gold at the time
of the marriage preparations of Rājaśrī. Valuable
ornaments with the finest gems, drinking vessels
embossed by skilful artists and different types of cups
were presented to Narada by Bhāṣakaravarman. Hsiuen
Tsang mentions vessels of gold, silver, copper, iron
and other materials. According to Hsiuen Tsang the
common people mostly used utensils of earthenware, but
metal vessels were not uncommon among the upper classes.
The same authority also refers to the full size statue of
Buddha in gold made for worship at the assembly of Kanauj, to which the king also presented as an offering a golden dish, a golden cup, seven golden ewers, one golden staff and 3000 gold coins.  

Huien Tsang mentions weapons like spears, shields, swords or sabres, bows and arrows, battle-axes, halberds and javelins. Bena names bows, arrows, helmets, mace, lance, swords and sharp pointed spears. Dandin also mentions the bow, discus, lance, dart, spear, club and the mace. Thus it may be inferred that the metal industry was well developed during the age.

Ivory work also seems to have been an important profession in the age. Huien Tsang states that Kanyaksha, Kalinga and the forests of the country produced elephants which were highly valued. The kings of those days had thousands of elephants in their armies, naturally it encourages the ivory industry. Ivory was used for making or adorning furniture in manufacturing seals and for other such purposes. The presents sent by the king of Assam to Harsha included ivory boxes and rings of hippopotamus ivory. The four legs of the king's Simhasana (throne) were inlaid with ivory. Kādamāra mentions ivory-fan and bed-stead with ivory legs. Āśākumāra carita also mentions ivory fans.

Besides precious metals the country abounded
In rate geas again, various kinds of precious stones of different names were collected from the nearby islands. Sthānesvara, Sanyakubja, Atali, and Valabhi, Kapisa and Tekka were the great centres of gems and other precious things. An exquisitely ornamented umbrella with jewelled ribs, crest jewels, pearl necklaces, quantities of pearl, shell and sapphire were among the presents of Bhāskarvarman to Harsha.

No Jeweller's art appears to have been followed with such industry and success in ancient India as that of pearl setting. This art was so highly developed that it gave rise to a branch of science called Ratnamarikā (examination of Jewels) which was sufficiently old as to be included in the list of 64 Arts mentioned by Vātayāyana. Both the Brhatasamhitā and Arthasastra of Kautilya mention pearl necklaces ranging from one to a thousand and eight strings, while the Amarakosa gives a shorter list.

Bāṇa mentionsEkāvali (pearl necklace of a single string) and 'Nakshatramālā' (pearl necklace of 27 strings). Pearls were used for inlay work in the manufacture of ornaments, drinking vessels and sword handles and also for decorating dresses. The art of cutting and polishing diamonds, rubies,
in particular was used for piercing other precious stones, while rubies were generally utilised for inlay work. Bāna and Hien Tsang refer to beads and other small articles made of valuable stones. Kālatī wore a golden bracelet with an emerald crocodile-shaped signet. Her neck was adorned with a collar of pearls. Bhaṇḍī had ear rings of sapphire and pearl and diamond bracelets round his fore-arms. The feudatory chiefs who came to visit Kārṣaṇa wore anklets inlaid with precious stones. Vyāgroketa had glass rings and a tin armlet decorated with white gudanta beads.

Masonry and architecture seem to have been well developed. It appears that most of the towns had walls all around. Hien Tsang observes that the walls of the towns were built mostly of bricks or tiles. The walls had wooden or bamboo towers. The houses had balconies and belvederes made of wood with a coating of lime or mortar and roofs of tiles. The houses were built of bricks or boards and were covered with common or coarse grass. The walls of the houses were covered with lime and mud and the floors were purified with cow-dung. The evidence of the Chinese authority shows that bricks, tiles and wood were the chief building materials; but lime or mortar was also in use.
The architect of the Buddhist monasteries was wonderful. A three storeyed tower was erected at each of the four angles. The beams and the projecting heads were carved with great skill in different shapes. The doors, windows and low walls were painted profusely. The monks' cells were richly decorated on the inside and plain on the outside. There was a high and wide hall in the middle of the building. There were various storeyed chambers and turrets of different height and shape, without any fixed rules. Hsuen Tsang refers to several such Deva Temples and so many sangharāmas (monasteries). The stupas of this type spread all over the country and this type was also adopted by neighbouring countries. Thus we find that the arts of building, architecture and carving were highly developed.

