



CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROBLEM

A) BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM :

The present study entitled " A Socio-economic condition of workers with special reference to Powerloom Industry in Sholapur City." is an outcome of one small research survey undertaken in the department of M.Phil in Economics, of Chh.Shahu Central Institute of Business Education and Research At Kolhapur.

The present chapter intends to throw light on Socio-Economic conditions of working class in India-With Special Reference to textile Workers. These textile workers have their peculiar problems-including the problem of occupational disease, long working hours and hazardous working conditions. This chapter will provide the necessary background which will enable us to understand and appreciate the plight of powerloom workers in Sholapur City.

"A socio Economic of labour problems usually increases with the tempo of industrial activities in a country, for exampale problems of wages, industrial peace, strike and lockouts industrial housing, health and efficiency of labour working problem etc." Although the magnitude of labour problems usually increases with the tempo of industrial activity, there are host of problems connected with labour in different countries of the

world whenever, be the causes of the origin of working classes in various countries, they have undoubtedly to the occurrence of immense social and economic problems, of conditions of employment of hours of work, of health and sanitation inside a factory or a workshop as well as outside it of housing welfare and social security."¹

One of the main objectives of an industry in any country is attainment of reasonable profit which depends on mainly labour productivity in India. It is found much of the technical developments have taken place, but the working community is not much skilled one. So the industries working in such conditions do not earn adequate profits. If technological gains have to be earned then endeavour to enhance labour productivity needs rethinking. Thus the entrepreneurs have to face tough labour problems.

"The modern industrial working class grew up in the country After the advent of large scale industries in the middle of the last century. One important feature of the introduction of industrialisation was the eagerness of the employers for quick returns and easy profits. The temptation of cheap helpless and submissive labour, used to long hours of work on low standard of living, proved the strong for many, who ^{secured} enormous

profits by terrible sweating of men women and children. The importance of labour in this context can hardly be over emphasised. But still as will be clear from the following the condition of working class is not very satisfactory. Two main important problems are the efficiency of labour force and the question of peace in industries, A proper approach to these problems is the need of the day."²

Planning in india started from 1951, since then attention is given to free development of different section. Such as agriculture industry etc. During second five year plan emphasis was placed on industrialisation of the country. Naturally the problems of industrial workers become important. Industrial development depends upon along with other factors on the regular stable supply of workers. But, before industrialisation became wider all over the country, the class of workers had certain peculiarities problems of industrial workers arise due to these peculiarities :

1. THE PROBLEM OF MIGRATION :

The main problem of Indian labour is the problem of migration. The increasing pressure due to population explosion the evergrowing army of Landless tillers, the social stigma on Harijans decline of cottage industries and city oriented education are some of the causes responsible for the exodus of villagers and their influx into industrial towns, so India did not

have class of committed period that worker in early trues. It is only in subsequent period that committed workers were gradually immigrous.

"The commission concludes, A vast majority of the workers in the cities are committed to the factory jobs. In older industries a second or even third generation of workers has emerged. A slef generating working class, with its roots in the industrial environment in which a worker is born and bred growing in strength."³

Generally most of them got the job with low payment, as a result they lived hard to mouth-life. The poverty irregular opportunities create number of job problems of social adjustment. It decreases efficiency and comes in the way of development of healthy employer-employee relationship.

2. THE PROBLEM OF RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE :

The second problem of the Indian labour is that of recruitment As yet there is little direct recuritment most of it is done through intermediaries. The service of employment exchange is available to very few. Most of the workers are dependent upon intermediaries and as intermediaries have special type of relationship with the employers they can afford to behave arbitrarily with the workers.

Labour investigation committee observes " Recruitment is first step in the method and organisation by means of which labour is brought into industry has a lot to do with the ultimate success or failure of such employment. The main reason of this phenomenon is that India is not sufficiently advanced industrially as yet."⁴

3. THE PROBLEM OF ABSENTEEISM :

Absenteeism means the failure of a worker to report for work when he is scheduled to work, it is assumed that the employer has already given an opportunity of a work, the worker is aware of this opportunity and still he remains absent for mandays.

Seligman refers absenteeism " to time lost in industrial establishment by avoidable or unavoidable absence of employees"⁵ The problem of absenteeism disrupts the industrial relation and creates the tention on the industrial sector of the economy. The problem of absenteeism in textile industry in India is old serious deep rooted and very complicated in nature.

4. TRADE UNIONISM :

The trade union movement in India is nevertheless in an infantstage and modern trade union movement functional only during the last three decades.

