

Chapter - I

The evolution of Cotton Weaving Industry of Bengal till 1833

While discussing the evolution of the cotton weaving industry of Bengal it is essential to mention the wide acclaim of Bengal and Indian textile across the world. Generally speaking the progress of any civilization is gradual development from the general state and the progress or excellence is the yardstick measuring the degree of development. Hindu civilization is ancient and weaving industry has significantly influenced its development with its achievements. The ancient civilization is incomplete without the mention of the significance of the weaving industry and its influence upon it.¹ It was even before the Vedic chants came into being the handloom industry had started earning accolade. The women were efficient in this work and took active part in this industry. It will not be aberrant if we hold that the current traditional weavers (Vaisya) had originated from the then Aryans. Otherwise Bengal handloom industry would not have cited such phenomenal development since so many years despite the racialism. As it is not possible for any traditional practitioner of any trade to give up the original practice and take up a new trade and flourish immensely within a short span of time. Among the Aryans none other than the Vaisyas have revealed such expertise in trade and commerce and the undying fighting spirit to keep the tradition alive for such long years which further strengthened the fact of their origin.² Therefore it is a proven fact now that in the ancient world's history (B.C era) of textile industry India has always held a prominent place.

The way the Indian textile industry had developed can be clearly understood from the following paragraph.

Professor Weber had mentioned in his book 'The skill of the Indians'—"In the production of the delicate woven fabrics, in the mixing of colours, the working

of metals and precious stones, the preparation of essences and in all manner of technical arts, has from early times enjoyed a work-wide celebrity. There is evidence that Babylon traded with India in 3000B.C. Mummies in Egyptian tombs dating from 2000B.C. have been found wrapped in Indian muslin of the finest quality. There was a very large consumption of Indian manufactured textile in Rome. This is confirmed by the elder Pliny, who complained that vast sums of money were annually absorbed by commerce with India".³

During the rule of Mughal emperor Shahjahan, Bernier had described the capital of the empire as follows- He speaks of his immense treasures, gold and silver and jewellery, "a prodigious quantity of pearls and precious stones of all sorts"...and marvels over the incredible quantity of manufactured goods. Embroideries, streaked silks, tufts of gold turbans, silver and gold cloth, brocades, network of gold."⁴

From the Indian Industrial Commission Report it is known that once how the Indian weavers were much more evolved and advanced than their European counterparts. "At a time when the west of Europe, the birth place of the modern industrial system, was inhabited by uncivilized tribes, India was famous for the wealth of her rulers and for the high artistic skills of her craftsmen".⁵ In one word it can be said that without the weaving industry the history of Indian tradition and its rich heritage remains incomplete.

The remarkable Indian textile industry specially the cotton textile manufacturing was primarily developed in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bengal. Bengal had an old reputation for cotton textile production the centre being at Dacca. Later Shantipur also reached a place of prominence through their dexterity in the weaving of finer cotton textile. In his book 'Arthasastra' Kautilya mentioned that Bengal was very famous for that weaving industry. 73 B. C. Pliny also praised highly about the silky elegance and finesse of the muslin clothes.⁶ "The

muslins of Dacca were known to the Greeks under the name of Gangetika.... Thus it may be safely concluded that in India the arts of cotton spinning and cotton weaving were in a high state of proficiency two thousand years ago...cotton weaving was only introduced in England in the seventeenth century".⁷ In 1496 A.D. Poet Bipradas had praised highly of the then cotton textile woven in Bengal while mentioning of Saptagram in his composition 'Mansamangal'. It goes on like this - in Sixteenth Century A. D. several traders used to visit Saptagram with loads of items in their ships and exchanged them for cotton clothes and several other products from Bengal.⁸

Therefore in the Hindu civilization during the ancient and the middle ages, weaving industry had influenced so much that its eminence over other trade practices was irrefutable. In Bengal, this racial division among the weavers was remarkable. In "Biswakosh" we find Bengal weavers were divided into different classes like :

1) Ashwina or original weaver, who are again divided into five classes :
 a) *Bardhamani*, b) *Barnakul*, c) *Modhyokul*, d) *Madaran*, e) *Uttorkul*. In West Bengal majority of the weavers are *Ashwina*-s.

2) The weaver originating from the type called *Balarami* are again of two types Barendra or Radhi. They lived at Pangsa and near the place which was north of Faridpur District of East Bengal.

3) *Banga*- they lived in East Bengal. It is well known by Basak Weavers that they (*Balarami*) are the best. 20 miles north to Dacca city is Dhamradhu where there was a settlement of about 250 *Banga* weavers.

4) The weavers at Dacca are divided into two sectors

a) *Bara Bhagia* or *Jhapania*

b) *Choto Bhagia* or *Kayet Weaver*

5) *Barendra*- they resided in Calcutta, Shantipur who are better educated and cultured.

6) *Katur*

7) *Kora*

8) *Khir*

9) *Madhukori*

10) *Magan*

11) *Moriyali*

12) *Nir*

13) *Patra*

14) *Purandari*

15) *Purbokul*

16) *Radhi*

17) *Udvobi* are only some of the many sectors of weavers that resides in Bengal.

18) *Dakshin kul*- they are found in the districts of Howrah, Hooghly, Calcutta and they outnumbered others in population.

19) *Mogi*-found in Dacca

20) *Koroni*- Kayastha tanti or weaver

21) *Ganesh*- found in the region where Purnea, Malda and Rajshahi districts intersect, many of them are well educated.

22) In Midnapore we find another class of weavers who are well educated and well off.

23) In Chanpur village of Magura sub division of Jessore district, another class of weaver resides. The Bengal weavers essentially belong to the *nabasakh* segment and thus are mostly Vaisnab (worshipper of Vishnu) being disciples of Khardah's Goswamis.'

Mention of weaving expertise in literature

After discussing the various sectors and division of classes among the weavers in Bengal we shall observe the presence of weaving industry and its dexterity in

the contemporary literature.

The women in the Eighth to thirteenth century A.D used to wear scarf or Odhron or dupatta. It symbolized the elegance and feminism that Duk had described in the native dialect as

|| “*Odhon kare bole mane
Takey loiya ghar keney*” ||

In Srikrishnabijay we find the author fondly mentioning the elegance of the textile that enhances the sublimity of a woman’s beauty as

“*Pater pachra prishte ghono udhe jai*”.

In the 14th century we find reference of uses of *neths* in textile, *bhuni* made of jute and *kanchuli* (primitive form of unwoven corsets).

In the court of the king of Goud, varieties of Bengal textiles were used.¹⁰ In the 15th century again we come across the mention of scarves (*odhna*) by women in Vaisnab Padaboli.

Bijay Gupta has mentioned about jute textiles in his ‘Mansamangal’, the folklore in verses.

|| “*Nil odhna majhe mukh sova kore
Sonar kamal boli dongsibe bhromore*” ||

The *kanchuli* (primitive form of unwoven corsets) of the 15th century were intricately embroidered. In the 16th century we come across sarees with superior texture and designs in different varieties like *maghdomru*, *gangajoli*, *cheli*, *meghambor*, *mokhmol*.¹¹

We find mention of these superior varieties in Jodunandan’s ‘Gobindo Lilamrito’. This Century also witnessed the development of full length or 5.5 metre sarees (*baro haath*). Poet Konkonchandi mentioned this in his composition.

Also the range of sarees like *Khasajora*, *Dubra* (thicker quality) was woven as mentioned in Dwija Kalidas’s Mansamangal.

In the 17th century more varieties of sarees in different colours came into being like *Jatrasiddho*, *Khunchaneth*, *Munjoful*, *Agniful*, *Safaria*.

In Jagjiban's 'Mansamangal' we find mention of *Munjoful* saree. *Agnikul* saree was known to be the finer variety.¹²

From the above discussion it is revealed that the Bengal weavers had actually rendered a finer touch of artistic excellence to the weaving industry, thus making the Indian textile highly fashionable and popular across the world.

