CHAPTER - II

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE 20TH CENTURY

2.0 GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY

"The Madras Presidency officially styled Presidency of Fort. St. George"¹ - the Southern most Province of the British Indian Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century consisted of five major and distinct political entities - Madras Presidency and the Princely States of Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin. The West coast was washed by the Indian Ocean and the East by the Bay of Bengal, but the Northern boundary had been formed by accidents of history and consisted from East to West of Orissa, the Central Provinces, the State of Hyderabad and the Southern most Districts of the Presidency of Bombay. Excluding the five native States, the area of the Presidency was 141,705 sq. miles or 20,000 sq. miles larger than that of the U.K. The native States occupied an additional area of about 10,000 sq. miles. Fort St. George was the fortress of Madras city, the capital of the Presidency, and was so named by its founders in 1640 after England’s patron saint.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Madras Presidency was one of the most extensive of all the British territories in India. It stretched from the tip of the Indian Peninsula, Cape Comorin, halfway up the east coast to Bengal. A part of it lay on the Indian Ocean, touching Bombay Presidency to the North, and another segment extended westward from the Bay of Bengal, bordering on both Bombay Presidency and the native State of Hyderabad. Lady Pentland, whose husband was Governor of Madras from 1912 to 1918, described the extent of the Presidency as "bigger than any other Indian Province except Burma, and nearly five times bigger than Scotland, with a population nearly ten times bigger, speaking seven principal languages: and yet, she continued, "it has a special Madrasi clannishness, perhaps as a recompense for its isolation at an extremity, like Scotland." The saga of Indian independence from the shackles of a colonial empire is unique in that it was not achieved by waging a war for liberation. It is also distinct in that the non-violence as a political weapon became a world heritage. The Muslims came and stayed as conquerors but were eventually diffused in the vast concourse of the Indian polity; or they left. Unlike this event of history, the British came to India as traders but stumbled into an empire. Nations, old and new, face a challenge when conquered as indeed India did, but despite the connivance of evangelists and like others, the British made no ethnic or cultural impact on the country. The salient contribution of the conquest was towards a political and national unification.

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2.1 POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The British advent in India began in the South in 1693, when Madras was acquired by the East India Company two decades before Bombay and half a century before Calcutta or Karachi. Madras was also the first of the Presidencies and its Governor was regarded as next only to the Viceroy. (vide Appendix 2.1) "Being the first of the settlements, it was also the first centre of revolt against colonial rule, a fact that has been unfortunately blacked out from the story of the Freedom Struggle"\(^3\). The sobriquet of "ignorance and rural darkness" attributed to the Madras Presidency by the Viceroy controlling the Empire from Calcutta has understandably a geo-political connotation. Its mercantile backwardness after the development of the natural port of Bombay, made it an administrative and cultural backwater. But this limitation, however, gave an impetus to the politicians and bureaucrats of Madras to learn to depend on their own public life in the country. It is in this context that the inroads, which the influential men of Madras made into the founding of the Indian National Congress, has to be understood.

The years 1891-96 saw a story of repression by Grant Duff, Governor of Madras, a period of tyranny, scandals, blunders and riots. Ironically, he was appointed by the liberal ministry of Gladstone. Wenlock who succeeded him was instrumental in expanding the railways after the Great Famine of 1876-78, but the people of the Presidency saw the ulterior motive

\(^3\) NAIR, C.SANKARAN "An Indian View of the Indian Problem" - (September 1918) p.418.
for the development. The predicament became worse in Ampthill’s time (1901-06). He was intolerant of any criticism and named it all as "ill-founded, uncharitable, dishonest, self seeking and discontented". He refused to admit the famine conditions of 1905 and claimed that if it were famine, then the people of London were in greater penury and he was backed by his friend and Secretary of State, George Hamilton in stating that India was prosperous under British rule. He dreaded the ‘Congress Wallahs” and sought the analogy of India placing the ‘Brahmins’ in the same court as the Roman Catholic Priests in Ireland supporting terrorism. But public opinion and the Indian press were loud in raising their voices against the growing exploitation and repression and condemned the wasteful extravaganza of Edward VII’s coronation. The celebration and feast for making Queen Victoria the Empress of India by Lord Lytton, then Governor-General of India took place embarrassingly during the Great Famine of Madras in 1876-78. The Madras press was contemptuously pointing out that there was no cause for rejoicing when the reforms were made like the admission of competent Indians into the Viceroy’s Executive Council or the Governors’ Council, without the reduction of the salt tax or the remission of interest on the famine loans.

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904 showed Asian might and was an immense source of encouragement to nationalist activists. It also further froze

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5 SIANMUGASUNDARAM V. The Great Famine, 1876-78 (Madras 1964) p.11.
the ruling Englishman’s attitude to the Congress. With the declaration of 1906 as the Year of Swadeshi, it was preceded by frenetic days of Swadeshism and boycott of British goods. Repressive measures like the "Bengal Terror" infuriated the citizens of Madras. The same year Dadabhai Naoroji, the father of the Congress, unequivocally proclaimed the gospel of Swadeshi and Swaraj as the twin objectives of the Congress and the solution to India’s political and economic problems. In the same year V.O.Chidambaram Pillai founded his Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company from the south of the Presidency, Tuticorin. The erstwhile restraint of the Madras national papers and the people at large, began to wear away. These "flames of unrest were fanned by the high-handed arrest of a leader".6

Even the moderates abandoned their conservatism, "now in the face of the changed attitude of the people the bureaucracy will grasp more closely than ever, every power that it can arrogate to itself by virtue of its unrestrained despotism and will be constantly incited against us by the growing class of unscrupulous fortune-hunters infesting our land".7 Congress began to bring awareness of nationalism at the grass-root level in the Presidency. The people responded with zeal. A mass movement was beginning to assume shape. Textiles were a major item in the Madras industrial scene and Ampthill and others were caught in a contradiction. The British textiles were boycotted

