



CHAPTER VI

Shri Shahu Mills during 1941-49

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Introduction –

The period 1941-49 is very important in the history of Shri Shahu Mills. Because in this period the business relations between the local traders and the world traders were established due to the goods manufactured in Shahu Mills. **Most of the productions from Shahu Mills were supplied to military purpose in World War II.** First attempt of making Trade Union in the Kolhapur State was made by the workers of Shahu Mills in this period. This chapter includes the detailed information of Shahu Mills, its management, production, shifts, types of products, number of workers, various facilities provided by Mills, during the period (1941-49).

The management of Shahu Mills remained in hands of **M/s. James Finlay & Co. Ltd; Bombay** under certain conditions, from 1st November 1935.

Varieties of cloth produced by Shahu Mills:

The varieties of cloths produced by Shahu Mills were plain Khadi, Shittens, plain and fancy bordered Dhoties, Shirtings, Long Cloth, drills, mulls, Dosuti, China Sheeting and standard Cloth. Etc. The entire production of cloth was manufactured from yarn manufactured by the Mills.¹

Market:

A very large portion of the yarn and cloth manufactured in the mills was sold in the State and surrounding districts and the cotton used in manufacture was entirely purchased in the state and the surrounding districts.²The market was situated in Ratnagiri, Satara districts and Mumbai. About 40 percent of looms capacity of the mills was engaged to meet the requirements of either Defense service or for the Governmental demands in the period of World War II.

6.1 Productions during the years 1940 -1945.

Sr. No.	Year	Ring Spindles	Waste Mule Spindles	Looms	Yarn Produced lbs	Cloth Produced lbs	No. of Employees		
							M	F	Total
1	1940-41	15,988	416	319	27,68,578	14,52,505	--	--	1300
2	1941-42	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3	1942-43	15,988	416	319	30,97,586	17,77,866	900	300	1200
4	1943-44	15,988	416	319	30,60,405	18,11,219	880	220	1100
5	1944-45	15,988	416	319	27,58,787	14,11,247	880	220	1100

(Source -This information is from A.R.K.S. of each respective year.)

Above table shows the actual conditions of productions in both forms i.e. yarn and cloth .Also it gives the detailed information about the number of workers and exact numbers of male and female workers.³ From the above table it is clear that though the economics of country was affected by World War II, the productions from Shahu Mills was in very good situations. It seems that the demand from the homeland market supported the economy of Shahu Mills to maintain its economic conditions exactly like World Great Depression of 1929.It is to be noted here that decline in the number of workers by 200 in 1943-44 over 1941-42, had not caused any decline in output. It means the Mills had become successful in rising efficiency of workers by reducing the extent of disquiet unemployment.

In the year 1941, the workers of Shahu Mill demanded implementation of Factory Act and increased in the dearness allowance. Shahu Mills had a strong hold on their productions and its economy, that's why the management of Mills accepted the demands of the union and implemented various laws and also provided various facilities to the workers. That is a proof of the strong economic position of Shahu Mills in 1941.Due to the lack of documents bearing on the period 1945 to 1949, i.e. the last five years of the State period; no light can be thrown on the economics of the Mills, in the said period.

World War II and Shahu Mills:

The World War II in 1939 ensured the demand for goods of Indian Mills which proved to be the most destructive to British industries. The Indian industry was called upon to meet enormous war orders for Mill cloth. During this period, the price of cotton was blast up sharply with a sharp increase in the prices of other essential materials, such as bleaching powder and dyestuff.

As a result of Second World War, the import of Foreign Cloth was totally stopped. Due to this reason, Mill production had very large demand in society and Military services too. Hence the Mill was running into profit.

Production of cloths for Defense Services:

In the year 1942-43 there was demand from the government for Defense purpose for standard type of cloths.⁴ Where as in the year 1943-44 the cloth manufactured for this purpose was 1,80,000 yards of China Sheeting, 5,42,640 yards of Dosuti Single Welf and 13,16,289 yards of Standard Cloth.⁵ In the very next year the cloth supplied for this purpose was 8, 19,168 yards of Dasuti Single Welf and 1,76,894 yards of Standard Cloth.⁶

Effects on working conditions:

In the year 1941, the workers of Shahu Mill demanded implementation of Factory Act and increase in the dearness allowance.

At this stage, to stop work means a big loss of profit and it was not affordable to the State. Mr. Perry, the prime minister of Kolhapur state immediately accepted the workers demand and paid to them Dearness

Allowance at the rate of one Anna per rupee. Also he promised them to implement the Factory Act in State.

The Court immediately called a meeting of working committee, took a review of the problem and decided to grant bonus to workers, amounting to one and half month's pay besides allowances, implement workers Union Act, all the Factory Acts, reduction in working hours i.e. 9 hours instead of 10 hours, payment of overtime to the extent of half of the wages. Darbar promised to accept the demands. This was the great achievement of Shahu Mill workers before forming their Union.

The Mill was working in day and night shifts. The impact of the unionism and consciousness about the working conditions raised the spirit in the minds of working class of Shahu Mills in this decade. And one great achievement of this decade was the establishment of trade unions in the Kolhapur State. Shahu Mill Kamgar Sangh was the first amongst them in the Kolhapur state.

Welfare of Workers:

1. Dispensary facilities:

The Mill maintained a dispensary. The number of patients in was 4,158 during the year 1940-41.⁷In the year 1943-44, there were 11,367 cases treated and handled.⁸ In the year 1944 -45, the mills gave medical treatment to 5,191 persons.⁹

2. Compensation paid:

The amount of Rs.716 was paid to injured patients as compensation in the year 1940-41.¹⁰The amount of Rs. 149 was paid as compensation in the year 1942-43.¹¹In the very next year Rs.35 was paid as a compensation.¹²

3. Maternity Benefits:

In the year 1940-41, the maternity benefit was given to 18 female workers.¹³ In the year 1944-43, the maternity benefit was paid to 27 female workers amounting of Rs.653.¹⁴ In the year 1943-44, the amount of Rs.442 was paid to 17 women workers.¹⁵

4. Bonus and Dearness allowance:

The mills paid bonus to the workers on the same lines as were adopted by **Bombay Mill Owners Association**, which was equal to 1/6th of the workers total earning of the year. Also, the dearness allowance of 65 paisa was paid to the employees.¹⁶ In the very next year the bonus was paid as declared in previous year ,and total amount of Rs.1,44,948 was paid as dearness allowance.¹⁷

It is very clear that the last decade of State period was very significant. This period witnessed the emergence of workers union. The worker seems to be awakened regarding the working situations and their rights. The workers received a valuable guidance from the leaders and benefitted too.

After the merger of princely state of Kolhapur in 1949, the **ownership of the Mill** was transferred to the **Government of Bombay** from the **Kolhapur Darbar**. However, the *James Finely & Company* continued to manage it.

Conclusion:

In the real sense, the last decade of State period proved profitable and worthy regarding the overall development of Shahu Mills. The World War II benefitted a lot Shahu Mills to make hold on the textile industry. The demand and supply of Shahu Mill's productions during war period to defense services itself proved the quality and efficiency of Shahu Mills. In this way from these connections, Shahu Mills succeeded to make their own identity of textile on the map of India. Also this period is the period of emergence and development of labour union of Shahu Mills. It can be concluded the State period was really the glorious period in the history of Shri Shahu Mills.

References –

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