To understand the evolution of weaving industry in Bengal it is essential to discuss briefly the political and economic condition of Bengal during that time. During the Hindu rule prior to Mughals there was no separate existence of demarcation of land as Bengal. Comprising of the north and western part of Bengal, Gour had existed but there is no specific proof to the extent of its frontiers. From the Chinese travellers's (Hiuen Tsang, who reached Bengal in 638 A.D. a year after Sasanka's death) travelogues one can know, under Sasanka's rule Bengal was prosperous. Tamluk was a prosperous port then. But after the death of Sasanka his kingdom started falling into fragments and prosperity of Tamluk port was declining. In north Bengal there was a kingdom whose capital was Poundrabardhana. In his writing he has marvelled the garden and decoration of the custom duty office on the bank of the river near the port. So business was another means of economics in Bengal then. Even during the reign of Pal dynasty (750-1162) commerce in Bengal was advanced. The decline of Tamluk and fall of Saptagram had happened within the 8th century. Pal rule has witnessed many political crises, which has devastated progress of trade and industries in Bengal. Soon the Sen dynasty followed in with the decline of the Palas. Meanwhile at the onset of the 13th century Turkish invasion had thrown Bengal into another political crises though the Sen dynasty continued even after that for a while and eventually the independent Bengal emerged.¹³

In the middle age the pathans had ruled Bengal for 400 years with a few intermittent Hindu rulers ruling in between. Some fragmented kingdoms were established here and there. The pathan ruler Hossain Shah 1453-1511 had enriched the Bengal history in various ways. The pathan and hindu rulers had never submitted to the Delhi throne. During this period commerce had flourished in Bengal to a great extent so that it earned Bengal the complement 'Jinnat-Ul-Belat' meaning, heaven on earth. In this era peace, law and order were maintained for quite sometime.¹⁴

In 1576 after the death of Dayud Khan, Mughals took over Bengal. Akbar's rule witnessed prosperity and expansion in trade and commerce as peace and order were maintained. But the revolt of the Baro Bhuiyan again caused disturbance in peace and order. Therefore the Mughal subedars started ruling Bengal clasping the reign tightly. Trade and commerce rose to prominence during this tenure. After the fall of Venice and Geneva, commerce in India was predominated by the Portuguese and the Dutch traders. But goods were exported from India across the world even prior to the advent of the Portuguese in Indian trade. The Portuguese had entered into Indian mainland in the 16th century and dominated the commercial activities in Saptagram and Chattagram areas and extended their activities in Dacca, Sripur, Bakula, Hooghly, Hijli and Tamluk.¹⁵

The Portuguese's predominance over the waterways started hampering export of goods by Bengali traders. The foreign traders and their dominance started affecting the ever-strong financial base of the Bengal traders. Till then goods from Bengal were exported to Asian and East European countries and exports had exceeded imports. On 31st December 1600 AD, East India Company secured the permission from Queen Victoria to trade with the East Indies. In 1611 they started settling down in Muslipattam and Petapalli to set up business here.¹⁶

Till this period Bengal was the largest business centre in India. Saptagram was gradually losing its grandeur, Qashim bazaar and Hooghly were at their zenith. Dhaka was declining but still atleast 100 shiploads of goods were exported.¹⁷

The trade scenario in India started changing from the 17th century. Though the East India Company had started business in India they were still unable to set up an encouraging business atmosphere like the Dutch as they lacked in market setup in the Far East. They were willing to start business in the East with textiles from Gujarat from 1639 and even set up direct trading activity between India and England.¹⁸ Gradually Indian goods started reaching a bigger market introducing Indian textile to the farthest corners of the world.

In the early years of the 17th century Bengal could not attract the Dutch or the English primarily because it lacked in law and order, and the Portuguese traders controlled its riverine ports. Also the Bengal political scenario was disrupted with revolts, battles and frequent change in rule that had repelled the traders. Bengal then had two prime ports, Hooghly and Pipli and another reason that discouraged the new entrants in trade was lack of any seaport in Bengal. Moreover the European goods were not so popular among the Indians then; rather Indian goods were in high demand in the rest of Asia specially textile from Gujarat had huge market in South Asia.¹⁹

Coastal Regions and chief seaports	Principal Exports	Destination
Bengal-Hooghly, Pipli, Balasore, Chittagang	Provisions (Rice and Sugar) muslin	Pegu and Tenasserim, Malacca, and beyond Achin-extensive coastwise trade. ²⁰

The Portuguese controlled the entire trading activity in the 16th century and this was carried on mainly in three routes. "The first was by sea to the Arabian

coast at Aden and thence to Cairo and Alexandria. The second was by sea to the Persian Gulf and thence by land to Aleppo and on to the Laventine ports. The third lay overland by Kandahar to the cities of Persia and Turkey. The chief were those of the Malabar Coast and Diu and Surat further to the north.”²¹

Till the first half of the 17th century business did not commence in significant manner between Bengal or for that matter India and the European companies. India was trading directly with the Asian, East European countries.

Though along with the Portuguese the Dutch, French and English had penetrated into the Indian mainland, in this period we also come across the Armenian and Persian traders in Bengal. Besides we have reference of traders from different regions of India like kashmiri, multani, rajasthani, afghans and pathans, sheikhs, pageya, bhutia, sanyasi etc (Pageya-s were the Hindi speaking traders with the turban on head.)²²

The Mughals had captured the Hooghly port in 1632 and that initiated the rise of Hooghly and decline of Saptagram though its prosperity continued for another 30 years. In 1667 Dutch Admiral Warwick wrote that, Saptagram is still the oldest port and holding the flame of pride. It is mainly controlled by the Portuguese traders.²³

Gradually the Government headquarters were shifted to Hooghly and the bank of the Bhagirathi started emerging as a major business centre. There is a controversy around the date when the Portuguese had arrived in Hooghly. According to “Hooghly past and present” in 1537 the Portuguese had secured right in the place in terms of raising offices and forts from emperor Akbar. It was because traders were facing problems in conducting business from Saptagram. Again O’Malley said that in 1570 the Portuguese had secured the right of business and raising major establishments in Hooghly from Suleman Karnani. Bandel was the port from which the Portuguese used to operate. Rice,

wheat, oil, pipul, sugar, butter, silk, blue dye, jute, cut pieces, umbrellas, rope, textile woven from threads of Tishi trees were the items which were exported from the port.²⁴ Tax imposed on imported goods was at the minimal rate of 2.5 percentages. Now the question arises why the tax rate was kept so low on imported foreign goods. The fact to be noted here is that the Mughals had always encouraged trade and commerce with the foreign companies and to expand it further they had imposed such low rate of tax. At that time the Mughals did not have the practice of charging high rate of interest on imported foreign goods in order to secure the market of domestic production. Bengal had also enjoyed a monopoly in the trade in the International market without any competitor.²⁵

Because of its location on the bank of Bhagirathi, Hooghly gradually became a very popular trade centre. Indian goods were exported to other countries like England, France, Netherlands and trade thus expanded. In 1649 the English company was not able to expand its business through the sea route though in 1633 they were able to set up an establishment in Balasore.

In 1621 the East India Company had once attempted to send calico from the Arabian coast to London but it did not find any market. So the company did not try anymore in that period. In 1649 though export had increased still there was not much demand for calico or muslin. But there was a significant demand for the same in the markets of Africa and America as the Portuguese had run a monopoly in trading with these goods in those countries. Indian calico had entered the European market in the form of tablecloth, handkerchiefs, bedcovers etc. Till then the Europeans had only used linen materials for making such products.²⁶

In 1650, East India Company had raised their establishment in Hooghly. They were the major buyer in the port. Till then their major export centres were

Surat, Ahmedabad, Bombay and Madras. In 1664 half of the total volume of textile exported by the company was from Surat that amounted to 35 percent of the total volume of goods exported by the company. Madras exported 41 percent of the textiles that is 48 percent of the total sales volume of goods exported by the company where, from Bengal, it only amounted to 9 percent textiles amounting to 17 percentages of total sales volume of goods exported by the company. Bengal handloom products were of very high quality and priced high, hence was not exported much to Europe. Handloom products were exported from Gujarat, Madras and the least from Bengal. But price in order, was just the opposite. Bengal being the producer of the highest priced products and Madras the least, Gujarat being the second highest. The four varieties of clothes that were exported were Sallemporces (Salempuris), Londuced, Gurrahs (Garras) and Cossaces (Khasas). The first two varieties were produced in south India. Till 1725 these two varieties were exported and the last two varieties were exported from Bengal.²⁷

Though the East India Company had settled in India for trade till the reign of emperor Shahjahan or even later, Bengal textiles were exported only to the Arab countries and Asiatic regions. The reason why the finer quality of Bengal textiles could not attract or reach the European market were due to some problems related to the port, the Portuguese dominance, the high price of Bengal textiles and also because of the fact that the English had then settled in Madras and operated from there.