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7 Ibid
because in the long-run this was the only rational economic policy although at the time it was injurious. Boycott of British goods was in a way synonymous with growth of the Swadeshi, much like in the erstwhile American colonies. British critics tried to find a difference between the two, where there was none. V.O.C. Pillai was an illustrious example of how despite immense harassment from the Governor to his shipping venture, he fought relentlessly raising the banner of Swadeshi in the Presidency. Governor Lawley blatantly disregarded the Minto-Morley Reforms not expanding the Council or including Indians. These and other repressive measures led to the assassination of Sub-Collector, Ashe of Tirunelveli. Bipin Chandra Pal's extensive tour of the Presidency gave the necessary natural perspective to the already electrified air. In the period that followed V.O. Chidambaram Subramania Siva and Padmanabha lyengar were all arrested for supporting Pal, accusing them for sedition. Violent outbursts followed and even a disapproving Morley was ignored. The Bharata Mata Association organised rallies. People were arrested on hearsay and even poet Subramania Bharathi had to flee to a French settlement. Undoubtedly all these young anarchists demoralised the British administration. The year 1916 was momentous for the formation of the Congress League Scheme. V.S.S.Sastry and 18 elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council of India submitted 13 recommendations following the Congress asking for provincial autonomy, parliamentary institutions and it explored the shortcomings of the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909. Unfortunately Viceroy Hardinge who was a great friend of India and who agreed in a great way to these changes had to retire at this critical juncture in the history of
India. During the war years Indian affairs were neglected. The country was in a bad state and Madras Presidency even worse. The people of Madras urged for representation in Imperial Conference. Annie Besant's Home Rule Movement which was initiated in Madras earlier, was later organised. The counter movement to this, "the non-brahmin movement was also launched in the Presidency, with its unquestioning loyalty to British rule, a sensitive issue in history."\(^8\) Pentland's years of Governorship was very disappointing. He belied the trust placed on him and encouraged sycophants to enable his decisions and public resolutions. As many as 150 resolutions were disallowed in his tenure. In Montagu's words. "Here, if anywhere, officials administrate and do not govern .... Pentland does not know what is going on in his own Province". Scarcity of food resulted in riots in September 1918 but the Governor refused to accept the economic crisis and attributed the chaos to political reasons. What eclipsed the gravity of the situation was the War and the enormous War Fund, Pentland gathered through exhibitions in 1915 and 1917. Montagu's declaration had no cause for enthusiasm. It did not deter the emerging awareness that Britain was to assign India its right to self-determination after the war. Montagu could not find co-operation from Madras except by releasing Mrs.Besant who had been arrested. Montagu himself was indifferent to Pentland's hospitality and seemed more concerned with the actual condition of the Presidency. The Montford Report was totally rejected by the Congress after wide and thorough discussion throughout the Presidency. Under Gandhi's leadership it would settle for nothing less than

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8 CADOGAN EDWARD · *The India We Saw* (London 1933), p.21
1. 6. TAMIL SIDDHA LITERATURE

1. 6. 1. PROBLEM OF IDENTIFICATION

Tamil Siddha literature may be classified under two categories: one, the actual texts of the Siddha songs and the other, writings by authors who are not Siddhas themselves but have written about the Siddhas or about the Siddha thought, be it on Siddha Medicine, Siddha Alchemy, Siddha Philosophy, Siddha Theology or academic treatises on the Mysticism or Yoga of the Siddhas. The first may be termed as Tamil Siddha Poetry; the other may be regarded as literature that grew around the Tamil Siddha Poetry. In the recent past, there has been a growing interest in this field and there are many short or long articles, essays and books written on any or all of these above branches of Siddha Thought. From the perspectives of academic interest, it is to be cautioned that not all Siddha Literature in both the categories can be recommended as authentic writings either in presenting the songs of the Siddhas or representing the thought of the Siddhas.

In 1973, Kamil V. Zvelebil, in his The Poets of the Powers, stated

The Tamil Siddha texts have, so far, not been published at all in toto and in a critical or even a near-to-critical manner. It is first of all necessary to realize that obviously a vast amount of widely differing literature covering many centuries has been called the 'writings of the cittar.' (TPP:16)
From an early period of the British connection with this southernmost part of India, Madras was considered to be an administrative and cultural backwater, far removed from the headquarters of the East India Company in Bengal and later from the Government of India at Calcutta and afterwards at Delhi. Almost from the beginning, therefore, Madras politicians and civil servants learned to depend on their own resources, and this implied a certain limitation of their political and administrative horizons. At the same time there arose in Madras presidency, and particularly in the city of Madras, "a small but influential group of men who maintained all-India perspectives and tried to connect Madras public life with that of Bengal, Bombay", and the rest of British India. It was from this group that the founders of the Indian National Congress came, and it was they who sought to counteract the feeling that Madras was gravely imposed upon by the rest of India.

2.2 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Of every 100 people in the Presidency 89 are Hindus, 6 are Muslims, 3 are Christians, and 2 are Animists, i.e. worshippers of souls and spirits. Jains number only 27,000, most of them being found in South Kanara and North and South Arcot, Parsis, 350 and Buddhists, 240.

Table 2.1 - Major Religions - Madras Presidency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>31,998,245</td>
<td>34,048,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animists</td>
<td>472,808</td>
<td>641,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>2,250,386</td>
<td>2,467,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>865,528</td>
<td>1,024,071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>43,473</td>
<td>28,193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Commissioner of India - Census of Madras 1891 and 1901.

Languages

The most noticeable point about the languages of the people is the preponderance of those which belong to the Dravidian language family. Over 91% of the population speak vernaculars of this family, while in India as a whole it is only 20.

