

<u>CHAPTER – 4</u>

IMPACT OF MILL CLOSURE ON WORKERS -SECONDARY DATA

4.1 Impact on workers:

Here researcher has tried to see the impact of mill through secondary data like newspaper articles.

4.2 Daily Tarun Bharat:

In Oct 98 the article has been published in the newspaper 'Daily Tarun Bharat'. The reporter Aradhana Shrivastav has written that bonus and other problems are the main issues among workers and management. Asia's one of the biggest spinning mill in co-operative sector went in darkness. If workers and management take collective action, then there is possibility for restarting mill. Because of economic stagnation the mill gave 8.33% bonus in 1998. The workers thought about this events differently. Some workers thought it is consequence because of propaganda of majority of workers who were against congress party. Because of 30% less production, 44 workers were removed.

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۰ ۰ Another event was clashes between one mill directors representatives and some workers. The labour union demanded arrest those whom were involved in the clashes.

In the series of these events there was disruption among labour union. The workers burned the office of director Ashok Jambhale and broke some mopeds. The question of law and order emerged. In the meeting of management, labour union and Government representatives it was decided to gave 11.33% bonus and 40 workers were absorbed.

In this article it has been suggested that through workers organisation playing politics is not good.

The workers asked question that if they had worked and gave higher production, how mill has gone at loss. For better management, one workers representative in directors body should be taken.

4.3 Rashtrageet:

In 2001 local newspaper 'Rastrageet' published an article. Suryaji Salunkhe and the workers cautioned that if state government can't solve workers problem, then they will make propaganda against the leaders responsible for mill closure in municipality election. They told mill was closed from 28th March 2000. 1250 workers were permanent and 1700 workers were temporary. From May 2000, the payment of workers were

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stopped. The mills the pending electricity charge was Rs. 5 crore and 28 lakh. It was not paid for 17 months. For restarting of the mill the demand was put to Maharashtra state Co-operative Bank for Rs. 55 crore 50 lakh but state Government did not took responsibility about loan. The mill could not fill provident funds amount from September to December 1999. Rs. 26,59,826 and from January to May 2000, the amount was Rs. 28,30,948/- As per the administrative body's report the mill's loan was nearly Rs. 21 crore 2 lakh. For return of this amounts the workers demanded to sell mills surplus property and give priority to workers pending amounts. Salunkhe demanded that if Government can not restart mill then workers all pending payment provident fund, gratuity, bonus etc. should be given.

4.4.Sakal:

'Sakal' published an article in Oct. 2001. Deccan's workers came on road for their bread. Worker demanded to sell mills surplus property and to fulfil pending amount. The mills surplus property was of nearly Rs.21 crore. The labours tried to find alternative source for their survival. The workers payments were stopped for 1.5 years. After stoppage of payment workers faced worst situation.

In the situation of economic depression number of power loom factories were closed down. Consequently Ichalkaranji main industry was

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unable to provide job to workers. Other spinning mills also implemented policy of reduction of workers. In this situation alternative work was very difficult.

The workers told that they took loan. In the situation of hunger, how to spend money on their children's education ? Hence they stopped education of their children. Under the leadership of Suryaji Salunkhe, they established 'Deccan Kamgar Bachao Samitee' and had 'Jagrutee Miravanuk to indicate their declined situation.

4.5 Sakal:

One worker Shankar Davekar committed suicide. This news was published in local newspapers on the front page of 12th Nov.2001. Before suicide, he wrote a note on paper. Some important point on the note are, 'I am committing suicide not because of quarrel, or drinking wine. For my suicide, officers and Government is responsible.'

He wrote in the note that 'Deccan mill is closed for nearly 18 months. There is no payment, I can't get another alternative work. If I get the work then earning was nearly Rs.40 to 50/- In this limited amount, it is impossible to meet day to day family expenses.' At that time Diwali festival was nearing. To the workers question was, how to celebrate Diwali ? How to

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bring dresses for children ? He expected that workers leader Salunkhe will give co-operation to his family.

After this event workers expressed their anger and unrest. They gathered on mill side and started 'Rasta Roko' they sat on road. The workers leader Mr. Salunkhe read note paper. The police officers saw situation and called extra police force at mill. The workers demanded Devarkars post mortam on mill site. But the police not agreed for post mortam on the mill site. Therefore workers threw stones towards police. The police sent dead body at C.P.R. hospital. The workers participated in Thiyya Andolan.'

4.6. Daily Lokmat:

The newspaper 'Daily Lokmat' wrote in column regarding ambiguity of Shankar Devarkars suicide (12th Nov. 2001). Before two weeks of event of shankar Devarkars suicide another mill workers Ashok Maruti Shinde also committed suicide Shinde's suicide was due to closure are of mill was claimed by 'Deccan Bachao Samiti' leader. Ashok shinde worked in the mill during 1985. He took loan on the name of his wife of Rs.52000 from Shivanary an Bank and there was pending loan of Rs.7670 of path sanstha and other money landers. The problem went to peak, when there was need of amount for their daughters delivery. In this situation he committed suicide.