Business in Bengal was on a boom then. Bengal textiles were then procured by most of the royal and aristocrat families of India. The entire country saw trade under uniform rate of tax, as the central rule was strong under the Mughals. Though the Mughal dynasty was declining, its effect had still not fallen on the empire. With the change in political scenario, the business scenario changed

too as because the European companies were then competing against each other to get hold of the export industry in Bengal.²⁸

Another remarkable feature of the 17th century was that trade and commerce in Bengal was under the Mughal Subedars's control. Though Bengal was under central Mughal rule yet it was bit detached. After the cessation of wars Bengal had started settling down with peace since that last few years. The absence of the prolonged ruling complexity had started attracting the foreign traders. The Delhi Badshah (ruler) was only for namesake, the real power rested with the Mughal Subedars (known as Nababs). Though the subedars bonded with the Bengalis and adopted Bengali culture yet Bengal was equally exploited even during the Mughal rule, though the money was not drained outside the country.²⁹

From Raja Todarmal's 'Washil Tuma' r Jama, it is known that in 1582 Bengal had 18 sarkars, 682 mahals and tax was Re/Rs 1, 06, 85, 944. In 1587 AD Man Singh had visited Bengal. He returned to Agra in 1604. The Portuguese had entered Bengal in 1537-38. During the rule of Nurjahan's brother Ibrahim Khan in 1620, the East India Company had built their establishment in Patna. The next Subedar was Shahjahan who became the emperor in 1628AD. By Shahjahan's order when Inayetulla captured Hooghly in 1632 the Portuguese influence was curtailed. Since then Hooghly was the main port for trade and commerce.³⁰

Saptagram declined farther. In 1640 though the English had entered Bengal but till then it was not their main centre of trade as already discussed before.

In 1657, there were 34 Sarkars, 1305 Mahals and tax was imposed at the following rates Re 1,31,15,907.³¹ Shayesta Khan ruled Bengal from the year 1664 to 1688. During this period East India Company, French Company along with other foreign companies availed certain facilities to continue trade and commerce in Bengal.

In 1651 the English company had secured some facilities for trade and commerce from Shuja. This was gradually opening up trade opportunities in Bengal for before the European companies. During this period there was remarkable clash between the Mughal Subedars and the English or Portuguese companies. Like in 1686 at the encounter at Hooghly between the Nabab's army and the company the latter's establishment was destroyed.

The English company had to bear a loss of rupees 45 lakhs. The company begged for forgiveness before the Badshah and secured permission for duty free trade. Hooghly was the favourite port to the English. Stresum, the governor of Madras after consulting the members of the council, informed the Court of Directors in England in 1675 1st November that Hooghly was the most suitable place for trade and commerce as all products from Bengal are imported and exported from here.³²

Apart from this, there are many more advantages to trade. It was easier and economical to convey messages to Qasimbazar by land or waterways. In 1674 the French entered a treaty with Subedar Shayesta Khan. In 1693 they had secured a permit from Aurangzeb to trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa like the Dutch. During Subedar Shayesta Khan's rule the French settled in Chandannagore, Dutch at Chinsurah, Dinemar at Srirampore and conducted trade and commerce from these places respectively. The Mughal subedars then exploited the Bengal wealth both legitimately and illegitimately. A huge amount of revenue was sent to the Mughal court. Due to the entry of various foreign companies in the trade and commerce, business was expanding and hence the wealth. The rulers used to exploit and earn taking resort to all wrong means and carried them as they retired and returned back to their homeland. "Shayesta Khan had ruled for 22 years and carried back home 38 crores of money with him".³³ At the beginning of the 18th century the volume of revenue remitted to

the Mughal Durbar was increasingly enormous.

During the end of the 17th century the decay of Mughal finance started due to various reasons and after the reign of Aurangzeb it became precarious. In 1701 Murshid Kuli Khan became the Dewan of Bengal. During his rule Bengal remitted a huge amount of revenue to Delhi Durbar. In 1712 after the death of Bahadur Shah the new emperor Farukhshiar granted a 'Farman' or special permit to the East India Company. In exchange of annual fees of Rs 3000 the company procured duty free trade in India which gave them extra advantage over all Indian and foreign traders in the country. Within 1670 the English had established settlement in Qasimbazar with Patna and Dacca. Calcutta started flourishing since the end of 17th and beginning of 18th century.

Studying the business scenario of the 17th century against the pretext of the then political scenario that the financial condition in Bengal in the first half of the century was dependent upon the control of the Mughal Subedars and was very much an integral part of the financial picture of the entire country. But in the latter half of the century the picture started changing, the business scenario also changed. But Bengal was still attached to the central rule till the 17th century. Till the beginning of the 18th century during the reign of Murshid Quli Khan revenue was remitted to the Mughal Durbar. Though from the administrative and other points of view he was an independent ruler but remittance of revenue had helped maintaining a strong bond with the Delhi durbar due to which the foreign companies never dared to avail any extra advantage in Bengal during his reign. This was definitely because Murshid Quli Khan was an able and very strong administrator. He also exercised complete control over the use of seal and signature over the English company. In 1722 the rate of revenue in Bengal was rupee/rupees 1,42,88, 186. Bengal was divided into 13 Chaklas, 34 Sarkars, 1660 Parganas. During the 12 years tenure of Sujauddin's rule (after Murshid

Quli) revenue remitted to the Delhi Durbar was rupees 14,62,538.³⁴ The drain of revenue out of Bengal led to scarcity of silver coins. There was rise in price leading to inflation. But still until the time of Alivardi Khan there was constant flow of revenue from within the state to out of it to the Delhi Durbar.

From last quarter of the 17th century Bengal started featuring as the primary place whose products were exported by the English, Dutch and the French companies. The main centers of export in Bengal were Dacca, Chattagram, Shantipur, Maldah etc. Besides the finest muslin, mulmul, tangail from Bengal there were the exquisitely done embroideries by the women from Shantipur and adjoining areas. Surprisingly, use of machine was rare, advantages of labour distribution were not felt. Weaving was an integral part of the lives of men, women and children. The sound of the loom was their heartbeat. The industry had grown up amidst several advantages and disadvantages. Still the excellent textile from Bengal was unparalleled in their texture and design. The reason behind the prosperity and increasing demand in the European market for the Bengal textile was due to its low cost of production. Want of technology was not a disadvantage. The united effort of sometimes an entire family supported by lots of passion and love. The labour cost was low as cheap labour was available and that kept the cost of production low. But in Europe availability of cheap labour was unthinkable, hence this product from Bengal was very popular and in great demand. During the last phase of the 17th century and first half of the 18th century, Bengal textile was exported across the country. Again, traders from different parts of India purchased Bengal textiles and sold them across the country. The political scenario in Bengal cum India was very favourable for business for the European companies. Narendra Krishna Sinha has appropriately commented "In the first century of Mughol rule (1575-1675) the other world is said to have come to Bengal and Bengal went out of herself to the other world."³⁵

In the first half of the 18th century on one side Bengal was getting detached from the central Mughal rule and on the other side it was trading directly with Europe with new products through different European companies and this had begun to change the socio-economic condition in Bengal.

Now let us focus upon East India Company. In 1600 the company was formed with 125 shareholders and its capital was 70000pounds. In 1700 they built their headquarter in Calcutta.³⁶ In 75 years the capital of the company increased to 13 lakhs pounds. Before the end of the 17th century dividend at the rate 150% were distributed among the shareholders.³⁷ Printed fabric lengths from Madras and Bombay exported to England and then it was further exported from there to other parts of Europe but finer quality white fabric lengths from Bengal were in great demand in London where the printing factories had come up. It is remarkable that England manufactured cotton fabrics in the beginning of 17th century but it was not of significant quality or quantity till 1656-57. In McPherson's words, "the quality of linen manufactured in the British dominions was so trifling as not to be equal to, perhaps the thousandth part of the consumption and then it was evidently good national economy to encourage the use of Indian Calicoes which were much cheaper than linen".³⁸ So this is a fact that when England was learning all about weaving, Bengal's woven textile was much admired across the world.

Like in the past, in 18th century, the economic condition in Bengal was linked to the political developments. From the beginning of the century taking advantage of the weak central rule, disintegrated regional powers raised their heads in Bengal and other parts of the country. The regional powers laid different duties on products as per their discretion and this hampered the provincial business of Bengal. On the other hand, Bengal's trade link with Persia was damaged due to its worthless cruel ruler Nadir Shah.³⁹ Trade with other Arabian countries

also decayed fast, so in the first half of the century Bengal's inter-state and export was considerably disturbed.

It was Murshid Quli Khan who revived Bengal from this crisis. Within the second decade of the century he tried to revive economic, political scenario in Bengal and established strong foundation. The peaceful environment created in Bengal during his reign was the prime reason in attracting the foreign companies to the state. During the rule of Murshid Quli Khan and then his son-in-law Sujauddin followed by Alivardi Khan, despite the Mughal control, Bengal was able to establish a different individual image.⁴⁰

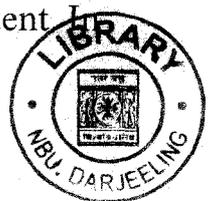
To improve the economic scenario, Murshid Quli Khan changed the Jamindari System to lay definite land revenue. To overcome the business crisis he encouraged the foreign companies to initiate trade in Bengal.