Table 2.2 - Major Languages Spoken - Madras Presidency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages Spoken</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamil (Dravidaan)</td>
<td>14,076,989</td>
<td>15,182,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>13,653,674</td>
<td>14,276,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayalam</td>
<td>2,688,332</td>
<td>2,861,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanarese</td>
<td>1,445,650</td>
<td>1,518,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriya (Other)</td>
<td>1,292,163</td>
<td>1,809,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindustani</td>
<td>817,146</td>
<td>880,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1,656,486</td>
<td>1,680,635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ibid.
This was a period of considerable economic growth under the impetus of Britain’s search for markets and the West’s demand for India’s raw materials. The growth was greatly stimulated by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869; by the new network of railways, which opened up the interior to trade and stimulated Indian war period; and by the building of India’s major irrigation work. This period saw the use of India’s first modern industry, cotton and jute textiles. "The opening up of India resulted in a rapid expansion of her export trade"¹² from the estimated Rs.560 m. per year in the 1860’s to Rs.2242 m. per year in the period 1909-1914 (unconnected for the changes in price level). Both the destination and the composition of the trade indicate that the cheaper British manufacture was being fulfilled. The destination of India’s trade suggests that India had become more important to England as a market for British goods than as a source of raw materials for British India.

Table 2.3 - Civil Condition - Madras Presidency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1901</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>16,191,488</td>
<td>6,703,462</td>
<td>9,488,413</td>
<td>17,953,437</td>
<td>10,408,471</td>
<td>7,544,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>15,370,166</td>
<td>7,850,992</td>
<td>7,519,174</td>
<td>15,829,992</td>
<td>7,702,871</td>
<td>8,127,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>4,053,642</td>
<td>3,448,851</td>
<td>604,791</td>
<td>4,426,007</td>
<td>729,942</td>
<td>3,696,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>14,756</td>
<td>7,740</td>
<td>7,017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ibid.
Per capita income was 133.6 at 1946-47 prices in 1871. In 1881, 1891 and 1901 it was Rs.140.3, Rs.144.1, Rs.155.6 respectively. The population in the Madras Presidency in 1871 was 31,220,973, in 1881, 1891 and 1901 the population was 30,82,218, 35,630,440 and 38,209,436 respectively. The decline of 1.5% in 1881 was due to the famine of 1876-78, but in the succeeding decade a rebound occurred after this visitation and the rate of increase (15.7%) was abnormal. The people of the Province are mainly agricultural and live in villages which have an average of 600 inhabitants each. The loss of population was specially heavy in the districts of Kumool, Bellary and Anantapur, Salem and Cuddapah, the percentage of loss ranging between 17 and 26. About 11% of the people live in towns. Only three cities in the Presidency- Madras, Madura and Trichinopoly - contain over 100,000 inhabitants and only eight others over 50,000. There seems, however, to be clear evidence that, owing to a variety of reasons, marked movement of the people into towns is taking place gradually.

The following table gives the birth and death rates (as registered) in the Presidency as a whole and the mortality per 1000 from certain diseases.

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13 KUMAR, DHARMA. · Cambridge Economic History of India (New Delhi 1964) p. 48.

14 Population in India - 1871, 255.2 million. 1881,257.4 million, 1891, 282.1 million, 1901, 285.3 million. (Source: Dharma Kumar · Cambridge Economic History of India Vol. 2, P.410.)
### Table - 2.4 - Population Figures - Madras Presidency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population under Registration</th>
<th>Ratio/1000 of Registered</th>
<th>Deaths/1000 from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Births</td>
<td>Deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>28,676,375</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>28,513,734</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>37,315,611</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>37,355,766</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census Reports - Census Commissioner of India.

**Occupations**

The most noticeable point of the people is their rural (69%) simplicity. The large majority of them in the absence of industrial occupations other than weaving live by the land. Of these more than 95% are cultivators, tilling land which they either own or rent from others. Of these cultivators 72% farm land which is their own property. The commonest occupations are those connected with the preparation of food and drink which support nearly 7% of the population, and those relating to textile fabrics and dress which include all the weavers and employ 4% of the people. The various Districts differ little among themselves in the occupations which their inhabitants follow.
2.2.1 Employment and the Conditions of Handicrafts

The employment in works classed as factories, whether belonging to individuals, partnerships, joint-stock companies or Mission societies, has considerably developed during the decade 1891-1900. Cotton mills increased from 8 to 16, employing 15,971 hands as against 5,942 in 1891 and a capital of Rs.119 lakhs instead of Rs.40 lakhs. Cotton presses and ginning works, other than mills, rose from 30 to 61 in number and from Rs.16 to 34 lakhs in capital, and employed 3,490 persons instead of 980. There were also 15 cotton spinning and weaving establishments not classed as mills, as against 7 in 1891; these are almost wholly the Mission industrial institutions, working on a considerable scale, on the West Coast. The tanneries of hides and skins are entered as 173 as against 22 in 1890, but this increase is partly due to better registration, though the trade developed during the decade. There were at the close of the period, 8 sugar factories, employing modern plant, as against 3 at the beginning, while the output in sugar rose eightfold. Oil mills rose from 21 to 86, employing 1,725 persons instead of 328; none of them is large. A soap factory was newly started in Madura and in 1900 turned out 148,875 lbs. of common soap: bone-crushing mills rose from 4 to 6 and a demand for saltpetre as manure in coffee estates has considerably developed this business to which the new cordite factory added "Tobacco factories showed a decrease, probably by reason of the larger factories absorbing or killing the smaller ones, for while the local demand for cigars has increased, there being now a rising
demand among native consumers, the export of cigars has risen from 191,000 lbs. to 493,000 lbs.\textsuperscript{15}"

Decline of handicraft in Madras is clearly marked in nearly every branch of native art. The production of articles of necessity, such as the native clothes had suffered most by direct European competition. Industries in the production of articles of luxury such as wood-carving, carpet-weaving and ornamental metal work had been affected to some extent by the decline of many old native Zamindaris and States and more from the spread of European education and ideas which lead many of the better class of natives to throw aside their national dress and decorate their houses in a pseudo-European style with glaring Brussels carpets and ill-designed furniture, and either to look upon all native art as beneath their notice or with condescending benevolence to supply the workmen with designs called from the pattern books and catalogues of European manufacturers. In this way native industries have suffered as much as by loss of prestige as by European competition from any other cause.

