CHAPTER IV

GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE HANDLOOM INDUSTRY

The chapter deals with the general background of the handloom industry in the country as well as in Bijapur district with special reference to Ilkal (the leading and representative centre of handloom in the district).

The handloom industry in the country has passed through different phases. It has faced cycles of prosperity and panic. Before the nineteenth century, the policy of English manufacturers of preventing the imports of cloth from India caused the decay of Indian handloom industry to a great extent. During the nineteenth century the pace of decline of cotton hand-weaving industry speeded up, on account of the imposition of many exactions by the East India Company on the weavers, steady decline of exports and increase in imports from Great Britain. Consequently a large number of weavers were forced to abandon their hereditary occupation. They began to join the public work schemes launched by the Government. Hand-spinning also began to decline. Further, imports of English yarn accentuated the crisis.
However, the imports of yarn from England fell in value as well as in quantity since 1895. For, by this time the Indian spinning mills had already been developed. The cotton mills in this period concentrated mainly on the production of yarn. The production of yarn in the country began to rise steadily. As a result, the supply of yarn in the country increased considerably. As the hand-spinning by this time declined significantly, the handlooms began to depend more and more on indigenous mill yarn. Thus the relationship between mill and handloom sectors was complementary. During 1896-1900 while the mills consumed on an average 85 million lbs. of yarn per year, nearly 200 million lbs. went to the handloom industry. The steady supply of yarn had slowed down the pace of decay of handloom industry during the closing years of the last century. The fiscal policy of the Government, the Swadeshi Movement of the 1890's, the experiments with the fly-shuttle handlooms and their introduction by the Christian Missionaries, also contributed to this. However, these events in the country could not restore to the hand weaving industry its former unique place of the past. Imports of foreign cotton piece goods and

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growing production of cloth within the country by mills did not allow the full recovery of the industry. As a matter of fact, by the end of the last century, India became a net importer of cotton textiles.

The series of widespread famines occurred in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and widespread unemployment and underemployment in the agriculture and cottage industries sectors, drew the attention of the Government of India for the first time, to the decline of cottage industries. Particularly the handloom industry clinched great attention of the government. The Royal Commission in Famine 1880, the Royal Commission appointed in England in 1888, and the Famine Commission of 1898, recommended that it was desirable wherever convenient to protect all crafts by which people were supported instead of through public works. The Famine Commission of 1901 made a similar recommendation. During the last decade of the 19th century the central government asked the provincial governments to conduct investigations into important cottage industries like hand-weaving. But in no way handloom industry was benefitted much by investigations and programmes.

In the beginning of the present century, the domestic yarn production was found greatly favoured by the cotton mills
in India. Besides, there was great demand for Indian yarn in China and Japan. But soon with the emergence of Japan as a great yarn and cloth producer, India was forced to lose these two big markets. As a result, the need for utilising mill-made yarn within the country became imperative. This led to doubling of loomage in 1910. Whereas at the same time, the spindleage increased only by 20 per cent. Further, the Swadeshi Movement insisting upon the consumption of home-made-goods stimulated the expansion of weaving section in the Indian cotton mill sector. This led to fall in the ratio of spindles to looms in the mill sector. For instance, whereas in 1876 there were about 120 spindles to one loom, the ratio fell to 105:1, 100:1 and 59:1 respectively in 1895, 1906 and 1916.

The increase in the production of cloth in the mill sector could be effected at the cost of handlooms in the country. Until about 1909 annual handloom production was more than annual mill production, and in some years nearly double. But from that date onwards, mill production began to increase steadily and rapidly. By 1914 both lines of production became almost equal. By about 1912 a few cottage

powerloom factories were set up. They also began to produce superior quality sarees. Their number rose with time. Increasing production of powerloom sector was also posing a great threat of competition to the handloom sector. Trends in production of mill, powerloom and handloom sectors are clearly depicted in the graph IX.

During the period 1911 to 1914, government paid great attention to the welfare of weaving communities in some provinces. The handloom development schemes in some provinces consisted of popularisation of improved equipment and tools, fly-shuttle looms, dobby, jacquards, peripatetic demonstration parties, establishment of a few training schools, introduction of co-operative organisations etc.

During the World War I, imports of cloth in India came down. To make use of this opportunity the mill sector made all possible efforts to raise production and to capture the domestic market. This led to more consumption of yarn by mills and much less supply of yarn to handlooms. For instance, in the quinquennium 1911-12 to 1915-16 the mill sector consumed only 1,297 million lbs, while 1,248 million lbs had gone to handlooms. But in the following quinquennium (1916-17 to 1920-21) mills used as much as 1,664 million lbs while only 1,097 million lbs had gone to handlooms. The
The same trend in the consumption of yarn by mill sector and supply of yarn to handloom sector has been found after World War I and even today.\(^3\)

The war entailed mixed effect on the handloom industry in India. The scarcity of dyestuffs, growing scarcity of mill yarn handicapped the independent weavers. They were forced to work under master weavers who could obtain imported raw materials. Consequently seeds of present master weaver's system were sown at the time of war. On the other hand, the great difficulty of mills in obtaining machinery and stores from abroad did not allow mill sector to expand further. Moreover, the mills' production was mostly geared to meet war time demand. As a result the demand for handloom cloth in the domestic market rose considerably. The master weavers in the handloom sector exploited this situation advantageously. Weaving from coarse yarn declined but weaving from medium and fine yarn increased as there was great demand for such superior varieties of cloth.

During this period greater attention was drawn on the cottage industries, particularly hand weaving industry by

the provincial governments. Apart from already existing measures, some new measures like starting research institutes, sending experts abroad for studying market situations giving improved accessories on a hire purchase system etc, were also implemented. This certainly helped the handloom industry.