Murshid Quli Khan had excellent rapport with the European companies. Bengal politics grew complex again at the time of Alivardi Khan. This was due to the aggression of Maratha and Afghan. During the time of Murshid Quli Khan the British company was expanding its business without the restriction of central rule. Besides the company, their staff and representatives also availed of the benefits of carrying out unrestricted trade in Bengal. Situation started changing during the reign of Alivardi Khan. In the words of Dr. Kali Kinkar Dutta --- "But with the accession of Alivardi the company had to deal with a Nawab who was as strong as he was upright and who had a keen insight".... he understood perfectly well the interests of his Government, favoured the poor merchants and administered justice very fairly when complaints succeeded in reaching him".⁴¹

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The western region of Bengal was affected by the Maratha aggression. It had also affected the business of different foreign companies but efficiency and keen administrative ability of Alivardi revived the situation to a great extent

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the words of Narendra Krishna Sinha "In other parts of Bengal peace was maintained, trade flourished and wealth accumulated".⁴²

Alivardi used to collect money from the English company using strict measures. The company though not fully but could give some money satisfying him partially. When Nawab had demanded 25lakhs from the company the latter could only give 3.5 lakh and was acquitted for the time.⁴³

If the company could not render money, the Nawab's army would seal the establishment. Consequently major English establishments like Dhaka were worse affected. Besides the Maratha invasion had also rendered huge loss to the English companies.⁴⁴ The political disaster had destroyed economy, finance, agriculture and production in Bengal significantly. Precisely it can be said that before the English monopoly in trade destroyed the Bengal economy, the Maratha invasion had already shattered it.

But still the textile industry of Bengal was flourishing. By dint of his strict rule and equality in treatment for all, the English could not avail of any added advantage to their benefit. Bengal continued exporting its textile to different parts of the world through the foreign companies. Alivardi's rule was literally devoid of central control that later had tempted different authority to come to Bengal and a power struggle began. Apart from the Marathas, in 1742 the Ayodha advance, in 1748 the Afghan attempt are some of the instances supporting the above statement. Later the English drew advantage from the fact that Bengal was isolated from the central Mughal rule. P.J.Marshall has discussed the fact how Alivardi had isolated Bengal from the Mughal control and ruled independently. "Alivardi Khan ruled a virtually autonomous state. He seized his position by force, subsequently gained imperial endorsement, and he filled offices at his own direction, even if he sought imperial ratification for most of them later. The practical power of the Nawabs of Bengal was such that Alivardi

Khan was able to dispose of offices throughout the provinces, with virtually no regard to Delhi. The major appointments were those of the Naibs, or Deputies to the Nawab, appointed in Patna for Bihar, Cuttack for Orisha, and Dhaka for Eastern Bengal, which has virtually administrated as a separate entity”⁴⁵ “But he had not thrown off his allegiance to the ideal of a Mughols Empire.”⁴⁶

Political turmoil had adversely affected agriculture and trade yet the competitiveness among the foreign companies was remarkable. Meanwhile the English company had established its settlement at Santipur (a place in Nadia district in Bengal) spending lakhs of rupees. The reason behind settling down at Santipur was for its location on the bank of the river Ganges (Ganga) that facilitated waterway transportation. Later, this became significant as Dutch settlement. From Santipur and Dacca muslin, mulmul were exported to Europe. Muslin from Dacca was of four types 1. *Mulmul* 2. *Daria* 3. *Charkhana* 4. *Jamdani*.

Various types of Mulmul are : *Obroya, Manjer, Mulmulkhas, Saugati, Sarbati, Sabnam, Khasa, Jhuna, Sarkar, Ali, Gangajal, Terindom, Hammam, Dimti, Sani, Jangalkhana* and *Galabandh*.

Various types of daria are : *dorakata, Muslin, Nandanshahi, Anardana, Kabutar, Khop, Sakuta, bachhadar, Bapachhadar, Kustidar*.

Varieties of Jamdani : *Nayansukh, Butidar, Subarnabuti Chawal, Dublijal, Mel, Tercha, Karela, Jolibar, Toradar, Pannahajra*.

Besides *Modonkhas, Albolla, Kasida, Meghdombur, Naste* were the other finer varieties of muslin delicately woven in those days.⁴⁷

There was huge demand for these elegant sarees in Europe. The English procured bullions from their homeland and continued investment in the trade. Patna, Qasimbazar, Rongpur, Rampur Bauliah, Lakshmipur, Kamarkhali, Santipur Burron (in Nadia District), Sonamukhi, Radhanagar, Kheerpoy, Haripal,

Gollagore, Jongipur, Surodha, Dacca, Kalinga, Balasore, Malda, Baranagar, Dhaniakhali, Harrial etc were the major textile centres of the British.⁴⁸

But till the time of alivardi's reign the English could not dare to misuse the seal and establish monopoly in trade in Bengal. Till 1740 the French were better off than the British in trading in some areas. East India Company continued dadoni trade till 1753. in 1755 the amount of dadoni given is as follows :

Data of dadoni in 1755 :-

TABLE NO. - 1

Places	Rs	Ana	Pai
Santipur	93592	3	15
Haripal	85443	8	10
Dhaniakhali	38533	3	5
Gollagore	38518	3	10
Cutturah	51400	6	10
Burron	82261	5	—
Harrial	224110	6	15
Buddaul	79483	14	10
Kheerpoy	162570	12	—
Malda	264007	2	10
Calcutta	59500	—	—
Barahanagar	78015	2	—
Sonamooky	22099	14	10

Source : Ghosh, Binay - Badshahi Amol

Sharma, Kali Prasannya - Banglar Itihas - Nababi Amol, 1308 Bangabdo,

Page - 430.

In 1757 the investment by the company is shown a table below : -

TABLE NO. - 2

The investment figure mostly consisting of cloth, for the year 1757 was as follows :-

Places	Rs
Santipore	1,68,500
Cuttorah	64,000
Kheerpoy	2,48,675
Malda	3,52,450
Harrial	3,11,970
Buddaul	71,670
Gollagore	20,800
Burron	1,04,800
Sonamooky	1,01,220
Haripaul	1,54,645
Calcutta	1,69,720

Source : Letters to Court, 10 January, 1758 : Fort William - India House Correspondence, Vol - II, Para - 35, P - 267

Mitra, Debendra Bejay - Cotton Weavers of Bengal - Page - 14

The above-mentioned Gollagore, Cuttorah are probably meant to be Balagarh and Katoa respectively. But it is difficult to identify Burron or Buddaul. It is worth marking that the company's amount of dadoni in 1681 was 1,40,000 pound.⁴⁹ In 1755 its expansion was huge. But till this time the weavers had ample freedom. Till 1756 and even during Siraj's reign the manufacturer could use his money for production and had the freedom to sell it according to his choice. Till then despite the change in trading practise in the country the market across the country including Bengal did not encounter the competition of the

international market. Like the producer exercised bargaining power the customers could also exercise their options freely. In one word, 150 years after the entry of the foreign companies the producers still had their freedom intact.

Before the advent of different foreign companies in the commercial market in Bengal, volume of textile exported was limited. From 1730-40 the volume of export had picked up and scores of orders poured in from different companies. This led to a change in the production pattern as well. Though the producer exercised freedom but slowly grew dependent on the creditors or mahajan. Initially weavers were by birth (caste and creed) and tradition and the villages were self-sufficient. Situation changed. The price of textile soared up. With increasing demand and production people from other castes broke in into the profession, thus people from different castes joined in and under the roof of same industry or sangha. Initially an experienced weaver used to work with a single assistant with him. The latter would work with little wage; mostly a boy child of the age of 12-14 years would do such work. There was no division of labour. The relation between the chief weaver and his assistant was like that of a family member. During the Mughal rule there used to be separate workshop for weaving where under the same roof different producers would produce different products. Things changed in the beginning of the 18th century. The huge volume of export of textile from here was a matter of deep concern for the British. Previously the production and export of Indian textile during the Mughal period was limited. But later as the volume the manifold increase affected the budding industries of England.⁵⁰

The cotton fabrics, white lengths exported from India to England and later dyed there was of far superior quality than those produced in England and the latter failed to create appeal in the market over the Indian variety. Hence to safeguard the budding textile industry in England a law was passed on 29th

September in 1701 in the British Parliament. The law banned the use of goods exported from Bengal, China, Persia, East Indies by East India Company in Great Britain.⁵¹ But Indian cotton fabrics especially the muslin was very popular in Great Britain and that led to continued use of dyed or printed Indian cotton fabrics that adversely affected the burgeoning textile industry in Great Britain. So in 1720 another law was conceded.

It declared anyone who flouts the law and sells printed/dyed Indian cotton fabrics would be penalized with a fine of 20 pounds.⁵² Despite the enactments by the parliament the textile industry in England did not grow significantly until the year 1760 as till then England was known as a major centre for wool and woollen products. Till 1760 the machine woven products made in England were inferior to the finer quality produced in India.⁵³

The export of Indian textile including white cotton lengths, muslins and other varieties continued. The whole of 18th century witnessed the export of large volumes of Indian cotton lengths both white and coloured, muslins into England that were farther exported to other countries of the world. In 1772 Henry Patullo said that the demand of Indian Textile was not-to-dwindle, as no other country has products parallel to those produced in India and worth of competing with its quality.⁵⁴

Following are the data on the textile (cotton fabrics) exported from India to England and its value. The data reveals that how the export has increased from 1766 to 1818 and how it has soared high.