In the North of India, the beauty of its industry had always commanded a certain amount of admiration with a few, but in this Presidency it was not so. The decline of the handloom industry may be attributed to some measure to the introduction of machinery in the West which enabled the European manufacturer to produce large quantities of cloth at extremely cheap

\textsuperscript{15} Government Order No.711 (Revenue) 11th August 1902.
rates. In the case of the medium fabrics required by the majority of the people, the foreign machine-made goods were sold at about half the price of the indigenous product. Foreign competition first drove out Indian manufacturers from the external markets. Moreover British piece-goods began to invade Indian markets in increasing quantities. The process became accelerated after the passing of the Charter Act of 1813, when the Company was deprived of its monopoly and English traders were allowed to compete for Indian trade. The rapid extension of cotton cultivation in America also enabled the manufacturers to buy the Indian Cotton at a lower rate. The local demand which was reduced owing to the influx of cheap foreign fabrics, became further restricted because of the Agricultural Depression which prevailed at that time.

To a considerable extent, the decay of the handloom industry was due to the State policy. The exports of piece-goods were handicapped by excessive transit duties and the Moturpha tax (tax on the loom) the British cotton piece-goods imports received substantial encouragement.

One of the most momentous consequences of the establishment of British supremacy in India was the disruption of the centuries old union between agriculture and manufacturing industries. As a result of the progressive decline and destruction of the Indian town handicrafts and village artisan industries, by the end of the 19th Century most of the industries of India had either been ruined beyond recovery or were on the road to ultimate ruin.
About handloom industries, historians commented that the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with which he could not have contended on equal terms.

There is considerable truth in the complaint that the Indian trade had affected prejudicially the handloom industry in Madras and impoverished the classes engaged in them - spinning as a separate section was rapidly disappearing. Large sections of the agricultural population used the coarse cloth made of country yarn which was more durable and warmer when compared with the machine-made cloth: Moreover the coarse thread was spun by the agriculturists themselves and given to weavers who had woven them into cloth on being paid about one rupee per cloth or its equivalent in grain for each cloth. These cloths were extensively in use in the districts of Coimbatore and Salem where the cold climate in the winter months was more severe than in other parts of Madras.

The decadence of the spinning section of the handloom industries was brought about not only by the Manchester competition but also by the growth of Indian mills. For the whole of India out of the total production of cotton as estimated in 1869, 5 m. were exported and 21 m. consumed in India - 0.25m. million of Indian mills and 1.8 million by the handloom industries. In 1888-89, the total production was estimated at 9.5 m costing 5.5 m. were exported to foreign countries, 3 m. by the Indian mills and 1m. by the handloom industries in India. This shows that the hand-spun yarn was being
rapidly superceded by yarn made in the Indian Mills. Thus the rise of the Indian mill industries also caused the decline the spinning section of handloom industries.

The Board of Revenue made enquiries about the handloom industries in the Madras Presidency in 1871 and again in 1890. The enquiries revealed that the number of looms at work in 1871 was nearly 2,80,000 or 42% higher than the number at work between 1856-57 & 1860-61. But the Board estimated the real increase would be between 20 and 25% as the returns of the earlier years were not to be relied fully. The number of looms at work exhibited an increase of 7%, while the increase of population was 14%. The failure of the proportioned increase in the number of looms was mainly due to the policy of the Government.

Though it must be admitted that the handloom industry was benefitted by the spinning mills which had cheapened the price of yarn and created a new demand for the handloom woven cloth, it could not be denied that handloom suffered a lot from the competition of the weaving mills since the establishment of power weaving created more unemployment among the weavers and in many cases a fall in their earning.

2.2.2 Attempts at Revival

About mid-19th, century the effect of the invention of the spinning gin, the power loom and the chemical dyes dealt a serious blow to the
handloom industry and threw it completely out of gear. By 1900 Indian mills began to compete with English mills in producing yarn and cotton piece-goods. The result was the export of handloom cloth declined; import of mill made cloth and hand spun yarn gave place to English and Indian mill made yarn. Chemical dyes drove out indigenous dyes and European weavers. The European piece-goods made grievous inroads into Indian homes and for these reasons the prospects of the handloom industry suddenly became dark in addition to the famine that ravaged Madras during the second half of the 19th century bringing untold havoc among the Indians.

The gradual languishing of the industry was noticed. It caused concern to many a thoughtful observer and well-wisher of the country, and there was fear that unless something was done to revive this ancient industry, it would soon sicken and die. All these compelled the Indian Government for the first time to look into the condition of the handloom industry. On the basis of the reports submitted by Thurston, Holden and Balfour, a Commission was appointed to study the conditions of the weaving industry and suggest remedial measures to bring about the revival of the industry and for the amelioration of the weaver who was hard hit by mill competition.

2.2.3 Transport and Communications - Internal Trade

The great benefits conferred on the country by the improvement of communications are too obvious to need detailed consideration. Nevertheless a few facts gleaned from the old Reports will be given to enable us to realize
what immense advance there had been in this direction. Owing to the absence of roads, bullocks and coolies were the only means of conveyance and the cost of transport of bulky articles for long distances was consequently prohibitive. Mr. Nicholson in his Manual of the Coimbatore district has so well described the revolution in trade effected by the improvement of communications in that district that his remarks may be usefully quoted here. He states: "From various reports it is known that in 1800 there were practically no roads, but merely tracks; there was not a cart in the district, and what traffic existed was carried on by pack bullocks, and by ponies and by basket boats on the Cauvery. The result was not only that all imported commodities were dear, but export trade was insignificant, and only in valuable articles such as ghee, spices and so forth. Grain could not be moved, so that prices depended on local scarcity or abundance, with the result that ryots of substance were no worse off in bad years than in good, for storage was a necessity, so that deficient crops were supplemented from the surplus of good years, which then fetched very high prices; while in good years, especially if consecutive, the markets were glutted, prices fell heavily, and the ryots who were compelled to sell in order to meet the Government and other demands were ruined by their own superabundance. This reproach remained for many years, so that average prices between 1849-53 were lower than at any previous time, while in times of famine, as in 1824 and 1837, the difference in prices between famine and non-famine district was very serious. In the district above 1,500 miles of metalled or gravelled roads were in good order,
besides numerous cross roads and village lanes and 147 miles of railways - Madras and South Indian.