In the post war period, the handloom industry recorded some advance. Because more comprehensive handloom development programmes were introduced. Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, creation of department of Industries in each province, organisation of Conference of the Directors of Industries in 1921 and 1922, wide-spread use of fly-shuttle looms, passing of Acts for advancing financial aids to small industries in some provinces, etc., effected some improvement in the handloom industry in the country. The total production of handloom sector increased to 1,502 million yards in 1924-25. Unfortunately this happy position of the industry did not last long. After 1925 the handloom industry was confronted with more severe competition from mill sector. This was on account of: i) Mills had shifted their attention to women's wear as well which was so far, the best line of handloom production. ii) The removal of cotton excise duty, the imposition of high tariff
wall against imported yarn and cloth. iii) Congress ban against imported yarn and finer cloth. iv) Development of transport system in the country facilitated sale of mill-made cloth even in the countryside. v) Change in the clothing habits, from artistic cloth to simple and plain mill-made attire. vi) Growth of cottage powerloom sector.

The Great Depression of 1930s affected the handloom industry adversely. The demand for handloom goods declined owing to fall in the purchasing power of agricultural masses. The Depression also caused adverse effect on the mill sector. However, the adverse effect on handlooms was much more serious than on mills. In 1931 the total production of mill sector was to the tune of 2,460 million yards and of the handloom production was of the order of 1,390 million yards. By 1938, mill production of cloth amounted to 4,297.4 million yards and the handloom production to 1,945.9 million yards, (i.e. mill production was more than double of handlooms production).

During this period, the concrete arrangements were made to assist the handloom industry in the country. A grant to the handloom industry equivalent to the proceeds
of an import duty of one paise per pound of imported yarns up to 50s counts were included in the central Budget of 1934-45. The grant was utilised by the provincial governments for launching schemes of marketing, improvements in designs etc. The government of India directed the Banking Enquiry Committee (1931) to make specific recommendations regarding the cottage industries.

According to the Fact Finding Committee (1941), the Second World War did not impart the fillip to the handloom industry as the First World War did. For, during the Second World War, Indian mills consumed most of their yarn themselves and exported part of the remaining yarn to the countries of East European group. Consequently, hand weaving industry faced with acute scarcity of yarn. The weaving communities were in a great flight. Perhaps, this forced the government of India to appoint Fact Finding Committee in 1941.

During the period, 1942-46, the handloom industry showed some improvements in the volume of production, owing largely to the stimulus drive of the government. The handloom industry began to supply varieties of cloth required for the war. The central and provincial governments began
to give more than usual attention to the development of the industry. They placed order with it to the extent of 25 percent of their total war requirements. The First Small Scale Industries Conference held in New Delhi decided to stimulate the activities of these industries. The arrangements were made to purchase goods through Provincial Co-operative Departments or Directors of Industries. The Directors were instructed to supply raw materials, finance and technical information to these industries. They were also asked to supervise the manufacturing work of small industries. This helped the industries, particularly hand weaving industry to a great extent.

In this context, it is quite appropriate to mention the observations of the Famine Inquiry Committee in its Final Report (1945). The committee maintained that there was no lack of knowledge as to the form of assistance necessary for the development of cottage industries in India. Similarly, there was no lack of willingness to help them. But one great difficulty was absence of a suitable agency through which state assistance could be made available to the rural artisans. Further, it pointed out that in certain sections of the handloom industry the co-operative organisation made some progress. But its
efficiency was questionable.

Immediately after Independence the country was in critical conditions. The severe inflationary pressures, partition, communal riots, problem of refugees etc. accentuated the situation. The controls on prices and distribution of yarn and cloth introduced in 1941 were withdrawn in 1947. This led to the deterioration of yarn and cloth supplies. In view of this, controls were re-enforced in August 1948. They continued until July 1953 when they were abolished to a major extent. Two measures introduced in the control period were of great importance to the handloom industry. One was the Textile (Control) Order of 1948, which restricted the establishment of powerlooms for cotton goods. The second was the handloom control order, calling for registration of handlooms.

During entire period of 1947-51 the handloom industry was confronted with many difficulties. Frequent shortage of yarn, great difficulty in quick disposal of handloom goods, decline in demand for handloom cloth due to inflation, etc. affected the industry adversely. Government of India felt that a comprehensive study of the handloom industry was inevitable to evolve programme of handloom development.
With this end in view, it appointed the Textile Enquiry Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. N. Kanungo in November 1952. Simultaneously Government constituted the All India Handloom Board, with the Textile Commissioner as a Chairman. The Board is to advise Government generally on the problems of handloom industry and to examine schemes for improvement and development of the industry. Further, to give immediate relief to the handloom industry the government issued orders restricting monthly production of dhoties by the mills to 60% of the average monthly packing during the twelve months ended March 1952. The orders also prohibited piece dyeing of sarees by Mills. The Khadi and other handloom development Act was passed in 1952. This empowered the government to levy an additional excise on mill-made cloth. The funds created out of the proceeds of the levy is called cess fund which is meant for implementing the handloom development schemes as per the general principles laid down by the All India Handloom Board. (Such as grant of rebate, supply of improved looms and appliances etc.)

The Textile Enquiry Committee estimated that the handloom industry in India provided employment to about 1.5 million persons working on about 1.2 million active handlooms
for about 200 days in a year. The estimates of handlooms in the country by different authorities are presented in table 10.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Tariff Fact</th>
<th>Govt. of Tax</th>
<th>Shivaram Report</th>
<th>Board Finding India</th>
<th>Enquiry Committee Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1260409</td>
<td>1515450</td>
<td>1790957</td>
<td>2259263</td>
<td>2870000</td>
<td>3573364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The handloom fabrics production in 1954 was estimated at 1,400 million yards a year. The mill sector produced 4,800 million yards and employed 0.73 million workers in 1953.