Hsuen Tsang saw a Mahāvihāra 160 to 170 ft. high at Bodh gayā. It was a three storeyed building with a high tower shaped like a pyramid and was built of bricks coated with lime. It had tiers of nīcēś with gold images. Its four walls were adorned with exquisite carvings of pearl strings. On the roof there was a copper Amalaka. There were three lofty halls one behind another and the wood work of which was adorned with gold and silver carvings and studded with precious stones of various colours.
also describes the great temple at Śālanda erected by Narasimha-gupta as being 300 ft high and resembling the great tower at Bodh-gaya. The king of mid India (probably Kāśī) also built a great vihāra at Śālanda.

Bṛha's description of Ārmbhakāryardhana's palace gives us glimpses of the construction of royal palaces. It was a great establishment broadly divided into three main parts (i) Skandhāvāra (outer part of the palace) where feudatories, animals and common people were accommodated (ii) Rājakula (Next to Skandhāvāra inside was the residence of the royal family and of the royal guests and (iii) Inside Rājakula the inner most part was called Dhavalagṛha where the king and the queen resided. There was also a separate apartment for the princes. The palace had several vestibules, closing and opening doors, windows, quadrangles and courts. The courtyards had terraces protected with awnings. The royal palace was surrounded by a wall and protected by a moat.

The houses of the common people were mostly made of wood, bamboo and mud. Probably the village houses and forest dwellings were made of slats of bamboo, leaves, stalks,
reeds and mud. They had garden enclosures with clumps of various flowers and different types of plants and creepers.76

The contemporary sources also refer to industries such as pottery, carpentry, cane-work, leather work, glass work, hunting, fishing and shipping. Washermen and barbers are also mentioned.77

Huen Tsang writes that the household utensils of Indians were mostly earthenware.78 Bana states that multitudes of modellers moulded clay figures of fishes, tortoises, crocodiles, coconuts, plantains and betal trees.79 Bana describing the royal camp of Harsha enumerates a number of vessels some of which (water pots, frying pans, simmering pans etc.) were probably made of dry clay.80 The Ajanta paintings also reveal a number of cooking utensils, other vessels and toys.81 As already noted the houses of ordinary and low class people were usually made of clay and wood with roofs of tiles or grass.82 Bricks and ovens were quite common.83

Carpentry seems to have been well advanced during this age. Huen Tsang and

(ii) Carpentry: Bana mentions carts, chariots, boats, ships, wooden furniture, vessels, toys and handles of
ordinarily corded benches were used for seats. The royal family, the grandees, officials and gentry adorned their benches in different ways. The sovereign's dais was exceedingly wide and high and it was dotted with small pearls. The Lion's seat (throne) was mounted by a jewelled foot stool. Bāna mentions the bamboo couch and bamboo baskets.

I-Tsing states that small chairs were used by the senior Buddhist monks and wooden blocks were used by the junior monks. Mats are also mentioned by Hsüan Tsang. Bāna mentions carpenters planning out the marriage altar at the time of Rajyasrī's marriage. He also refers to cane stools and baskets of coloured reeds.

Leather work also seems to have been known.