The result of this improvement was an immense internal traffic between the various trade centres, such as weekly markets and towns, and a considerable import and export trade in which thousands of carts take part with railways. Every village had several and every town hundreds of carts which were extensively built in many places. The value of the railborne traffic has not been ascertained, but one or two facts may be noted - a) in the late famine, grain was poured by thousands of tons, while the price of rice at the height of famine differed from that at Tanjore, whence it was supplied by only about 3 lb. per rupee b) private trade has been so stimulated by the railway that at the least hint of scarcity in any other district or province, grain was at once moved, e.g, in the early months of 1884, scarcity seemed imminent in Northern India, and the Coimbatore Railway Stations were crammed with grain en route northwards; c) trades such as the considerable tanning industry, coffee growing, had been begotten by the railway, which carried the produce cheaply to the coast d) upon the making of the railway, prices, to the great advantage of the ryot, speedily doubled owing to export facilities; with this great rise in grain prices, land prices also rose, so that land, especially near the railways, was now worth from 6 to 10 times its value when the Madras Railway was made; e) the production of valuable crops had been greatly stimulated, tobacco, which has long been grown largely owing to the West Coast demand, being excepted. It is to be noted that railways could yet
compete with carts for local traffic of say 30 miles' run, owing to the rates at
which ryots can afford to hire out their carts during the non-cultivation
season". Mr. Nicholson's observations which have reference to the Coimbatore
district are equally applicable to the other parts of the Presidency.

At the beginning of the century, roads were practically non-existent
and that in 1852 there were only 3,000 miles of roads hardly deserving the
name. There were now 25,000 miles of road in the Presidency maintained by
the Local Fund Boards in fair order, 2,000 miles of railway, and 1,500 miles
of canals. As pointed out by Mr. Nicholson, the number of carts had
enormously increased coincidently with increase in the mileage of railways.
In the Presidency as a whole there were only 90,000 carts in 1850; in 1877-78
there were 2,84,000 and there were now 436,000 or nearly 5 times as many
as in 1850. There was not a single cart in South Canara in 1838; there were
in 1880, 3,000 carts. In Salem a tax on carts at the rate of 1 rupee was levied
in 1836 and the number of carts in the district was ascertained to be 1,189.
The number had increased to 3,296 in 1847 and the number in use at present
is 12,400. The hire of a cart which was As. 14 in 1838 was thus 6 times the
rate in 1847. In the latter year the purchasing power of money was 2.5 times
at least as high as it was in 1900 and consequently As. 8 then would be
equivalent to Rs.1-4-0. The ordinary rate of hire for a cart was 1 rupee per
diem in 1900 and as a cart-load is about 1,000 lb. and the distance hauled
every day, 15 miles on an average, this rate was equivalent to about As.2-8
per ton per mile, while the cost of carriage by railway was about 8 pies per ton
per mile or a little more than one-fourth of the cost of carriage by carts. The
cost of carriage in boats on the canals is about half of that on railways.
Confining our attention to the main railways and canals in this Presidency, the
quantity of goods and the number of passengers carried in 1888-80 were for
Madras Railway - passengers 8,003,205 over an average distance of 38.1 miles
and goods 1,088,774 tons over an average distance of 105 miles; for South
Indian Railway - passengers 7,212,299 over an average distance of 35.12 miles
and goods 1,349,433 tons over an average distance of 46.9 miles. In the
Godavari, Krishna and Buckingham canals, the number of passengers carried
was 480,000 and the ton-mileage of goods 36 millions. Leaving out of
consideration the passenger traffic, the saving in the cost of carriage of goods
alone caused by the substitution of carriage by railways and canals for
conveyance by carts may roughly be estimated at 27 millions of rupees every
year; that is nearly one-half the entire land revenue of the Presidency. If the
saving in time, and the diminished risk of loss by robbery and of damage by
exposure to the weather be taken into account, the real saving in cost was
found to be very much greater. Of course, under the old conditions it would
have been impossible to carry anything like the quantity of goods now sent
from place to place, or in other words, the immense trade that existed would
not have been possible but for the extension of communications. It is a well
known fact that silver had fallen considerably in value since 1873, and, under
ordinary circumstances, we should have expected that prices of the principal
commodities in India would have risen in the same proportion. The
cheapening of the cost of carriage has, however, been so great as to neutralize
almost wholly the rise in prices, and the consequence was that the prices of food grains of these years were slightly, if at all, in excess of the prices in 1873.

2.2.4 Export Trade of the Province

The statistics available as regards sea-borne trade of the several provinces included in this Presidency for the last century are, as might be expected, fragmentary and imperfect. In the "Political Survey of the Northern Circars" written by Mr. Grant and printed as Appendix to "Fifth Report" and in Buchanan's "Journey" in 1800, have scattered accounts of both sea-borne and inland trade which was carried on a very small scale. According to Grant, the value of the sea-borne and inland trade of the Northern Circars amounted only to 75 lakhs of rupees.