Having examined objectively the various problems of handloom industry in the country the Textile Enquiry Committee recommended phased conversion of handlooms into powerlooms.

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4 The expert committee on Handloom Industry under the Chairmanship of K. Santhanam, in 1973 estimated that in India there were about 30 lakhs of handlooms providing direct employment to about 75 lakh persons.
over a period of fifteen to twenty years. The All India
Handloom Board rejected this particular suggestion. But
the government accepted this and also all other recommendations
of the committee. Owing to strong opposition from
the handloom interests, ultimately government dropped the
policy of phased conversion of handlooms into powerlooms.

But in the year 1956, under the guise of revised
Textile policy, the Government decided to set up 35,000
powerlooms in the handloom co-operative sector. The
co-operatives did not show much interest in installing
powerlooms. In view of this attitude of the handloom
co-operatives, the Government went to the extent of en-
couraging the private sector. In this behalf, the Govern-
ment announced that the powerloom units with four or less
looms would be classified as cottage powerlooms and that
they would be free from excise duties. The exemption from
the reservation order and liberal government assistance
were also announced. This led to the phenomenal growth
of cottage powerlooms in the handloom sector. Along with
this, a large number of unauthorised powerloom units came
into existence. From a bare 27,000 powerlooms in the year
1956, the figure swelled to 1,46,000 by 1963. It was
estimated that more than 2,17,000 powerlooms were working
in the country in 1971. This aggravated the crisis in handloom sector. As there was a direct competition between handlooms and powerlooms.

The Government at long last realised the futility of the scheme and decided in 1961 that no further schemes would be sanctioned for the installation of powerlooms in the co-operative sector. But the growth of powerlooms in the private sector had been steady. The production of cottage powerlooms and mills began to increase significantly. (See graph IV). The handlooms in the country had to face with not only the competition from mill sector but also from the powerlooms. Thus triangular competition was formed. As the handloom is the weakest of all, it could not withstand the competition. Handloom weavers began to desert their traditional occupation. Underemployment and unemployment among the weavers became phenomenal. This had happened particularly in those places where big powerloom centres emerged.

Rapid changes in fashion, specially in women wears, affected adversely the handloom industry in recent years. While handlooms could not adjust its production to the changing preferences of the consumers in the country, the powerlooms and mills could easily effect changes in the
varieties of their cloth in accordance with changing fashion. As a result, handloom goods market had been declining whereas the market for powerloom and mill goods had been expanding. At present, the threat to the handlooms from powerlooms has become severe as the powerlooms have been cornering handloom markets. Powerlooms have been also competing with handlooms in the raw material market. All this intensified the agitation among hand-weaving Communities. Political and other pressures were brought on the Government to prevent the growth of powerloom sector. Under such circumstances the detailed study of these sectors became inevitable. Hence Government appointed powerloom Enquiry Committee under the Chairmanship of Ashok Mehta in 1964.

The Committee had representatives of powerloom interests and mill interests as well as handloom interests. The conclusions of the Committee were unanimous. Its terms and references among other things were to account for phenomenal growth of unauthorised powerlooms in the past and to advise means to prevent future unauthorised expansion.

In view of dangers from existing powerlooms and also prospective danger from future installation, the need for
giving protection to the handloom industry became imperative. To offer protection to the handloom industry the Committee recommended unanimously that:

1) Production of dhoties and sarees by textile mills should be pegged at 1963 level.

2) The production of coloured sarees should be reserved exclusively for handlooms. Even cottage powerloom units with four looms and below should not be allowed to produce coloured sarees. The Committee maintained that small powerloom units should not be allowed to exploit the advantages arising from these reservations.

The Cotton Mill Federation brought it to the notice of study Team, Textile Commissioners Organisation, 1966, that the reservations which were essentially conceived as measures of protection to the handlooms had really contributed to the cottage powerlooms. The Team also reiterated the suggestions of the powerloom Enquiry Committee.

The suggestions of the expert committees and the persistent agitation of the handloom interests in the country brought about change in the attitude of the Government. On 19th November 1966 the additional Textile Commissioner
amended order of the previous Textile Commissioner's Notification of 14th April 1950. The result was that the protection that was offered to the owners of the powerloom units having less than four looms was withdrawn.

It was a matter of great surprise to notice that not only did very large number of unauthorised powerlooms came into existence after 1966 but they were also flouting the aforesaid order. The State Governments have not made sincere efforts to enforce the order. The powerlooms in all important handloom centres in the country were increasing and their production of reserved cloth was expanding. The powerlooms also succeeded in capturing market for women wears in both urban and rural areas. The mills and powerlooms were changing the pattern of production in accordance with the frequent changes in the preferences of consumers. Along with the increase in consumption of yarn by mill sector, the consumption of powerlooms was also increasing. Yarn prices were soaring. Handlooms were facing acute shortage of raw materials. The plight of weavers was considerable. Handloom interests in the country have been making representation to the Government.

The High Powered Study Team, under the Chairmanship of
Shivaram studied this problem of handloom weavers versus powerlooms. The Shivaram Committee in its report (1974) made very strong case for the development and protection of handloom industry in the country. It proposed for the enhanced excise duty on powerlooms. The proceeds of the duty estimated at Rs.20 crores should be utilised for the development of 35,73,363 handlooms in the country. The Study Team felt that any other differential in the excise duty and other allied duties in favour of powerlooms vis-a-vis composite mills would not be justified. Hence the Committee thought that there was no need to differentiate between the total excise duty levied on powerlooms and mills. To support its stand the Committee gave following reasons: i) The powerloom sector flouted the licensing Laws. ii) A large number of unlicensed powerlooms were competing after yarn which should have legitimately gone to the handlooms. iii) Powerlooms were producing cloth reserved for the handlooms and were cornering their market.