TABLE NO. - 3

Official value of Cotton goods Exported from Great Britain 1766-1818

Year	Exports	Year	Exports
	£		£
1766	220,759	1780	355,060

Year	Exports £	Year	Exports £
1785	864,710	1802	7,195,900
1786	915,046	1803	6,442,037
1787	1,101,457	1804	7,834,564
1788	1,252,240	1805	8,619,990
1789	1,231,537	1806	9,753,824
1790	1,662,369	1807	9,708,046
1791	1,875,046	1808	12,503,918
1792	2,024,368	1809	18,425,614
1793	1,733,807	1810	17,898,519
1794	2,376,077	1811	11,529,551
1795	2,433,331	1812	15,723,225
1796	3,214,020	1813	Record destroyed
1797	2,580,568	1814	16,535,528
1798	3,602,488	1815	21,480,732
1799	5,808,009	1816	16,183,975
1800	5,854,509	1817	20,133,966
1801	6,606,368	1818	21,292,354

Source : Macgregor- "Commercial Tariffs", Page - 494

Hamilton, C. J. - Trade Relation Between England and India, Page - 260.

In the 17th century prior to and later than the period in which Bengal used to export textile to England the English printing factories used to produce (coarse cotton lengths) textile but they hardly found any market with the elite clientele. Primarily these products were sold among the poorer section of the European communities. These lengths were not that cheap compared to the finer cotton lengths of Bengal. Hence during industrial revolution one of the primary requisites

was a textile-printing factory that was mainly dependent on the Indian cotton textile.⁵⁵

It was previously mentioned that the English company was interested in trading with Bengal. From 1693-98 the volume of export had increased yet the volume of export and order decreased thereafter in next 10 years. The reason behind it was the Parliament Act, 1700. Meanwhile the company had appealed before the Council in St. George that textile from Madras was less profitable compared to Bengal and hence sought permission for investing in Bengal textiles. Therefore the situation started changing in the next two decades. The act passed in the Parliament in 1701 failed to disturb the company's activities in Bengal. In 1710 the export volume of textile comprised of 25% from Surat, 28% from Madras, and Bengal 47%. From 1728-60 Bengal exported about 60-80% of the total volume of Indian textiles exported which included finer and expensive quality fabrics. In 1717 the law passed had actually put the business of the East India Company on solid foundation. Later in 1720 when the second Parliament Act was passed unlike the former act the latter could not affect the business much. After 1720 subsequently in the following three decades the volume of export each year from Bombay and madras Presidency amounted to 150,000 pounds whereas from Bengal alone it was thrice the amount-400,000 pounds.⁵⁶

In this way by re-exporting products from England the company earned back sufficient amount to reinvest for importing products from Bengal. Thus the Bengal textile industry grew favourite in the English market. Among the cotton fabrics exported from Bengal gurrahs and cossacs were the key choices. In 1742 the mainly export of gurrahs reached the peak. Gurrahs were of superior quality and more expensive than the Cussacs. In 1710 they amounted to 5 to 10% of the total volume of export. In 1730 it increased to 15% of the entire volume of export. In 1748 war affected business in Madras and export was

worse affected. The French were weakened by the first and second Karnataka war but the third war finally broke their backbone. After 1763 they completely withdrew from the business activities in Bengal. Southern India was devastated by war being engaged in war with Mysore hence Bengal was better positioned in business. Apart from gurrahs finer quality of other varieties like tanjeeps (tanzebs), humhums and mul (malmal) were exported from Bengal. But printers and common men preferred gurrahs. The latter was low in price and that made it stand apart among other varieties. The Bengal weavers moved with time and demand in the international market and produced accordingly. Consequently during the years 1734, 1739, 1742 exported 2,00,000 pieces of clothe to London.⁵⁷

The employees of the company carried back home finer qualities of sari lengths that changed the taste of the European clientele. A demand for Bengal textile started growing among the buyers in London. The printers in London started following the designs of the Bengal textile. In one word by the grace of the East India Company Bengal textile in its traditional form entered the English market. Side by side ample export from England itself yielded revenue and this undoubtedly favoured the Industrial Revolution.

The success from the battle of Plassey in 1757 earned the company economic, commercial and political benefits and subsequent control gained had put the business of the company in Bengal in a secured position. The finer control of the East India Company is also a remarkable feature. The establishments of the company were not scattered and even if they were, the Calcutta Council had ample control over them. The employees of the company were well aware of the quality of the products with which the company traded. They had engaged the dadni traders for ensuring the quality. The samples collected were matched with the final delivered lot to ensure the quality by the council. Therefore the power and control of the dadni traders increased over the weavers. Sometimes

under the dadni system goods were not delivered despite the agreement. Consequently the Council directed the Court of Directors to instruct the dadni traders to give lesser advance to the producers. The dadni traders refused to accept the instruction. Until 1753 these traders had also worked under the French and the Dutch. The latter used to invest substantial amount in the trade. After 1740 traders started losing interest in business with the English East India Company. The dadni traders many a time failed to collect and deliver the products as per the agreement, hence the company completely stopped making investments through the dadni traders. Instead they started establishing direct control over the producers working at different workshops through their gomastahs and agents. The Court of Directors instructed the Council to appoint a cash keeper with each gomastah. Here one feature is noteworthy that the gomastah system aggravated the misuse of dastak (special permit). When the company had acquired the dastak its investment as per government sources amounted to 33 lakhs. It is worth mentioning that dastak was granted to the company for import and export. It was not meant for any internal trading, any personal trading or trading by the company employees at personal level. The employees of the company illegitimately procured and traded with Bengal products at different places yet denied the liability of paying any tax on it to the government. Later this issue became a major bone of contention between Mir Qasim and the English company.⁵⁸

This illegitimate business was further facilitated by the gomastah system. In the words of Long that before and after Plassey weavers were brought to Calcutta from Santipur, Dacca against dadon by the gomastahs.⁵⁹ "Gomastahs encouraged good weavers to settle in Calcutta. The provision of investment in and above Calcutta by Gomastahs, was so beneficial to the company, that we cannot think of a better option. You are therefore, to pursue that method, with

every addition that can be suggested and shall be found reasonable for its improvement. In particular, we earnestly recommend your giving every possible encouragement to bring the weavers to settle in and about the neighbourhood of Fort William on both sides of the river, particularly into the thirty eight villages, totally acceded to us by the treaty with the Nawab,.....involvement may be provided in and near the principal settlements of Dacca, Cassajora and Santipur.”⁶⁰

The company could not procure much benefit till or little after the reign of Murshid Quli Khan it was only possible with the expansion of the gomastah system. N. K. Sinha has rightly remarked “In 1753 the English East India Company’s servants in India decided to adopt the policy of making investment not through the agency of the country merchants who were known as dadni merchants but with the assistance of their servants, their own gomastas. This enabled them to mix up private trade with investment in a more efficacious manner.”⁶¹ The introduction of gomastah system met the English undue desire of establishing profitable business using illegitimate use of power but the demand of the company’s employees, independent English traders and their pressure for their individual demands to satisfy personal interest the character of the Bengal traditional weaving industry changed. Till the time of Alivardi the company and its employees were forced to keep their illegitimate practices within a limit. They could not get any opportunity to exercise a monopolistic control over the weaving industry. After the Maratha invasion in 1753 though the English company could increase its investment in the industry, still the French had an impressive business running in Bengal. The French ship used to carry products from Chandannagore to Madina, Pegu, Achin, Canton and Persia. The British had primarily invested in cotton piece goods, silk piece goods, raw silk and saltpetre. In addition to these, the Dutch used to export opium and calico as well. Another

instance of absolute control during Alivardi's reign is that though the English and the French had fought in Karnataka several times but they were not allowed to do the same in Bengal.⁶²