The lack of education outlook indebtedness and opposition by employers and intermediaries are some of the factors responsible for slow and uneven growth of trade union movement in powerloom section of India.

"The trade unions at old had by and large primary responsibilities of improving conditions of work and economic interest of working class only, but they have now to play an increasingly important role in the development of overall economy and social conditions."⁶

5. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES :

The capitalistic economic and social structure, the policies of creating dissension among worker by intermediaries retrenchment of workers to circumstance labour legislation and paying compensation are the problems which leads to frequent strikes, lockouts, gheroaes, and sit in by workers. At this time dispute turns violent and labours suffer heavily.

According to Dr. Radha Kanga Mukharjee " Forcible liquidation of strike backed by penalisation, without attempting at all to guarantee the basic human needs of a fair wage, decent housing insurance against illness and maternity is tackling the labour problems from the wrong end."⁷

6. PROBLEMS OF WAGES :

Wage problem is an important problem of workers as they are poorly paid. Due to lack of adequate wages the labour is unable to give proper education to his children. He cannot maintain his health, this leads to decline in his efficiency and in the ultimate analysis the productivity falls.

Different manufacturing processes are adopted in different industries, various types of machines are used. These things have made the problem of standardisation of wages very difficult. A number of issues as pointed out above are thus, involved in determining a right wage policy. This will involve the aspects of cost of living, size of the family, ability to pay and skills required for a specific job. The problem have to be tackled not only from economic but social point of view. This tackling has got the ramification of establishing equity in the society.

7 THE PROBLEM OF INDEBTEDNESS :

The indebtedness of the industrial workers unfold a grim story of their economic degradation on account of low wages, bribes to intermediaries, drinking and prostitution, most of workers are permanently and deeply under debt. But most important causes of indebtedness is occasional expenditure on marriages, funerals and

festivals and anniversaries. Usually the worker is born in debt and due to durdgery becomes/^{desonaitized} therefore, he takes to drastic and powerful influence line liquor and women.

According to the Royal Commission on labour "Many indeed are born in debt and it evokes both admiration and regret to find how commonly a son assumes responsibilities for his fathers debt an obligation which rest on religious and social but seldom on legal sanction. In this way majority of workers are in debt for the greater part of their working lives."⁸

8 THE STANDARD OF LIVING :

The chief cause of course is the low income of the worker and the high cost of living.

Shri. C.D.Deshmukh remarked in 1947 " India is suffering from a wage price spiral and the higher wages paid to the workers are almost automatically offset by higher living costs."⁹

A comparison of wages in India with our countries will bring into relief the pathetic plight of the Indian labour. The workers in India are underfed and more than 30% suffer from serious malnutrition. In U.S.A. 75 Yards cloth is used per head where as in India it is only 16 yards.

The amount of necessities comforts and luxuries which a man places in advance of marriage and family, some time, standard of living is regarded as allowed amount of goods and services which an individual consider necessary for proper mode of living.

9 PROBLEM OF HEALTH AND EFFICIENCY :

Due to low wages and low standards the workers are unable to eat whole some balanced diet. Most of them are addicted to smoking tobacco chewing, drinking and visiting cinemas and bawdy house. All these reasons are compled with unhygienic living conditions.

Dr. Bed ford, emphasised the need for "Wide spread training in safety principles and effective inspection by factory inspectors. As regards living condition out side the industry attention was drawn by both the reports to condition of insanitation and over crowding in the industrial areas, and to malnutrition of the workers."¹⁰

Efficiency depends upon the health and strong of the workers and his training. There are various factors, which affected the health and strength i.e. racial qualities climate standard of living, education, psychological effect no. of working conditions, indebtedness these are mentioned as contributory towards thier inefficiency.

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The workers also have no opportunities either at home or in institution to obtain proper training for the work. The mental faculties facilities of the Indian labour are not well developed on an account of lack of training.

10 WORKING CONDITIONS :

The majority of the labours live in extremely bad and deplorable working conditions and leave much to the elimination of improper things. As many places even facilities for drinking water, toilet etc. do not exist. Due to lack of amenities and hazardous working conditions the efficiency of workers drop and they are exposed to accidents and infection.

"The relations between employers and workers will also improve, if the employers take care of the conditions under which the workers have to work and provide them with a bright and clean atmosphere. The workers will also not feel which exhausted and depressed and will have more time to devote their organisation, family and welfare measures."¹¹

11. CHILD AND WOMAN LABOUR :

It is illegal to employ workers under certain age, these provisions are frequently flouted and circumvented. The problems are the following more work and less wages, loss of education

of children, lack of proper rest and play essential for proper growth. The unhygienic and rigorous working conditions low and be low-standard productivity.