The Committee recommended that eight varieties of cloth now reserved for both handlooms and cottage powerlooms should be reserved exclusively for handlooms. These eight varieties were: 1) Yarn dyed dhoties, 2) Chaddars, bedcovers, counter panes, 3) Low reed pick cloth, 4) Table
cloth and napkins other than bleached quality, 5) Sarees other than coloured sarees with borders exceeding two feet six inches with using imitation or real zari in a zari border, 6) Dusters, 7) Towels in honey comb weave or Erazha thorty and 8) Cloth of plain weave.

Another important recommendation of the Committee was that 62.5 per cent of the yarn production should be in straight hank form which was used by the handlooms.

We are tempted very much to conclude the discussion in this section, with the comments of Fact Finding Committee. For, the preceding analysis clearly demonstrates that the comments of the Committee are as valid today as they were in 1940s. "The handloom has survived and will survive." According to the Committee, "question is whether it will survive as a relic of primitive economy, a symbol of sweating and low standard of living. Or will it survive and grow strong as the corner stone of a healthy decentralised modern economy which will maintain in freedom for millions of families on a reasonable standard of comfort, while ensuring to the population at large a steady supply of clothing even in times of possible insecurity?"
As the handloom industry at Ilkal had a long history and as it is one of the largest hand weaving centres in Bijapur district, we have made a detailed study of it. Besides, the information of the hand weaving industry pertaining to past 100 years or so is systematically available at Ilkal. Prosperity and panics that are observed at Ilkal are more or less applicable to other selected centres. Hence we think that the detailed discussion of historical and general background of Ilkal renders the representative picture of general background of handloom industry in Bijapur district. The hand weaving industry at Ilkal had been playing vital role from time immemorial. It occupied a pride of place, from the point of view of reducing incidence of unemployment and underemployment in this region, and also from the point of view of output of handloom products. Ilkal 'Top-teni' sarees, the main fabric of the industry, enjoyed great popularity in Karnataka and its neighbouring States too.

Ilkal type sarees were also produced in a number of surrounding handloom centres like Sulebhavi, Amingad, Kamatagi, Gudur, Hanamsagar, Gajendragad, Muski, Balaganoor, Tawarageri and Dotihal. For one reason or the other, these handloom centres were depending on Ilkal. Most of them were
obtaining raw materials or dyed yarns and working capital from Ilkal merchant-cum-master weavers/dealers. The major portion of their finished products was marketed through the merchant-cum-master weavers/dealers.

That the hand weaving at Ilkal has been predominant occupation is clearly indicated by Table 11. For seven decades, more than 70 per cent of the total population at Ilkal had been dependent directly or indirectly on the industry for its livelihood. The weaving community at

Table 11
Population Depending on Hand-weaving Industry at Ilkal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Population depending on the industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>9019</td>
<td>6313</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>11853</td>
<td>8299</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>14267</td>
<td>11314</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>17660</td>
<td>14128</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>20747</td>
<td>15560</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>24231</td>
<td>18083</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>30023</td>
<td>24000</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Reports and Ilkal Municipality Records.
Ilkal had got an inherent skill in weaving artistic sarees. A number of innovations had been introduced in the industry from time to time as the master weavers or merchant-cum-master weavers were progressive and diligent. Some of them had invested huge amounts in the industry. Above all, Ilkal is fortunate enough in having endowed with natural gifts like climate and water suitable for producing nice and fast colour sarees. As it is surrounded by a more or less perennial stream, it has the humid type of climate necessary for smooth weaving.

Evolution of the Industry

It was very difficult to trace accurately the evolution of the weaving industry at Ilkal since no one had maintained reliable records of the development of the industry from its inception, and no scientific study of it was made in the past. However, an attempt is made here to give a brief account of the development of the industry during the last hundred years or so, on the basis of personal interview and discussions with old and learned persons and information and documents obtained from the old business firms.

In the last decades of 19th century, the number of
looms working at Ilkal did not exceed 150 to 200 families depending on the handlooms for their livelihood. The favourable and conducive factors for the development of the industry were created by development of transportation system and innovations in new raw materials, products and markets in 1920s and 1930s. These effected a considerable rise in the number of looms and people employed in the industry. When the production of handloom industry at Ilkal fell short of the required demand, the merchant-cum-master weavers at Ilkal encouraged weavers in the surrounding villages, like Dotibal, Hanamsagar, Sulebhavi, Gudur, Amingad and Kamatagi, to establish new looms, by supplying them more raw materials and working capital.

The adoption of fly-shuttle looms in place of throw-shuttle loom about 1928 increased the efficiency of weavers. Their earnings also improved very much. This situation in the industry attracted other communities and consequently, the number of looms in the industry went up from 1,000 in 1920 to about 2,000 in 1932. During the Second World War, the number of looms in the industry remained constant and a high percentage of idle capacity was registered. For, there was an acute shortage of raw materials and the industry had to face severe competition from the mill-section and also from the newly emerged powerloom sector. Due to various
handloom development programmes introduced in recent years and development of efficient transportation system a considerable growth of looms in the industry at Ilkal was noticed. In 1970-71, there were 3,633 looms under working condition and about 5,000 looms were found in the surrounding handloom centres which were under the control of merchant-cum-master weavers at Ilkal.