The situation changed after the company's success in the battle of Plassey in 1757. The company needed to change the Nawab to establish its control over Bengal textile industry and the political change for financial benefit. The victory at the battle of Plassey also opened the door of colonialism in India to the British.⁶³ In 1651 the English had procured the permit of duty free business in India from the emperor Suja at Delhi in lieu of Rs 3000 which the Nawabs at Bengal had denied it to them, the battle of Plassey paved way to restitution of that right. "The privileges which they were already enjoying by a nishan or sealed permit Shuja granted in 1651-duty free trade on payment of 3000 rupees, and the rights over Calcutta whether Zamindari or Talukdari- were confirmed. Beyond this scope was left for the exercise of discretion by the government of Bengal. It has been said that the battle of Plassey was fought to regain the rights granted by the farman and hasb-ul-hukm which were denied by the Nawabs of Bengal. The theory of Nawabi intransigence is based on a misinterpretation of the language of the farman and of the administrative practices of the day."⁶⁴ As a result of which in 1753 specially after 1750, the gomastahs, brokers and Paikars kept very strict and close vigilance over the production and producers that the latter were forced to handover their entire produce to them. These employees took advantage of the political situation and went on to increase their respective financial prospects. The local and regional traders for which the Bengal weavers previously used to weave textiles slowly died down. Between 1757-72 the gomastahs, brokers and agents warded them off. In 1763 the French withdrew completely. The other companies also stayed away especially from the company's establishments at Santipur. To ensure control over the Santipur

establishment the company took many measures. One of the measures were providing pension to the employees of the establishment and superannuating erudite persons like Gourgobinda Khan, Becharam Bhattacharya, Ramhari Pramanik, Brojokishore Bidyanta, Mahesh Chandra Bandopadhyay.⁶⁵

Apart from this there were Raghuram Sarbavauma, Kandarpa Siddhantabagish, Gokulchand Goswami, Sibram Bachaspati, Harihar Bidyabagish, Ramprasad Bhattacharya who were honoured with grants.⁶⁶ To build rapport with the local people the employees of the company alongwith the locals had build a tutorial within the establishment for local children that was continued for long time.⁶⁷

This shows how Santipur establishment was important and profitable for the Company. In Bengal, goods were started to produce according to the market demand in Europe. After the Industrial Revolution the European market regulated the export and production in Bengal. Their will forced Bengal once again to become solely dependent upon agriculture. In the words of N.K.Sinha- "The entire economy of Bengal was dominated by the needs of the European markets in 1760's, 1770's and 1780's."⁶⁸

Thus the East India Company started to establish monopolistic control over the Bengal cotton textile industry. After 1757 all the governors appointed had invested increasingly to facilitate export in Europe. But the company did not pay the weavers any justifiable amount. So the weavers were keen on selling the production to the French and the Dutch who used to pay fully and buy the products. To prevent the weavers from selling products to any other client the Council appointed a peon with the gomastha to keep vigilance over, but the weavers being poorly paid by the company showed reluctance to work for it. The Court of Directors was aware of the injustice upon the weavers. In protest against the injustice over the weavers the weavers of Santipur had written two letters to the Council. Many weavers gave up their traditional occupation. Court

of Directors protested against the injustice upon the weavers and voiced for their independence. It debated in favour of the weavers that in absence of freedom to work the quality of work will deteriorate.

The famine of 1770 not only harmed the handloom industry of Bengal but also affected the commercial activities of the East India Company. In Bengal the worst affected areas were Purnea and Nadia, large number of people died in the famine causing the agricultural activities to collapse. In the words of W. W. Hunter - "Before the end of May 1770, one third of the population was officially calculated to have disappeared, in June the deaths were returned "as six" is to sixteen of the whole inhabitants, and it was estimated that one half of the cultivators and payers of revenue will perish with hunger. During the rains (July to October) the depopulation became so evident that the government wrote to the Court of Directors in alarm about the number of industrious peasants and many manufacturers destroyed by the famine".⁶⁹ At Santipur 25% of the weavers died in famine. The price of yarn increased drastically. Still the company had its price for textile fixed at the same old rate. In this situation in 1773 on 12th April the law passed by the government showed some light to the weavers that said that weavers in Bengal and Bihar would have the freedom to trade with anybody. It further added that that nobody can force them to sell products against any advance.⁷⁰ Hastings had thought that 'Freedom of Trade' would protect the weavers from the hands of the gomastahs. The weavers were reluctant to take orders from the company and preferred working with the other companies. In other words the famine had brought distress but it was soon followed by relief to the weavers bringing them freedom and happiness. But this happiness did not last long.

While the entire inland trade of Bengal was thus disorganized by the company's servants and their agents in every important district the methods by which they

secured the manufacturers to themselves were equally oppressive. These are fully described by William Bolts, an English merchant who saw things with his own eyes.

“It may well be now said that the whole inland trade of the country as at present conducted, and that of the company’s investment for Europe in a more peculiar degree, has been one continued scene of oppression, the baneful effects of which are severely felt by every weaver and manufacturers of the country, every article produced being made a monopoly, in which the English, with their Banyans and black Gomastahs, arbitrarily decide that quantities of goods each manufacturer shall deliver and the prices he shall receive for them Upon the Gomastah’s arrival at the Aurung, or manufacturing town, he fixes upon a habitation which he calls his catcherry, to which by his peons and harcarahs, he summons the brokers, called dallals and pykars, together with the weavers, whom after receipt of the money dispatched by his masters, he makes to sign a bond for the delivery of a certain quantity of goods at a certain time and price, and pays them a certain part of the money in advance. The assent of the poor weavers is in general not deemed necessary; for the Gomastahs, when employed on the company’s investment, frequently make them sign what they please; and upon the weavers refusing to take the money offered, it has been known they have had it tied in their girdles, and they have been sent away with a flogging... A number of these weavers are generally also registered in the books of the company’s Gomastahs, and not permitted to work for any others, being transferred from one to another, as so many slaves, subject to the tyranny and roguery of each succeeding Gomastahs.....The roguery practiced in the department is beyond imagination, but all terminates in the defrauding of the poor weaver; for the prices which the company’s Gomastahs, and in confederacy with them the jachendars (examiner of fabrics) fix upon the goods,

are in all places at least 15 percent, and some even 40 percent, less than the goods so manufactured would sell in the public bazar or market upon free sell.....weavers , also upon their inability to perform such agreements as have been forced upon them by the company's agents, universally known in Bengal by the name of Mutchulacahs, have had their goods seized and sold on the spot to make good the deficiency ; and the winders of raw silk , called Nagoads, have been treated also with such injustice , that instances have been known of their cutting of their thumps to prevent their being forced to wind silk".⁷¹

The documents of Bolts being an eyewitness of the events reveal the oppression and atrocities the Bengal weavers were subjected to in the hands of the gomasthas and other employees of the company. William Bolts, in 1772, described the process thus: "The English, with their Banyans and black Gomastashs, arbitrarily decide what qualities of goods each manufacturer shall deliver, and the prices he shall receive from them."⁷² "The dearest dream of the merchant of the English East India Company was thus realized: to draw the wealth out of India without having to send wealth in return."⁷³

Till that time the export of Bengal textile was still continuing at a prosperous level. Hasting's effort could only resolve the problems on a short time basis. In 1775 the Board Of Trade again introduced 'investment system'. Till 1782 agency business continued. Investment process was re-introduced through fresh agreement. Due to frequent change in the situation availability of yarn varied widely at different times and hence the quality of textile lost its purity and because of mixed texture that did not match with the taste, demand and large investment system of the company. It became evident that without an advance of at least 50% advance payment to the weavers it is not possible to keep the quality of the yarn high. Monthly advance system continued from 1776-1779. Another system that was introduced was not beneficial to the weavers. In 1781

during war, the company could not pay advance due to financial constraints, the weavers felt the urge to sell their produce in outside market. They hardly make any profit working with the company. As there was no advance given to the weavers during 1782 - 83, they gave their ultimatum that either the company would give them advance amount or they would violate the agreement and sell their products in outside market. The protest of the Santipur weavers in this matter was significant.

The victory at the battle of Plassey in 1757, gomastah system and the grant of Dewani had increased the company's investment in Bengal. The increased investment had also increased their expectation of profit. In September, 1759, the Council acclaimed the gomastah system and its achievements. Prior to 1765 the export price was remitted in the form of silver bullions. After 1765 when the company secured huge land revenue, the situation changed. No longer the bullions were remitted to India. The exit of other companies, huge investment by E.I.C, followed by high expectation of profit led to immense pressure upon the handloom industry of Bengal. With the increase in investment the control was increased too. Though the Bengal textile industry found an international market, it also paved way to its decline. The industrial revolution in England, the financial and political situation in that country was also responsible for the decline of the Bengal textile industry.