The exports have shown increase in certain manufactures, or in goods to which local labour has added value. Exports of dried and salt fish increased from 5,606,000 lbs. to 12,371,000 lbs; cigars have been mentioned above, and the trade might have almost illimitably developed; oil cakes more than trebled in quantity, viz., from 8,600 to 27,400 tons, and manufactured coir goods from 8,050 to 15,050 tons, while mats rose from 50,000 to an average of 175,000 square yards, the export of 1900-1901 being no less than 389,000, chiefly, if not wholly, of Indian goods. The exports abroad of Indian made cotton goods rose largely, viz., from an average, in the five years ending 1891, of 12,041,000 yards of cloth and 2,099,000 lbs. of yarn to an average
in 1896-1901 of 20,276,000 yards and 3,706,000 lbs, respectively, notwithstanding the immense fall in grey goods and yarn in 1900-1901, owing to the war in China. Of these goods the rise in coloured and printed goods was most satisfactory, viz., from 11,146,000 to 16,085,000 yards (28,642,000 in 1900-1901) since they were probably all or mostly dyed, woven, and printed in this country, and therefore represent Indian labour, largely outside of the mills; these goods chiefly went to the Malay Straits Settlements and Ceylon, where there were many Madras emigrants, and to the Philippines. Woollen goods showed a decided increase, but it was only in raw wool that this increase was very great. In leather, notwithstanding that America is now demanding raw skins for her chrome tanning trade, the exports largely increased; the average of the quinquennium ending 1891 was 1,141,000 tanned hides, and in that ending 1901 it was 2,229,000 or nearly double, the figures for 1900-1901 being 3,474,000; tanned skins went up for the same periods from 15,717,000 to 16,779,000, the number for 1900-1901 being 17,890,000; of these, however, only about one half were tanned in the Presidency, the remainder being imported by rail, dressed or tanned. To the above exports must be added the enormous amount of locally manufactured goods consumed in the Presidency itself.

A new item appeared in the produce of the mining industry which had wholly arisen during the decade; manganese was exported at the rate, of nearly 100,000 tons per annum, valued at nearly 8 lakhs, most of which was
expended in actual mining and cartage to the railway: mica exports rose to nearly 1,000 tons valued at nearly 4 lakhs in the last year of the decade.

Certain of the imports also showed symptoms of developments in manufactures; the imports of steam engines and machines other than railways, increased in annual value from Rs.14.8 lakhs to Rs.26.2 lakhs. Whether the imports of angling and alizarine dyes which rose from an average of 46,000 lbs. annually at the close of the previous decade to an average of 1,347,000 lbs. at the end of the decade under review, means the developments of the dyeing business or merely the replacement of country dyes, has not been ascertained, but it is significant that the increase was concurrent with the immense increase in the export of coloured goods: since the aniline dyes were cheap, ready for use, and easily applied, they were probably ousting the country dyes, but were also largely enhancing the dyed and coloured cloth business.

In the matter of cotton goods there was a considerable increase in the output by the local mills both in yarn and cloth; the annual figures for an average of five years, including the disastrous year of the Chinese war (1901), were 30.5 million pounds of yarn and 11.5 million yards of grey piece-goods, while fancy goods rose from 7,244 lb. in 1900 to 4,291,204 lb. in 1901.

The principal articles of export and import and to what extent the country had benefitted by the increase of trade can be assessed from the following analysis. Among the articles of export, cotton is the most important.
In 1855-56 the exports of cotton were only 21 million lb. valued at 25 lakhs of rupees, whereas by 1899 the exports rose to 98 million lb. valued at 2.5 crores of rupees; and of this increase value, a larger share reached the cultivator than it did in former years. The cultivation and trade in coffee, as is well-known, have been entirely created and developed, within the last 40 years. The value of the coffee exported in 1889-90 amounted to 1.5 crores of rupees. It was estimated that the amount expended on the maintenance of coffee plantations on the Nilgiris alone was 20 lakhs of rupees, of which about one-third was paid as wages to coolies and goes to support 14,000 labouring families from the plains. 23 large works for curing coffee have been established, turnout being estimated at 18.5 million lb. valued at nearly one crore of rupees. These works afforded employment to 7,500 hands.

Indigo is another article of export which had rapidly progressed. In 1855-56 the exports were 2.9 million lb. valued at 43 lakhs. In 1889-90 the quantity exported was 6.1 million lb. and the value 119 lakhs of rupees. The Collector of Cuddapah, in which district indigo is extensively manufactured, writing in 1853, states that at the commencement of the century "the manufacture of indigo was in its crudest state, and the plant from which it is extracted grown to a limited extent; the cultivation of this plant was formerly confined to the south-eastern portion of the district, but now was gradually extending to the north and west. The indigo itself was manufactured in earthen pots with great labour and considerable expense, and was of inferior quality, but in later years a more improved and better system of manufacture
was introduced and the culture of the plant greatly increased. The produce of this plant from its quality was well-known in the European markets, and its culture had proved to be of great benefit to the cultivators both rich and poor, as a ready market is found for any quantity which may be grown; the poorer ryots receive advances without interest from the wealthy firms who have established indigo manufactories, and who, should their crop be insufficient to repay the advances received, are seldom pressed for payment, unless it was ascertained that they were endeavoring to defraud those from whom they had received liberal advances, by disposing of their crop to another party. This system to a considerable extent relieves the poorer ryots from the exorbitant interest demanded by village shroffs, and thus instead of being ruined by usurious interest, they with a little care and management could have repaid all their advances from their crops during the following year, and obtained sufficient profit to satisfy the Circar demand and to maintain themselves and families. The manufacture of indigo has, however, since passed entirely into the hands of natives, while the area under indigo and the production of the dye have increased. The reason why European agencies cannot cope with natives is explained by an agent of a European firm to be that "the latter can do things cheaper. They manufacture the produce of their own lands, work their own factories and are assisted by relatives and friends who are paid little or nothing, though, of course, they expect assistance in return. At an European agency the weed is purchased, and the cost of seasons, yields little or no dye. European agencies suffer heavy losses, while natives do not feel the loss so heavily". There were now six indigo factories and 6,393 indigo vats at
work in the Presidency, the quantity of indigo manufactured being estimated at 3.8 million lb. valued at 51 lakhs of rupees. Besides the persons employed in the cultivation of the plant, the manufacture of the dye gave employment to 90,000 persons during the working season. cultivation being perfectly voluntary, no difficulties or disturbances similar to those frequently experienced in Bengal, where indigo planters who had secured leases of land on zamindari tenure endeavored to force the cultivation of indigo on ryots against their will, had ever been experienced in this Presidency. The indigo manufactured in Madras was supplanting the indigo of Bengal and it would, doubtless, soon take possession of the market were it not for the fact that Madras indigo was extensively adulterated by dealers. Indigo cultivation was very profitable to the ryot not only on account of the dye, but also because it enriched the soil and increased the yield of cereals, especially rice grown in rotation.