The organisation of the local handloom industry had undergone notable changes from time to time. Prior to the present complex system (consisting of different types of master weavers, independent own-account weavers, wage and contract workers), there was in existence a simple system. Each weaver-household had one or two looms which were run by the head of a family or grown up male members. The family was the unit of work. The artisan was assisted by the children and women in the family in the preliminary process. However, in the busy season a few outside labourers were also employed. Each individual artisan invested his own capital in the unit. He used to buy raw materials in small instalments either from local yarn dealers or from the Guledgudd yarn market. Finished goods were sold on market days at Ilkal. Some producers carried their
products to distant places preferably on market days to
dispose them of directly to the final consumers. The
system of daily sale by hawking was also in vogue.

Before 1920, the market for Ilkal sarees and khanas,
was confined to Bijapur district only. But during the
third decade of the present century a significant innova-
tion in the market had been introduced. As a result, the
Ilkal sarees became very much popular not only in Mysore
state but also in Varahad, Khandesh and others of the Central
Provinces. Weavers at Ilkal began to produce the sarees
according to tastes and preferences of women in these
places. From then on, Maharashtra had become the main
market for Ilkal sarees. In fact, even today, it is the
principal market, as more than 75 per cent of the fabrics
produced here are sold in Maharashtra state alone.

The expansion of the market undoubtedly gave a great
fillip to the development of the industry. But unfortuna-
tely, it caused rapid disappearance of the simple system
composed of a large number of independent establishments.
Owing to lack of finance and knowledge of external market,
the small establishments no longer retained their independ-
ence. They began to rely more and more on merchant-cum-
master weavers for provision of raw materials, working
capital and for marketing the finished goods. Consequently, the direct relation between producers and consumers broke down. The array of middlemen emerged. With the passage of time, while family remaining the unit of work, the present master weaver, co-operative and Rokhada systems came into prominence.

In the technical field some improvements occurred. But the adoption of improved tools and techniques was quite slow at Ilkal. The fly-shuttle looms which were technically superior to throw-shuttle looms, were adopted in 1928. The adoption of fly-shuttle looms increased considerably the efficiency of a weaver. The production on these looms was three times the production on throw-shuttle looms. As a result, throw-shuttle looms were rapidly replaced by the fly-shuttle pit-looms. By 1940, throw-shuttle looms were reduced to a negligible number. In 1970-71, except 15 throw-shuttle looms, all the looms in the industry were fly-shuttle looms. Besides, in recent years 10 twisting factories were set up; 8 hand-driven sizing machines were established. Improved varieties of winding and pirn-winding wheels were substituted for the old and obsolete ones. All these improved equipments and tools increased the overall efficiency of the handloom industry.
As the industry developed technically, the division of labour took place to some extent. A group of workers, mostly women, specialised in the preliminary processes like sizing, warping, winding-pirn-winding, etc., while the men specialised in weaving. Some separate dye-houses were opened. However, in recent years a number of such independent dye-houses came down as the merchant-cum-master weavers began to maintain their own dye-houses in order to ensure guaranteed colours of their products.

Considerable changes in the process of dyeing and use of dyestuffs were observed in the handloom industry at Ilkal. In 1930s, a lengthy and costly process of dyeing was practised. A silk-yarn was dyed in those days by utilising "Kirmanji Dani" and "Fista-phool" seeds imported from Italy and Amritsar respectively. As these dyestuffs were in seed-form, they were first converted into powder and then it was kept in water for two days. On the third day the red colour was obtained and then silk yarn was soaked in it. For preparing golden and green colours some imported dyestuffs were used. These dyestuffs were imported from such foreign countries as Germany, Switzerland and France.

For dyeing cotton yarns, the process of Vat-dyeing by
fermentation was in vogue. It was for obtaining indigo-blue or 'kel-karad'. In this process of dyeing, a naturally occurring substance got mainly from indigo plants, was used. Indigo-plants were grown mainly at Produtur in A.P. This process of dyeing was said to be completed within 15 days. For dyeing yarn with red colour 'Congo Red' was mixed with the red powder obtained by crushing roots of 'Muddy tree'.

As the imported dyestuffs prices went up sharply during war period, and some other dyestuffs produced in the country became scarce, new substitutes were innovated. Nepthol and Indethrene colours were adopted. The use of these new dyestuffs not only reduced cost of dyeing but also saved much time and energy of a dyer. At present these dyestuffs were extensively used in the industry for obtaining different colours.

The line of production also underwent notable changes. Upto 1910, the main production in the handloom industry consisted of varieties of coarse khanas and to a negligible extent coarse sarees of 8 yards. In 1915 an important innovation in the products of industry was ushered in. From

5 Kel-karad means black colour dye vat process.
then on, the present 'Ilkal Top-teni' sarees had been produced in the industry. As the production of sarees became more and more important, the production of khanas declined rapidly. By 1940, weaving khanas at Ilkal was stopped completely.

The acute shortage of raw materials during World War II and the sharp decline in demand for sarees (caused by keen competition from mills and powerloom sectors), created a situation wherein continuation of production of sarees became almost impossible. Forced by this situation, weavers began to produce in 1940-41 mul-mul white long cloth out of waste yarn of cotton textile mills. This type of production continued till 1945. As the supply of waste yarn became irregular after 1945, pure-silk and dyestuffs were readily available and demand for sarees revived, weavers once again started weaving sarees. The entire production of handloom industry at Ilkal in 1971 was consisted of varieties of sarees.