After 1750 new discoveries took place in England and within a few decades prospects of industrial revolution started taking place. But Export from Bengal continued in volumes. In 1769 in the House of Commons Lord North compared India as the Golden duck that lays golden eggs and encouraged employees of the company to double the volume of export.⁷⁴ This paved the way to oppress the weavers to force into signing agreement and defraud them simultaneously. At the small centres along with the major establishments like Santipur, Dacca

etc oppression of weavers was common when the weavers produce sample fabrics which are originally of the quality 'A', 'B' and 'C' and send them to the company, the Gomastahs returned them marked as 'C', 'D' and 'E'. There were many other ways by which the profit was denied to the weavers and the latter sunk into critical condition.⁷⁵

After 1770, owing to increasing demand for different types of fabrics like ordinary coarse variety, muslin, coloured the volume of export from Bengal increased manifold. In 1778 the company exported 8,05,010 pieces of fabrics. Meanwhile the war of independence started in America and these reduced the volume of export drastically. In 1779 the annual export declined to 3,38,465 pieces. During the period, 1779-82 there was no significant rise in export. The materials exported from Bengal were re-exported to other countries in Europe, West Africa and West Indies the volume of which significantly declined between 1779-83. In 1782 the calico printers appealed before the parliament to lay excess tax over the printed cotton lengths exported from Bengal. Despite all adversities Bengal cotton lengths featured high on the company's bulk of export to other places.

It is true that after the battle of Plassey, the English company tried to prevent all other companies and establish itself as the monopolistic trader in India but they were not completely successful in that. The Dutch business also flourished during the period of 1757. Interestingly the Dutch and the English joined hands of cooperation with each other that was only hurt during the Anglo-Armenian war. After 1784 when the Dutch attempted to return in business the English businessmen had already established their monopoly in trade and commerce. The Dutch slowly withdrew from business. Though the English could establish their monopoly and other companies withdrew, still the company or the Council could not achieve the goal they had hoped and set for export.

From the beginning of the 18th century Bengal cotton textile was the primary object of export. Prior to the Battle of Plassey the company used to sell goods worth two million pounds. The company had expectation of doubling the volume of export after acquiring Diwani right but it did not happen so. P. J. Marshall explains the reasons, firstly due to the enormous expenditure on securing positions and establishing rights and expenses of war in the country and secondly establishing and setting foundation of textile manufacturing factories in England. From 1772 British calico was produced successfully and sufficiently. From 1781 England started producing muslin of finer quality. From 1787 England started competing with the products from Bengal in the English market. Till 1810, Bengal products were substantially exported to England. Between 1777 and 1786 an average of 550,790 pieces of cotton fabrics were exported to England. Between 1792-1801 an average of 777, 237 pieces were sold. In the first half, the reason behind lesser export was the political condition in England. In the later half the figures indicate the export volume was not all that bad. In one word the export from Bengal was substantial 40years after acquiring the Diwani right.⁷⁶

The year 1787 can be taken as an year mark in the history of Indian Textile Industry. Between 1778 and 1786 the important discoveries started in England. The British manufacturers started producing additional produces to meet export demands and invested huge investments in it. On the other side the company was increasing its export volume, the above information is a testimony to it. They forced the weavers to work for them. Weavers were not allowed to work independently or for other companies. It was enforced that if the weaver would work for or sell its products to any outsider violating the agreement he would be penalized with unreasonably huge amount of money. They were also subjected to corporal punishments. The English parliament yielding to the then political

and financial situation, was forced to put pressure upon the company for its policies. Besides English East India Company had also the pressure of the Free Trade of business policy of Adam Smith. Taking this opportunity, the other European traders purchased clothes from Bengal and exported to different European countries.⁷⁷

The English Company for its own vested interest had tried to save the Bengal textile industry. To survive in competition in England they had reduced the price of Bengal muslin and cotton fabrics. Before the renewal of the Charter of the Company in 1793 Bengal handloom products could survive in competition. After the charter was passed for the interest of the British producers and production, Bengal textile Industry was dwindled and gave space for the foundation of British textile industry. To understand under what circumstances company was forced to reduce the export from Bengal one has to go back the pages of history. After the grant of Diwani, driven by utmost greed for wealth the company's revenue policy attacked the primary agrarian economy of Bengal. Jamindari (System individual landlordships) was replaced by Ijaradari (lease system) and Nawab's style of employing amla-s (officers of Nawab) was replaced by collectors and this snubbed the intimate relationships between the rural economy and revenue. On the other side the company set up monopolistic control over all local industries. This control gave away to oppression over the farmers and artisans. The weaving industry was under such coercion that the artisan became landless labourers and farmers were converted into daily wagers. The company's land revenue and business policy attacked ruthlessly and enormously, the harmony between the grass root levels of the rural society and the uppermost central control and the concord between agriculture and cottage industry was attacked and this led to the formation of the ground where conditions for future land settlement were seeded. In the grass root level in

villages after introduction of Ijaradari (lease system) farmers became landless or daily wage earners but this cannot be blamed upon land transfer. It was due to the company's business policy that assaulted and snapped the ancient bond between rural cottage industry and cooperative farming system. In 1775-93 the concept of individual ownership of land evolved and this was passed as a law between 1789-1793. The rural system fell prey to the control of the English unrestricted business exploration. This initiated the destruction of rural enterprises of Bengal. England started putting pressure increasingly upon the Indian economy for procuring raw materials to facilitate industrial revolution in England.⁷⁸

At the outset of the 18 years of the history of Permanent Settlement, change in agriculture and industry is remarkable. The agricultural problem of Bengal was affected by the industrial revolution of England. On the other hand there were serious move in the parliament to deny the company the right of carrying monopolistic trade in India. This phase ended with the period of Pitt's India Act (1784) and the administration of Macpherson (1785-86). In the second phase (1785 - 93) the theory of Permanent Settlement was formerly set at Bihar as Mokarari Settlement and then Dasshala Settlement in Bengal and Bihar. Ultimately for the sake of England's textile industry, without waiting for the impact of the Dasshala Settlement, in 1793 Permanent Settlement was passed as a law.

Between 1765-93 ground for agricultural revolutions was getting prepared gradually in Bengal. Similarly industrial revolution was taking place in England. But the consequences of these revolutions were contrary to each other. England was walking away from feudalism while Bengal getting swallowed to similar extent. Though differently directed, both were moving round the same circle. In England, economy was moving from agriculture to industrialization, trade

becoming free of all restrictions and India especially Bengal saw its economy shifting from cooperative farming to individual ownership, oriental ancient feudalism breaking into out and out business oriented neo-feudalism to satisfy the need of the English company. Both the changes had an intermittent connection between them.⁷⁹

Bernal had divided the scientific evolution of the history of 200 years between 1690-1895 in four phases. He emphasized that "the second phase of 70 years between 1760-1830 is equally important for its political reasons as well as for scientific causes. But the most eventful phase was the 40 years between 1760-1800. In terms of consequences, this phase had outweighed other phases. It is during this time that Britain witnessed Revolution in textile industry and America and France their respective National Revolutions. In the last phase of the 18th century scientific discoveries joined hands with capitalist developments and this evolved a force that changed the face of science, fundamentalism and lives of people in the world."⁸⁰

Industrial revolution in England was initiated with textile revolution. It is remarkable that in 1733 when discovery of fly shuttle or in 1738 roller spinning happened it did not bring about much change. Since 1764 the discoveries introduced the financial and social changes. The leading authority on English Industrial history Dr. Cunningham said, the financial changes are not for discoveries it is also for the inflow of money into banks unlike before. The outward transfer of money from India to England and the Plassey plunder made it possible. Till 1694 Bank Of England did not possess enough fund and it changed after the middle of 18th century.⁸¹

In 1764 discovery of spinning jenny by James Hargreaves brought about change in the weaving industry and in the later 15 years the change speeded further by the genius of Arkwright and Krompton into other divisions of the textile industry.

The iron and coal industry also underwent considerable progress. The steam power was the greatest discovery. In 1765 James Watt's steam engine brought about the revolution that culminated into Cartwright's making of steam driven loom. Thus development of large and small industry together advanced the industrial revolution further. "Resultantly there was decrease in prices of all goods from factories, increased revenue from trade and commerce and creating huge demand for unreserved/ unrestricted products in the market. The national wealth increased considerably. On the other side India witnessed increased number of labourers, destruction of wealth of the labourers with uncertain income."⁸²

The change in British economy and society reached the subcontinent through the path of its marine trade. British economy was driven from commercial capitalism towards free trade. It tried desperately to ensure continuous flow of production in factories for export and supply of raw materials to sustain the growth. The change in principle of colonialism became important. The pressure was felt upon the company's monopolistic trade practice and Bengal textile industry. In England there was a constant clash between agricultural and industrial interests and this triggered the clash in the parliament between the spokesperson of company favouring the company's monopoly trade practice and ones who voiced for free trade. And India under the above influence witnessed the clash between the governor's (ultimate authority in colonial rule) principal of ownership of land held by government and that ownership held by individuals.