Seeds to the quantity of 613,000 cwts. valued at 16.75 lakhs of rupees were exported in 1855-56. The exports in 1889-90 had increased to a little less than 2 million cwts. valued at 119 lakhs of rupees. The trade in groundnuts especially, has developed within the last few years and assumed large dimensions. Forty years ago, groundnuts were unknown to European commerce. The cultivation of this crop had extended rapidly in the South Arcot district where the acreage under this crop had increased from about 6,700 acres to 190,000 acres. As groundnuts did not require irrigation or much care in cultivation, and as they grew on dry, saucy soil, the trade in this article had increased the profits and the value of inferior lands. Besides the exports
of groundnuts from British ports in large quantities, the produce chiefly of the South Arcot district was shipped from Pondicherry. In 1889 and 1890 the exports were valued at 14 and 9.5 million francs, the diminished exports in the latter year being due to diminished production owing to adverse agricultural season. The value of exports of vegetable oils which was 6.25 lakhs of rupees in 1855-56 increased in 1889-90 to 51.5 lakhs of rupees, which is less than half the value of exports of seeds. There are 16 lamp-oil manufactories in the Godavari district turning out about 10 lakhs worth of oil, and there are a few mills in other districts doing a small business. The large export of seeds, however, shows that there is much scope for the establishment of additional oil-mills at convenient centres, for, the substitution of exports of oils for exports of seeds would cause a saving in the cost of carriage, while providing employment to a large number of labourers in this country and enabling the ryots to utilize the refuse of the oil-mills as manure or as food for cattle.

Sugar is both an article of export and import in this Presidency. In 1855-56 about 500,000 cwts. were exported, the value being nearly 32 lakhs of rupees. In 1889-90 the exports were nearly three times as much, 1,350,000 cwts. valued at 86 lakhs of rupees. The imports by sea in 1889-90 were valued at 5.25 lakhs of rupees. About 155,000 maunds or 110,000 cwts. were also received by land from Mysore where sugar, both refined and unrefined, was extensively manufactured. There were 6 large sugar factories for the manufacture of refined sugar, and these gave employment to about 2,000 persons. The art of manufacturing crystallized and refined sugar was in the
beginning of the century a secret known to very few. Buchanan states that sugar-candy made at Chickabalapur in Mysore was equal to the Chinese and the elated sugar is very white and fine. The art of making it was kept a secret. The price at which they sold precluded an extensive sale. Chinese sugar-candy was sold at Seringapatnam cheaper than the local produce was sold. The Chinese sugar candy was sold at Bangalore at 65-1-1, or say Rs.50 per cwt. while the prevailing price was not more than Rs.20 per cwt. i.e. the price of the article, allowing for the fall in the purchasing power of money in India, was a little more than one-fourth of what it was in the beginning of the century. The production of unrefined sugar had greatly increased, especially in the Godavari district. The rail-borne inland traffic in this article in this Presidency amounted to 1.5 million maunds. Iron mills were rapidly superseding the old inefficient wooden mills in extracting the juice of canes. There was great scope for the cultivation of cane and manufacture of sugar in this Presidency in the lands commanded by the great irrigation systems. Messrs. Traders and Sons of London pointed out that under proper arrangements, India ought to be able to produce all the refined sugar it wanted, instead of exporting both crude sugar and labour to Mauritius, and receiving refined sugar. The explanation for this was to be found in the fact that the price of refined sugar had enormously fallen, owing to the competition of bounty-fed beet sugar in France and Germany and the difficulty of getting cane grown near factories on a sufficiently large scale to make the manufacture of sugar by improved processes profitable.
The trade in spices was an ancient one in this Presidency. The exports were in 1855-56 of the value of 24 lakhs of rupees and in 1889-90, 71 lakhs. The net exports of foodgrains had not increased, but on the contrary showed a slight decline, owing to competition of the cheap rice from Burma and Bengal. The exports of cotton piece-goods were in 1855-56, 1,894,504 pieces and 223,140 yards valued at 21.5 lakhs of rupees. In 1889-90, 1,100,165 pieces and 13,638,070 yards valued at 45 lakhs of rupees were exported. The cloths were partly the products of hand looms and cotton mills established in the country and partly foreign manufactures dyed in the country and re-exported. There were at the end of 1889-90, 8 cotton mills worked by steam. The number of persons employed was 6,000, and the quantity of cotton worked up amounted to 20.25 million lb. Additional mills had since been established.

Of less important articles of exports, the value of tobacco had risen from a little over 2 lakhs in 1855-57 to 17 lakhs in 1889-90, and tea from ½ a lakh to 5 lakhs, Cinchona was a plant very recently introduced, and the exports of this drug from this Presidency amounted to 12 lakhs of rupees. In connection with the manufacture of tobacco, there were 32 factories in which cigars to the value of upwards of 7 lakhs of rupees were manufactured.

2.2.5 Import Trade

The value of the sea-borne imports of the Presidency amounted in 1889-90 to 9½ crores of rupees, of which 4.15 crores or nearly half consisted
of cotton manufactures. Cotton piece-goods had increased from about 28 lakhs in 1855-56 to 268 lakhs in 1889-90; cotton twist from 23 to 147 lakhs; metals from 11 to 58 lakhs; liquors from 13 to 21 lakhs. The other articles imported in 1889-90 were railway materials, 40 lakhs; timber and wood, 21 lakhs; hardware and cutlery, 20 lakhs; coal, machinery and mill work, 34 lakhs salt 28 lakhs; apparel, 38 lakhs; kerosene and other oils, 20 lakhs; spices and areanuts, 19 lakhs; gunny bags, 17 lakhs; stationery, 14 lakhs; provisions 14 lakhs; drugs and medicines 9 lakhs; woollen goods, 8 lakhs; sugar, 5 lakhs; raw silk 12 lakhs, books 3 lakhs; other minor commodities, 9 lakhs. Some of the articles such as machinery and mill-work could not of course have been procured except by means of foreign trade.