The innovation in the utilisation of yarn was brought forward in 1950 when there was serious scarcity of pure-silk. Instead of utilising pure-silk which was the main yarn in the production of sarees, art-silk was used. This change caused a great reduction in the cost of production and it...
augmented competitive strength of the industry in external markets. Neither the art-silk sarees nor pure-silk sarees produced at Ilkal were within the reach of a common consumer in the local market. They were mostly consumed by rich class consumers and were purchased by poor consumers on the occasions like marriages and festivals. Village women were purchasing coarse and medium type sarees from some other distant handloom centres. Taking note of this want, a progressive entrepreneur at Ilkal started in 1955 production of medium counts sarees according to tastes and capacity of a common customer. Approximately 500 looms in the industry were engaged in the production of such sarees (1970-71). The use of plastic golden thread (Jhari) in the border and heart of the sarees was innovated by another progressive entrepreneur, to fulfill the preferences of modern women. Jhari-border and Jhari mixed sarees were now, being produced increasingly. Other minor changes in the pattern, design, width and breadth of sarees had been introduced.

In the beginning of the present century the Dewang community dominated the entire industry at Ilkal. Owing to migration of other communities like Sali, Padmasali, Swakulsali, Chikka-kuruvinashetty, Hire-kuruvinashetty,
Togatageri, Marwari and entry of local communities like Lingayat and Muslims, the dominance of the Dewanga community in the weaving industry had come down to a considerable extent in recent years.

**Periodic Fluctuations in Output, Employment Income**

Our observations of fluctuations of output, employment, income and innovations ushered in different periods of the present century enable us to establish a certain correlation between innovations and fluctuations in output, employment and income. It is discovered from various documents of the old business firms and municipality records that as and when the innovations were brought forward in technology, raw materials, product, and market; the output, employment and income were increased. In short, the innovations gave a big push for the development of the industry at Ilkal.

In 1915, for instance, new type of product (pure-silk sarees, 9'-50" with 'Top-ten' heading) and a new market in Maharashtra were innovated. These innovations brought about rapid increase in a number of looms, employment, output and income. It pushed the industry in stagnation, towards prosperity. All producers in the handloom industry began to adopt the production of new type of products. Many merchants-cum-master weavers came to know the new markets. All this
had led for competition among the producers on the one hand and merchant-cum-master weavers on the other. As a result, incomes of producers and dealers drastically declined and ultimately the stagnation occurred in the industry. The industry was in the state of stagnation till 1928 when once again the progressive entrepreneur brought forward the innovation in the use of looms. The fly-shuttle looms were substituted for the old throw-shuttle-looms. This increased efficiency of a weaver as the new loom was technically superior to the old one. Consequently, industrial activities were pushed upwards. Similar tendencies were observed when other innovations were introduced in 1941-42, 1950-51 and 1955, in the use of raw materials like yarns and dyestuffs.

From the above considerations, it can be inferred that the handloom industry at Ilkal had been subject to certain rhythmic movement till 1955. But thereafter, there were no severe fluctuations as no major innovation has been brought forward in the industry. The scarcity conditions, war periods, severe competition etc. which were responsible for accentuation of downward fluctuations in the industrial activities prior to 1950 were now minimised to some extent by the handloom development programmes of the government. Since 1955 there has been relatively more stability in the
hand weaving industry at Ilkal.

Organisation and Size of Handloom Industry

In this section an attempt is made to study an organisational pattern and size of the handloom industry at Ilkal on the basis of census survey conducted here in 1971. As the main occupation of the population at Ilkal was weaving, handloom establishments were found in all wards of the town. The distribution of establishments is depicted by figure 3. The looms and establishments were not evenly distributed among all wards. One striking observation here was that the IV ward was like a slum area of a big city. A large proportion of weavers were living in small huts or small houses. Here floating population of weavers was residing. A large number of weaver's families clustered in V and VI wards. Majority of establishments in these wards were found in the old houses. Weaver's operations in these three wards were exposed to vagaries of monsoons. Since most of the weavers were in dire poverty, they could not own the houses or construct new houses. It was, found that the problem of housing at Ilkal was really grave.
Organisational Pattern

A study of organisations and workers in the industry denotes the organisational pattern of the industry. Broadly speaking, there were three organisations in the Ilkal hand weaving industry, viz., 1) Rokhada system (consisting of own account or independent weavers).

2) Master weaver's Organisation (comprising of small master-weavers - Karkhanadars, mungada and satta sawkars).

3) Co-operative sector.

The own-account or independent weavers constituted the Rokhada system at Ilkal. An own-account weaver was one who owned all the fixed assets, purchased raw materials out of his own savings and undertook production with the assistance of only the members of his family. He sold his products to dealers and/or directly to the consumers.

Master Weaver's Organisation

Three types of master weavers were found at Ilkal. The first type of master weavers were those who were directly engaged in production. They employed wage-workers for carrying on various operations. The members of their families were also assisting in the operations. They
purchased raw materials on their own account and/or they got required working capital from big master weavers. When they borrowed working capital from big master weavers they had to sell all their finished goods to them. They invested their own capital in fixed assets like looms, equipments, building. They were also described as Karkhanadars.

The second group of master weavers did not own looms and also did not engage directly in the production. They simply supplied dyed and warped yarns, prescribing pattern of sarees to the weavers working for them. (The actual weavers got only wages.) They also advanced short-term loans to weavers or small Kharkhanadars working under them. This enabled them to meet day-to-day expenses of weaving. The medium and long-term loans were also given on such occasions as marriage, funerals, delivery etc. These master weavers constituted "Mungada" system.

The third type of master weavers were same as the second type of master weavers in many respects. But the outstanding difference between them was that these master weavers, instead of supplying warped and dyed yarns, were granting cash credit to their weavers, needed for the production of certain quantity and quality of products. They sometimes issued to the weavers post-dated cheques (one month earlier).
On the pledge of such cheques, the weavers purchased required raw materials from retail yarn dealers. The weavers had to return certain fabrics within the specified period. If any weaver failed to do so, the drawer of the cheque (master weaver) would request the drawee (i.e. banker) not to honour the cheque. In such circumstances, the yarn dealers would be put into troubles. However, such instances were rarely observed. Many dealings were made in good faith. Retail yarn dealers were usually selling at relatively higher prices to these customers. This in effect constituted interest on the credit sale of yams to the weavers. The master weavers purchased sarees from the weavers either at contract prices or prevailing prices. They bought mostly at contract prices. They formed the system which was popularly called at Ilkal "Satta".