(iii) Leather work: Bāna and Hsüan Tsang mention leather garments, leather beds, bucklers, strings, drums, girdles etc. Bhairavachārya had an antelope skin, a girdle and other things. The Śabara youth Sarabhaketa had only a short black antelope skin as his garment and on his back he had a leather-quiver made of a bear's skin and covered with a leopard's skin. While describing a cāndāla colony Bāna states that their beds were made of dried skins. It appears that only some ascetics, certain forest dwellers and some low class people used leather garments and beds. At the time of Rajyasrī's marriage leather work vigorously played the festal drums, till they boomed again.
leather bucklers with arming borders and pillows of armuraka leather were among the presents sent by the king of Assam to Harsha. Hsien Tsang also mentions leather doublets, strings, gridles etc. He writes: "People mostly go bare-footed, few wear sandals." But this does not seem to be quite correct. Bana mentions sandals, but we are not sure whether these sandals were made of canvas, wood or leather.

Glass work also seems to have been familiar. Hsien Tsang states that Kashmir and Kuluta produced crystal lenses.

While describing the chamber of Grahavarman and Rajyasri Bana writes that Grahavarman spent the night in gazing at the reflections of Rajyasri in the mirrors of the jewelled walls. Bana mentions a lady holding a looking glass in her left hand. Some of the Ajanta paintings reveal women holding oval shaped mirrors with handles. We have references to the mirror in Desakumara carita also.

Both large boats and big ships continued to be made during the age of Harsha. Also, Hsien Tsang saw large ships plying through the Ganges. He, with about eighty other fellow passengers, sailed through the Ganges - on the way to Mayamukha. Kumara Raja of Assam came to see Harsha at Kajughara with a fleet of 30,000 ships on the way to the assembly at Prayaga, the military followers of Silditya Raja (Harsha and of Kumara Raja (Bhaskaravarman))
embarked in ships and proceeded to the place of the assembly. Dr. R. K. Mookerji writes that large ships with capacities of 200 to 500 passengers were built throughout the Hindu period. The Ajantā paintings in cave No. 2 indicate the same fact. Dandin also refers to the arts of ship building.

Moreover Hiuen Tsang and Bāña mention hunters, butchers, fishermen, public performers and even robbers. Bāña refers to hunters roaming in the country side, therefore hunters, butchers and fishermen must have been an important part of the economic life of the age. Hiuen Tsang was troubled by robbers twice during his travels in India. Once while traveling through the palāsa wood in the Punjab, Hiuen Tsang met a band of fifty robbers and had to run away to save his life. At another time sailing down the Ganges from Ayodhyā, his ship was captured by ten pirate boats and he was to be sacrificed to the deity Durga but he was miraculously saved. Dandin refers to a prince heading a pirate ship. The country between Simhapura and Taxila was frequented by robbers. Bāña refers to villagers who were angry because their ripe grain was plundered and censured their sovereign.

Bāña also refers to medicinal roots, timber, charcoal making and some forest products. At the time of his fatal illness Prabhākaravardhāna was attended by Susena and Rasāyana who had mastered the Ayurveda in all its eight divisions. Kulota produced medicinal roots of much value. Bāña notes wood cutters going with strong
axes to collect timber. He mentions blacksmiths intensifying the heat by burning hews of wood for charcoal. The forest people gathered bundles of sindhy bark, countless sacks of recently uprooted dhästäki flowers of the colour of red ore, plentiful loads of flax and hemp bundles, quantities of honey, peacocks' tail feathers, wreaths of compressed wax etc. Village women carrying baskets full of fruits hastened to neighbouring villages to sell them.

Bëna's mention of various types of cosmetics and ointments proves that such fine articles were made in abundance. The ladies of high status who attended the marriage ceremony of hajyasri, prepared cosmetics made of saffron paste, clotted by Bälacana essence unguents (Nukhalepanani) as well as strings of cloves (lavenga māla) mingled with Kakkola fruit, containing nutmegs and large bright lumps of crystalline camphor. Karsha received Goshirsa sandal, cool and pure camphor, scent bags of musk oxen, Kakkola sprays, clove flower bunches and nutmeg clusters as presents from Bhãskaravarman.

The above analysis suggests that various industries were well advanced during this period.