The employment of children is indeed more of an economic problem than anything else. Nevertheless we consider denial of opportunity to children for their proper physical development and education to be on issue of serious nature keeping in view the larger interest of the society. While the economic difficulties real, a way has to be found to give the child the necessary education in his more receptive years, we feel this can be ensured by fixing the employment hours of children where the number of children is adequate, the employers with the assistance of state Govt. should make arrangement to combine work with education."¹²

Woman workers faced the problems i.e. unsatisfactory working conditions, lack of amenities and facilities for maternity leave, child welfare etc. Rigorous labour understand to delicate constitution of woman.

Most of the woman workers in our industrial areas have been forced to lead an immoral life by the jobbers and other undesirable persons, who absorbed in industrial areas and even the employers sometimes have been responsible for the degradation of

woman in industrial areas.

The number of Women employed in industry is small, avocation in industry it is only indicative of the problem of inadequate employment opportunity. As put by Shri. V.V.Giri." The Traditional outlook that women are to take care of their health and home only is slowly losing ground and today the services of women are equally reckoned with when accounting the manpower potential of the country.*¹³

In this way all the problems of workers are found even in powerloom workers as well as other factories workers in unorganised areas. The textile industry which the largest single industry in the country is gripped by a deep crisis. The crisis has further aggravated since the formulation of the new textile policy by the Govt. of India in June 1985. This is because of the pro-monopolist, pro-synthetic and pro-modernisation thrust in the policy. The number of closed mills has gone up to 142 from 70 in January 1989 from June 1985 i.e. within three years, of the new textile policy. About two lakhs workers have been thrown out jobless. The handloom workers who are worst affected are on starvation wage, starving due to lack of modernisation fund, which is being diverted to the private big houses.

"Powerloom is the only "flourishing" sector according to Govt. data contribution to about 50 per cent of the total cloth

produced in the country and about 98 per cent of the total synthetic production. But this flourish is being achieved by fleeling the workers. The big monopoly houses like Reliance, Orkays, Siyaram or Blue Blends etc. are switching over to powerlooms and controlling about 50% of the looms in benami manner. This sector is because of the very benefits that this sector offers, this is free from Govt. legislation and even from fiscal levies. They do not implement the labour laws. The workers are kept at the mercy of the employers. The wage differential between a powerloom worker and the worker in a organised mill is almost 1:4 by producing the fabrics in the powerlooms.

The big business house get away without paying extise on fabrics in addition to other low costs. The new textile policy this can be seen from the fact that these are about 8 lakhs powerlooms before the new textile policy and three years after the new policy the member is around 11 lakhs including about 3 lakhs unregistered ones. So far weaving is concerned, it is being almost entirely being shifted to the powerlooms closing down the section in the organised mills. The yarn and the items of cloth reserved from the handloom sector, All this is being planned to allow maximum profit to the big business by exploiting cheep labour in the powerloom sector."¹⁴

The powerloom workers have to fight to protect the industry from the onslaughts of the Central Govt. and they have also to fight very hard to protect their standard of living. There is no law in the country to govern the working conditions in the powerloom industry. Except the minimum wage act no other statute is covering the powerloom sector. The fate of minimum wages fixed by various state Govt. The workers have to toil 12 hours a day to get a pittance of wages. The workers have no choice but to work since no other source of livelihood is available to them.

Many workers are deprived of weekly off and they have to work continuously without rest. All this tolerated on the plea that this is an unorganised industry covered under the E.S.I.

Though technically E.S.I. Act is applicable to powerloom sectors, it has not been given effect so far. So practically the powerloom workers do not avail of various benefits under the act. They do not get any compensation and practically do not have any job security. A worker can be terminated from service. In the absence of any strong trade union movement the conditions of powerloom workers have become more deplorable.

The women workers employed in this industry generally do not get any maternity benefits. These women worker are not aware of

a thing known as "creche" for their children.

The question of treatment during industrial injuries is left at the mercy of the employers. The powerloom workers work in unhygienic and unhealthy surroundings.

During the summer, due to excessive heat and absence of proper ventilation working condition becomes unbearable. Absenteeism tends to be higher but workers are forced to do the work.

It was decided to study the socio-economic conditions of worker in Sholapur city against this peculiar background of powerloom workers in our country.