4.7. Daily Pudhari:

The Newspaper 'Daily Pudhari' printed news in May 2002 that Government has not supported financially to families of suiciders. The newspapers like Daily Sakal, Tarun Bharat published news on 12th January 2002 about death of a worker named Dattatraya Shripati Kamble A/p-Sajani, Dist-Kolhapur due to lack of amount for medical treatment. He died on 6th January 2002. Deccan mill workers were out of Employees take insurance Scheme after closure. Kamble was sick for nearly 1 month 15 days. There was a need of operation. But it was not possible because of economic reasons. Lastly he committed suicide.

The workers were worried how to get treatment on serious diseases like paralysis, kidney problems, heart problems, etc. Many workers had diseases in old age period. In the period of no payment and unemployment workers were worried how to face day to day economic needs. These workers were having no amounts for medical treatment. Suryakant Laxman Musle has kidney problem. Maruti Krishna Ardalkar was having heart problem Ananda Bapu Radalar and Bhimanna Mundargi were the cases of paralysis. These four workers worked in the mill for 15 to 25 years. Before mill closure, they paid contribution to Employees State Insurance Scheme. But these workers could not get benefit of under the scheme after mill closure, when they needed treatment. Shree Mulee spent Rs. 25000/- for his treatment. He had to take treatment at Miraj and Mumbai. He demanded the expenses from Insurance Scheme for nearly six months. Then they got some amount for treatment. Shree Mundergi worked for 25 years in Deccan. He spent Rs. 15000/- on paralysis treatment.

4.8. Agitations of the workers:

As per the official record, when mill was in the profit at last phase temporary and permanent workers number was 2044. In the year 2000 there were two workers unions one was Deccan Girani Kamagar Sangathana (INTUC) and another was Kadam Anna Girani Kamgar Sangh (Independent). After mill's closure the workers payment were stopped. The mill could not fulfil workers demands. Therefore workers expressed their unrest mainly through morcha, court matter and suicide.

The attempt has been made in this section to analyse the agitation carried out by the workers. It also presents the events which took place during 2001-2004

In 1997-98 workers union under the leadership of Mr. Velu (INTUC) was closed down as the returns were not filled for nearly 3 years. Some of founder director resigned on 18th August 2000.

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July 2001

27 July 2001: Establishment of 'Kamgar Bachav Samiti' the workers arranged meeting and they demanded to restart the mill and payment of workers.

September 2001

11th September 2001; morcha of workers at prant office by 'Deccan Kamgar Bachav Samiti.' They demanded to restart spinning mill and to give pending payment, otherwise they will start agitation against the state Government.

October 2001

1st October 2001; morcha of workers on collector's office in Kolhapur. They assured that workers were ready for work, therefore the mill should be restarted.

23rd October 2001; workers morcha on prant office with their family members. They demanded that if restarting mill is not possible then to sell surplus property of mill and to give workers pending payment.

29th October 2001; In Ichalkaranji there was a morcha with family members of workers by 'Thailand' for the above demand.

November 2001

In the front of the prant office, workers sat for 'Thaiyya' for pending payments, restarting mill and investigation of workers suicide.

8th November 2001 Deccan workers had 'Shimaga Morcha' in the front of co-operative office, Ichalkaranji for the above demands.

January 2002

All the morchas, suicide failed to restart the mill and workers payment were not received. Therefore the workers filed case in the Mumbai High Court for their demands in January 2002. They filed a case against:-

- 1) State of Maharashtra co-operative and textile department.
- 2) Director of Handloom and co-operative & cotton industries.
- 3) Deccan's administrative, Deputy Registrar.
- 4) State commissioner
- 5) Mill

The court decision was declared on 13th Aug 2002 as follows:

"We have been informed that the authorities have taken a decision to wind up the respondent no-5 society and liquidator the grievances of the petitioner does not survive. We direct the liquidator to take immediate steps to sell the assets of the society and pay the dues of the workers as expeditiously as possible. Petition is disposed of all the parties concerned to act on the

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pridinary copy of this order duly authenticated by the personal secretary of this court."

May 2004

The attempts to receive assistance from governments appointed administrative committee as per court decision failed. The debt amount and interest increased. Finally I.D.B.I. stayed on mills property and Pradhikaran office declared auction of the mill.

June 2004

The former directors of mill arranged meeting and they told that "If auction of mill is not stayed on 20^{th} June, then one of them will sit for Uposhan.

In the front of Prant office, mill's former director and grand son of founder director Dattajirao Kadam, Mr. Ranjit Kadam started Uposhan along with some mill workers. They established 'Deccan Bachav Samiti' Their main demand was to stop auction of mill.

Deccan Bachav Samiti called 'Ichalkaranji Bandh' on Sunday 14th June 2004 on this day samiti organised morcha. 'Ichalkaranji Bandh' was partly supported by the merchants.

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On 15th June 2004, state Government arranged meeting with leaders in Ichalkaranji. In this meeting minister for textile told that state government will try to restart to mill. Textile minister demanded to stop auction by pradhikaran. The government sent proposal to the funding agencies. Therefore DRT gave stay for auction to funding agencies and government should try to restart mill. This matter was given in written by government. Ranjit Kadam stopped his uposhan after government announcement.

DRT court Pune rejected application for stay order on auction of the mill as there was a need to fill Rs. 15 crore.

July 2004

In the auction of Deccan co-operative spinning mill there was no tender so the auction failed. The high court ordered that the decision of DRT is important. For this auction was temporary stayed.

Deccan worker Bachav samiti had a morcha on Prant office. There main demanded was to get pending payment.

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