2.2.6 Indebtedness

There has been no proper investigation of this problem. Probably every ryot at some time or other borrowed, but while many were thoroughly solvent and free from debt, others were perpetually in difficulties, and a large number was dependent on their creditors; and the latter could not subsist with the crop grown except by petty continuous borrowing, and at harvest time all but a small surplus returned to the creditor. This was more so when even the ryots had the ill-fortune of facing a bad year, which would then throw a large number into debt.

In this Presidency, the chief sources were the landholders, usually of the ordinary ryot class; the examination of 83,000 documents showed that,
according to districts, from 73 to 85 per cent, even of registered loans were lent by ryots; the vast quantum of loans, be it in the form of cash on kind unsecured by any document, is even more largely between ryot and ryot. The mortgage was usually the last stage in lending when the personal credit of the borrower had been exhausted, mortgages of property other than land, and therefore did not wholly represent a charge upon agricultural land.

On the subject of non agricultural debt little is known except that traders, artisans and servants habitually lived on credit: petty shopkeepers paid very heavy interest on stock obtained on credit, two annas per rupee per week, or 650 per cent. per annum. Petty contractors and artisans borrowed in order to carry out contracts or to obtain them. Probably the section of society which had been steeped in debt had been the government servants due to the cost of their education, partly to the heavy expenses of domestic and social ceremonies. It is clear that the burden of debt in Madras was very heavy, that its interest, high and that it has been incurred with but a minimum result in profit. There is ample proof of much indebtedness, and of gross abuse of monopoly and opportunity. Those who mixed most with the poorer classes of ryots and labourers, those who noted the indebted condition of the large landholders, especially among those who did not themselves cultivate, were unanimous in asserting the existence not merely of indebtedness, but of very general habits of living on credit, of borrowing far too readily, and paying back far too unsteadily; of heavy interest amounting in many cases to deliberate, calculated usury; of grievous results in the impoverishment of borrowers due
to want of forethought and thrift on the one side and to unscrupulous exploitation on the other; of a tendency to mortgage any increment of gain such as that arising from the rise in land values and of a tendency to spend disproportionate sums unproductively; of an absence of improvements or even of a desire for them. In fact the impression given is not so much of unscrupulous oppression on the part of money-lenders as of want of business education on the part of the borrowers; the want of an education which would have led the ryot to restrain his tendency to borrow, which would have also led him to calculate the result of expenditure whether on improvements or otherwise, which enabled him to combine both for the formation of capital, and for it right and equitable distribution. It is true that the money-lender, whether ryot or sower, was described as the master of his clients, as tyrannical, hard, grasping, as obtaining and using his influence for base ends. But there was no gainsaying. The fact that the individual money-lender was, in the absence of village banks, a necessity, however expensive.

On the whole, indebtedness was general and its burden heavy; on individuals and on classes it was particularly so; the remedies lay in systematic and stimulative forms of banking which could economically educate while assisting its clients; and in the spread of general education of the ordinary sort with, as frequently advocated, special attention to the facts of rural economy.
2.2.7 Standard of Living and Quality of Life

It cannot be said that the standard of living had appreciably improved among these classes; custom in general operates against a rise in wages, and in most districts, viz, those without sea-ports, competition tended to keep wages down, and, in parts, even to lower them; the ryots and employers themselves were in no way rich, and were often poor and indebted, so that they had to make their labourers accept the lowest wages or shares of crop; the peasant proprietor is always the hardest master or landlord. There can be no possible margin for serious saving from wages amongst the purely labouring and landless classes generally, and it was naive to expect it. Consequently, with several millions of this class (probably one-fifth of the population) in the Presidency, a failure of the crops meant not merely loss of employment but great shortage of food; in other words, the necessity for State help. The closing years of the 19th century had been one of such unfortunate character and that it would hardly be surprising if, over large tracts, the standard of living such as it is, or at least the livelihood available, had necessarily fallen.

It is difficult to arrive at any conclusion based upon ascertained data about the expenditure of the people on luxuries, including such expenditure on ceremonial matters which might be disproportionate.

Under the classification of "indebtedness" it will be seen that not less than from 15 to 20 per cent of the registered debt is clearly due to
borrowing for unproductive expenditure on marriages and other ceremonies, and no one who has moved in the villages, talked with every class of persons, and examined the suits the civil courts or money-lender’s books, can avoid the conclusion that immense sums were annually wasted despite the enormous expenses for the clothing and jewellery. A domestic servant would spend Rs.50, and Rs.200 commonly for a wedding in an ordinary ryot’s house; a Government officer on Rs.150 per month will spend Rs.1,500 which he had saved in seven years in a Nidhi, and yet be open to the charge of meanness. These are actual types, except that such expenditure is not often defrayed from savings. The numerous funeral and anniversary ceremonies, the ceremonies of births and other domestic events, are also of a costly character. Even in the most careful of districts (Coimbatore) where amongst the Goundans or ryot class, each guest contributes to the cost, the burden is none the less heavy, since the cost of each guest contributes to the total cost since the cost of each marriage is merely distributed over a series of marriages. Ironically this induced the host to spend more liberally than he otherwise would.

The habits and needs of the people and the nature of the climate bring the list of luxuries in food, drink, and domestic furniture to small dimensions. Except amongst certain classes, and then only among the females, costly clothing is unusual even when cost would permit it; the well-to-do professional man, the wealthy Nattukkottai Chetti, would wear simple and even scanty white clothes, ornamented with perhaps a narrow strip of gold
lace, while clothing in general is more to be avoided than desired in a country of the latitude and warm climate of Madras. In food also, temperance and simplicity are the rule. A Nattukkottai Chetti with a fortune which would be considerable in England, eats but one hot meal per day, and that generally of simple grain, pulse and vegetables. Drink is fortunately an exceptional luxury, while tobacco is extremely cheap; these two items, which form a large part of British luxuries, cost together about one rupee per head in Madras.