"Mungada" and "Satta" systems dominated the handloom industry at Ilkal. They were merchant-cum-master weavers. While some of them were yarn dealers, owners of twisting factories and/or sadi merchants, majority of them were 'sadi merchants'.

Co-operative Sectors

Six Weavers' Co-operative Societies were functioning. They like master weavers in the Mungada system, did not
exercise any proprietary rights over establishments working under them. Like the master weavers, they supplied warped and dyed yarns to the member weavers. The member-weavers had to return finished products and receive wages depending on types of products.

Types of Workers

Workers in the handloom industry can broadly be classified into three categories viz., i) Independent or own account workers, ii) Out-workers, iii) wage-workers. Independent workers having invested their own capital in their establishments undertook production with the help of members of their families and sometimes by employing a few wage-workers only in preliminary processes.

Out-workers

Out-workers worked with the raw materials of master weavers and co-operatives on more or less fixed wages. They sometimes employed hired labourers both for weaving and for preliminary processes. Some of them took looms from others on rental basis. Many of them possessed their own houses, looms and equipment.
Wage-workers

Wage-workers neither owned the looms nor houses. They worked in the establishments of small master weavers and received wages regularly. The rate of wage depended on the type of sarees.

The establishments at Ilkal were either owned by small master weavers or Karkhanadars, or by independent weavers. 594 (45.7) establishments were own-account type and 707 (54.3) establishments were under master weavers system of Karkhanadars. (See table 12). In this sense, all looms and establishments could formerly be classified under own account. But it does not represent correct picture of the organisational set up at Ilkal. To show real nature of organisation, this broad classification must be correlated with the nature types of the total number of establishment at Ilkal.

In the total establishments 164 (12.6) belonged to independent workers and small independent master weavers, (Rokhada system) while 917 (70.5) and 120 (9.2) establishments were working for big master weavers - mungada and satta systems respectively. The remaining 100 (7.7) establishments were under co-operative societies.
Table 12

Distribution of Establishments According to Types of Organisation and Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Own Account</th>
<th>Master Weaver <em>(Karkhandars)</em></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent (Rokhada)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>164 (12.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master weavers (Satta system) working independently</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120 (9.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weavers working for Master weavers (Mungada) and independently</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>917 (70.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weavers working for co-operatives and independently</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100 (7.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>1301 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1) * Small Karkhandars.
2) Figures in the bracket show percentage to total.

The distribution of looms according to organisation and workers as shown in table 13, brings out still clearer picture of organisational pattern at Ilkal handloom industry. Of the total number of looms 3,633 only 1,171 (32.2%) were under own account. Out of these own account looms, 355 (9.8%)
Table 13

Distribution of Looms According to Types of Organisation and workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Own account</th>
<th>Master account (* Kar-khandars)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent (Rokhada)</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(9.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master weavers (satta system and working independently)</td>
<td></td>
<td>421</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working for Master weavers (Mungada) and independently</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>2431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(66.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working for co-operative and independently</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1171</td>
<td>2462</td>
<td>3633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32.2)</td>
<td>(67.8)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1) * Small Kar-khandars.

2) Figures in the bracket show percentage to total.
were of independent workers (forming Rokhada system), while the rest were partly independent and partly working for master weavers or partly independent and partly working for co-operatives. Out of 2,462 looms owned by small master weavers 200 (11.6%) were independent while the remaining 1,741 and were working for merchant-cum-master weavers (mungada and satta systems respectively) and 100 looms working for co-operatives.

It was very difficult to classify categorically looms among different organisations and workers since there was frequent mobility of weavers from one organisation to another. Further, it should be noted that the so-called independent workers and independent master weavers were not, in strict sense, completely free from the merchant-cum-master weavers, as they had to depend, at least for the sale of finished goods, on merchant-cum-master weavers. Even co-operative societies had to depend on these merchant-cum-master weavers for sale of their finished products. Hence, more or less the whole industry came under the influence of a few big master weavers.
Size of the Industry and Units

In all there were 1,301 establishments in the hand weaving industry at Ilkal and the total number of looms in these establishments accounted for 3,683. Table 14 (also see figure 4) represents the distribution of establishments according to size-classes in different wards at Ilkal. A largest proportion of establishments had only two looms, followed by the establishments having 4 looms and 3 looms respectively. The percentage of establishments with more than 4 looms was negligible. If establishments are distributed according to such size classes as (i) (1-2) (ii) (3-4) (iii) (5-6) (iv) (7-8) and (v) (9 and above looms) the interesting findings are observed.

The largest number of establishments at Ilkal came under the size-class (i) and this was followed by the size-class (ii). The establishments falling in size-class (i) numbered 644 (49.4%) while establishments in size-class (ii) and (iii) 538 (41.3%), 102 (7.8%) respectively. The remaining establishments (1.3%) were found in other establishments.