B) METHODOLOGY :

The present study throws light on the Socio-Economic conditions of powerloom workers in Solapur City. Solapur is traditionally known as textile centre, which provides quality yarn for the mill sector in the state. This being the centre of powerlooms it engages lakhs of powerloom workers. These workers have peculiar problems of their own. The present study aims at understanding these problems. Naturally we have used exploratory research design with a view to exploring the possibility of coming out with hypotheses as the end of the study. In this study the socio-economic conditions of powerloom workers have been studied by administering a pre-designed schedule amongst selected workers in Solapur City.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The study has been undertaken with a view to attaining the following objectives :

1. To study the Socio-Economic Profile of these workers in Solapur City.
2. To study the present socio-economic status of these workers in Solapur City.
3. To analyse the special problems relating to powerloom workers with emphasis on wage structure and welfare facilities available to them.

In this study facts relating to the socio-economic life of textile workers have been collected and have been presented along- with their socio-economic interpretation.

SAMPLING DESIGN :

Sampling included selection of the units i.e. weaving and additional processing units in Solapur City. The selection procedure ultimately boils down to the selection of individuals from there units for the purpose of detailed interview.

This can be described as Random Sampling since 100 workers were selected for the purpose of interview.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION :

The data collection was undertaken in the month of Nov. 1989. The method of data collection was mainly interview with the help of schedules. This schedule was pre-designed which covered the aspects of relations between workers and owners, socio-economic conditions of workers and working conditions.

This information sought with the help of schedule was tabulated, analysed and interpreted. This enabled us to come with appropriate findings.

The interview method was supported by discussion methods. This enabled the researcher to seek clarifications from trade union leaders, textile associations, Govt. offices and some of the consultants in the field.

The schedule administered in the course of the survey has been included as an appendix. (Appendix I).

C) IMPORTANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY :

Such an important industry like powerloom is still characterised as the unorganised sector in the economy. Though the value of production in this industry is estimated to be more than Rs. 4000. Crores per years, the Govt. of India has hardly paid attention to this industry, let alone the question of working and living conditions of the workers employed in this industry. The role of powerloom sector is very important in the Indian textile industry. It provides employment to about 2.5 million workers.

" The powerloom industry has developed rapidly in India since last two decades. According to estimates this industry employees about 33 lakhs workers while the total number of loom are about 12 lakhs as mentioned three years ago when the new textile policy were announced by the Govt. of India. However, a survey of the textile industry conducted recently shows that the total employment in the powerloom sector is 50.95 lakhs in the year 1988.¹⁵

"Maharashtra Account for 40% of the total powerlooms in the country having a concentration of about 5 lakhs looms employeeding over 7 lakhs workers Bhivandi, Malgegaon, Ichalkaranji and Solapur have been the major industrial centres in the State."¹⁶

The powerloom industry in all these places is predominantly in small scale sector. Almost 80% to 85% of the total looms are installed in small powerlooms factories having less than 5 looms each. All members of weavers family work as labourers on these looms.

A powerloom sector in Solapur Specializes itself in secquard chaddars and Turkish Tawels. The major problems as pointed out by different studies with reference to powerloom sector in India have been summarised below. The rapid growth of powerloom sector in the last 30 to 40 years has been quite in tune with the socio economic objectives of our planning.

1. Lack of constant supply of yarn.
2. Unstable price of yarn and shortage, of yarn.
3. Inadequate and costly credit to the powerloom sector.
4. Best material of yarn not available to powerloom sector.
5. Lack of adequate processing facilities.
6. Absence of Technical aid.
7. Lack of systematic recruitment procedure.
8. Absence of Social Facilities in Industry.
9. Absence of medical facilities.
10. Lack of transportation to despatch the goods to market places —
11. Lack of enlightened labour organisation as well as leadership.

- 12 Conflict between employer and worker.
- 13 Lack of awareness of trade union activity.

The powerloom problems need urgent attention of the Govt. The powerloom sector will play more effective role in clothing the masses with cheap cloth of high standard. Besides the weaving the powerloom sector also covers no. of additional processing units i.e. dyeing, sizing bleaching and processing. All the above mentioned processes are injurious to human health.

Therefore there is an urgent need of devising suitable schemes of adequate ventilation, lighting, water supply and drainage facilities.

The workers in the powerloom sector live in deplorable conditions in slum areas and are exposed to the occupational diseases like. T.B. and Asthma. This ~~also~~ requires careful understanding of the problem faced by suitable development schemes can be launched.

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