The establishments with 2 and 4 looms numbered the largest and establishment falling in size-classes (i) and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wards in Ilkal One Loom</th>
<th>Two</th>
<th>Three</th>
<th>Four</th>
<th>Five</th>
<th>Six</th>
<th>Seven</th>
<th>Eight</th>
<th>Nine</th>
<th>Ten &amp; above Looms</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward No.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward No.2</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward No.3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward No.4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward No.5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward No.6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>241</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3633</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14
Distribution of Establishment According to Size (No. of Looms)

(18.5) (30.9) (19.2) (22.2) (4.1) (3.1) (4.) (5.) (3.) (1.) (1.)
(ii) accounted for the largest percentage. One of the main reasons for this was that the majority of weaver's houses at Ilkal were built to accommodate either 2 looms or 4 looms. Here it should be noted that the house in which 3 looms were located (i.e. establishments with 3 looms) or the house in which only one loom was found, could accommodate for one more loom. Thus, in all establishments with one loom or three looms, the space sufficient for setting up of one more loom was idle or unproductively used.

Even though establishments with 2 or 4 looms accounted for the largest percentage, the establishments with 1 or 3 looms were not negligible.

Thus it could be concluded that though size of the handloom industry was reasonably large, most of the units or establishments were uneconomical and widely spread. This called for increasing size of the establishments by appropriate measures.

* About economic size and its implications are discussed in detail in the chapter on comparative structure of the handloom industry.
Idle Capacity

The idle capacity in the industry can be conceived in terms of (a) number of idle looms, (b) idle hours in a day, (c) idle days in a year, and (d) production. At present, attempts are made to estimate idle capacity in terms of a number of looms, hours and days. Assessment of idle capacity in terms of production is made in the analysis of data under sample survey of the industry. Out of the total number of looms 3,633, 238 (6.7) looms were reported to be idle. This referred to the idle capacity during the busy season of 1970-71. The extent of idle capacity of the industry did not remain same throughout the year and in all years. Because, during slack season or in the heavy rainy days, or even in the busy season when the marriages and festivals among the weaving caste groups were more, the idle capacity in the industry increased. In the slack season of the year (1970) as many as 1,000 looms were idle and in the busy season of 1969-70 as many as 525 looms were idle owing to more marriage ceremonies being held among the caste groups at Ilkal.

On an average, a number of working hours in a day accounted for 6 hours. The maximum number of working hours was reckoned to 11 hours per day and that of minimum hours
to 3 hours per day. Master weavers (Karkhandars) on an average, worked for 5 hours per day and many of them worked for only 3 hours a day. For, they had to manage all operations of their establishments and many of them were not hard working. A large proportion of independent and wage-workers were engaged in working for 7 to 9 hours in a day. In this category there were considerable number of lazy persons who worked for only 5 to 6 hours a day. In 1970-71, a weaver was engaged in his work on an average for 240 days and in the previous year he worked for 210 days. Lower number of working days in 1969-70 was due to heavy rains, and a large number of marriage ceremonies.

Table 15 sets out clearly the distribution of idle capacity according to size-classes of establishments at Ilkal. The percentage of idle looms to the total looms in the establishments increased with the increase in the size of establishments. But this did not hold good in case of the establishments with 8 and above looms. However, our observations of three years in this behalf, established the fact that the higher size-classes of establishments were generally associated with higher idle capacity in terms of looms. In terms of number of hours per day and days in a year, the idle capacity was found to be increasing still
Table 15
Distribution of Idle Capacity According to
Size-class of Establishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size-class of establishments</th>
<th>Total No. of looms in the establishments</th>
<th>Idle looms</th>
<th>Percentage of idle looms to the total looms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 loom</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 looms</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 &quot;</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 &quot;</td>
<td>1152</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 &quot;</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 &quot;</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 &quot;</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 &quot;</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 and above looms</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

more with larger and larger establishments. The reasons given by the owners of these establishments for such a high idle capacity were as follows: (i) 85% of the respondents reported sickness and laziness for high idle capacity; (ii) 82% frequent mobility of labourers, (iii) 59% of them reported lack of good house, (v) 42% of them reported desertation, (vi) 40% of them reported presence
of subsidiary occupations, (vii) 30% of them reported vagaries of monsoons, (viii) 30% of them reported habits, (ix) 20% of them reported traditions.

Conclusions

Following conclusions can be derived from the preceding analysis of locational, organisational pattern and idle capacity in terms of looms, hours and days in the handloom industry at Ilkal.

1) Housing problem at Ilkal was precarious and it was particularly so in wards like IV and V where a large number of migrated families had settled.

2) At the outset, it might seem that the entire industry is generally controlled by the single system comprised of master weavers (mungada or satta). Nevertheless, it was very difficult to say that they exercised strict control over the entire weaving industry. For, there was frequent mobility of workers from one organisation to another and from one merchant-cum-master weaver to another. In the present organisational set up, a single organisation could not force weavers to maintain quality and could not suspend workers on this ground as weavers had other avenues of getting help from one master weaver or another or from
one organisation or another. Competition among the master weavers on the one hand and among different systems on the other, often resulted in lack of co-ordination in the production. This had led for either over-production or under production. All this emphasised the need for effective reorganisation of the industry.

3) Further co-operative organisation was the weakest one and hence the present system of co-operatives should be thoroughly revised on practical lines so as to enable them to succeed in their tasks.

4) The fact that very large proportion of the looms are working under the master weavers indicated that the majority of weavers at Ilkal handloom industry were either wage-workers or out-workers. The existence of such a large number of wage-workers and out-workers in the industry was one of the most important causes for the deteriorating quality of the products. As the wage-workers or out-workers did not enjoy the profit and as there was no direct relation between consumers and actual weavers, they did not take much interest in maintaining quality of the product.

5) Weavers in the industry at Ilkal were not self-disciplined. There was virtual absence of modern factory
system where labourers were required to work for fixed hours regularly and fixed number of days in a year. This situation in the industry explained greatly lower productivity and lower earning per worker compared with other handloom centres like Sholapur on the one hand and with powerloom industry on the other. This emphasised the need for ushering in some sort of factory system in the handloom industry.