After 1775 the clash started between the interest of free trade and commercial capitalism and industrial revolution was not the only reason. In 1776 America declared itself free from British colonialism. This led to a major political disaster affecting export trade, marine operation and colonialism as a whole effecting a change. Britain after losing an entire empire led tremendous pressure on Indian

subcontinent to pursue free trade. In this regard the comment of Dr. Cunningham describing the crisis of capitalism is when American colonies seceded all link with its parent British Empire it affected a change in the commercial field. To encourage marine trade, the laws that were passed earlier became ineffective. As a result one had to restructure the entire department of the commercial capitalistic sector that was a major task. Trade was restricted through different prohibitions that created problems in the practical field, which brought about many losses that are vivid in the description of Adam Smith.⁸³

In the history of the decline of commercial capitalism Dr. Cunningham has marked 1776 as the most important year. In this year America declared freedom and publication of the book by Adam Smith 'Wealth of Nations'. The book introduced national and logical solutions facilitating free trade. It harshly criticized the company's principle of monopoly trade practice that can be described rightly only in words of Birk - monopoly is the only driving force behind commercial capitalism.⁸⁴

These monopolistic organizations are adverse to national interest. They deprived a major section of the public from free trading. They sell goods in other countries at very high prices that would not have been possible in the presence of free trade. For example the East India Company from the very beginning has deprived the other English traders from trading. On the other hand imported items from India had to be bought from the company at higher prices making up for their monopolistic high profit and also paying for the abnormal losses due to fraud and wastage within the huge setup of the company.⁸⁵ In the words of Adam Smith the company and its kind are all disturbing and sinful elements for the country it has originated as well as wherever it trades in.⁸⁶

Attuned to free trade an adverse reaction was triggered against the company's monopoly trade practice inside the parliament. The reaction was activated during

protest against the extension of the company's duration of trade practice. "In every decade during this extension procedure traders from London, Liverpool and Bristol had tried to break the company's monopoly practice and get a taste of golden business opportunity.⁸⁷ Yielding to the efforts of the traders in 1773 by Regulatory Act respective traders were given some rights to import and export certain goods from and to India. Overall the attempt to snatch monopolistic right of the company was not successful until 1813. Till 1810 the figure of the volume of Bengal textile exported could be lesser than before but still revealed the evidence of the company's traits of monopoly. The rights that the traders managed to secure were restricted by various conditions. After 10 years in the draft of Dundas law there was no mention of the right to individual traders. In Fox's draft Act it was suggested in 1773 that a council would be appointed as the guardian of the company to monitor its business activities with nine members selected by the parliament but the act was not approved by the parliament. In 1784 Pitt's India Act was passed rendering national political authority to the company sacrificing the right to individual traders. In another word the company against payment of commercial price purchased authority. The act was a negotiation and understanding between the company and the British government. Philips had said the political and commercial activities of the company was so closely related that a new board was established but not rendering any power of interference into trade to the board was illogical.⁸⁸

Now the question arises despite the progress under Industrial Revolution till 1785 - 1815 why it was not possible to pass the act stopping the company's practice of monopoly in trade ? In the 18th century though changes were coming in with the industrial revolution but it was not that strong then that could abruptly change the feudalistic framework of the parliament. Before the first law of reformation was passed most of the members were from the elite class of the

society with vested interest and that there was a closeness between feudal interest and company's interest was evident from the book published in 1767 which was relevant for the entire decade. In the last half of the 18th century the clash between the industrial interest and company's interest is not clear. There were few like Cobden in the political scene then who had unshakable commitment towards industrialization. There were more like Pitt a believer of free trade yet took financial support of East India Company to win election and had to repay the loan as a minister by decreasing duty by 37.5% on company's products or rather sacrificing 6 lakh pounds of national revenue.⁸⁹ In this situation it was unthinkable to abolish monopolistic practice of trade by the company. Another reason being though the internal condition of the company was conducive to free trade the international market was not so. In 1775 war with America and Marathas, 1793- war with France, 1789- French Revolution, and 1790 - third Mysore War and arrival of Napoleon at the end of the century (Anglo-French War) had great effect on the international politics and England and thereby trade witnessed major interruption. All nations became conservative in trade owing to the disturbed situation. For the sake of the national interest in the then politically disturbed situation an artificial clash on differences of opinion on monopoly of trade was maintained and natural death of the company's monopolistic practice was delayed and the same reason why Pitt kept silent over the issue in 1784.

The premier of England against the promise of maintaining a non-interfering stance in the business matter of the company and actually robbed off the company of its authority and power by passing an act in the parliament. Though Pitt's law is criticized as a secret negotiation with the company and an act of dishonest approach but whatever change it had introduced no other act could bring that before. Secondly in 1784 it was not possible to snatch company's

business interest and national interest at the same time. Hence Pitt's stand was justified in history. Despite ignoring chances of negotiation and sacrificing free trade before company's monopoly trade practice the law that was passed in 1784 was victory of industrial interest in England. Thus the law and transfer of power gave the English traders partial opportunity in 1793 to practise free trade in India despite the adverse international conditions. Owing to this transfer of power it was possible to bring about changes in land revenue system for the sake of English industrial interest. Cornwallis system in 1784 was the fall out of the Pitt's Act and also for the Permanent settlement and Dasshala settlement as well.⁹⁰

In favour of free trade Philip Francis had said that the monopolistic trade practice of East India Company in Bengal had hampered freedom of trade in the country. He had written a long letter to Lord North in this matter. He had published it as a book.⁹¹ He has made the allegations that the company has misused its power and exercised illegitimate control over the resources of the country and many of the employees are also involved in this exploitation in their personal interests. Hence they would always protest in the question of any reform of the system. The employees are used to many benefits and opportunities of direct business that they would be reluctant to share these facilities with others. Philip Francis has been so clear in his opinion that it reminds us of the straightforwardness of Bolts.

The superiors of the company along with the employees, banyans sitting away from the capital in the towns are actually misusing their power in the name of the business interest of the company and oppressed people and have seized the market here. They have blocked the competition in the market by practicing monopoly and have converted the native artisans into slaves. They sell their products at high price in the market compelling independent traders to buy

them so. In order to express authority in the name of the government they have occasionally put the seal of authority over the loom itself.⁹²

He proposed two solutions as remedy to the above problems. In Bengal the internal trade would be free and the company would operate without help of the royal authority government help (by the superior weight of its purse) and devoid of any extra benefit. Secondly for the supply of the raw material free tender will be called and all will be given equal opportunity including the native traders. He expressed that this would give rise to fair competition at Calcutta profitable for the company and the competition that would be created in the Aarath or wholesale market would benefit the artisans.⁹³

In this situation around 1789 the English had no other options and started importing raw silk in own interest. They had already been importing raw cotton. Situation got complicated at the end of 1780 and beginning of 1790. Under the instruction of the Court Of Directors in 29th March, 1774 a Board of Trade was established with four superior and experienced employees of the company to handle the complex commercial situation in Bengal. The latter demanded to improve the quality of textile for export. The reasons behind the fall of quality have already been discussed. The weavers were exhausted in matching with the monopolistic trade practice and frequently changing demand in export market. The Board of Trade was helpless in this regard as it had to work under the pressure of the Court of Directors and Parliament to stop export of cotton fabrics. The weavers were the worst sufferers.

The following is the chart of figures of import and export.

TABLE NO. - 4

Figures indicating the volume of Bengal cotton piece-goods exported to Britain and British piece-goods imported into Bengal from 1800-01 to 1809-10

Years	Bengal piece-goods exported to Britain (sale value) £	yrs	import of British manufactures into Bengal (Sale Value) £
1800-01	14,06,879	1800	60,32,652
1801-02	11,31,531	1801	71,60,463
1802-03	6,64,317	1802	79,10,306
1803-04	6,72,079	1803	73,78,879
1804-05	4,44,114	1804	85,61,224
1805-06	6,21,862	1805	98,57,110
1806-07	4,98,233	1806	1,07,50,724
1807-08	2,60,307	1807	1,08,51,045
1808-09	3,17,516	1808	1,28,39,624
1809-10	3,33,768	1809	1,86,34,614

*Source : Milbern, William - Oriental Commerce - Vol. II, London - 1813,
Page - 235 - 236*

It was not possible for the weavers to improve the quality of fabric like before in that condition. Inadequate investment, high price of yarn and low wages, company's drive to continue monopoly in trade followed by oppression upon weavers turned the weavers from poor to poorer.

The figure indicates that from the period 1792 to 1823 there was no variations or change in the wages of the weavers.

TABLE NO. - 5

Year	Coomercolly wages of spinners per seer of cotton of 80 sicca wt.	Hurripual wages of spinners per seer of cotton of 80 sicca wt.	Kheerpoy per month	Malda per month	Radhanagar per month	Rungpore cotton spinners wages per seer of cotton	Santipore per seer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs. a. P.	Rs. a. P.	Rs. a. P.	Rs. a. P.	Rs. a. P.	Rs. a. P.	Rs. a. P.
1792-93	N.A.	10-9-1	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	N.A.	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1793-94	N.A.	10-8-5	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	N.A.	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1794-95	N.A.	10-8-5	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	N.A.	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1795-96	N.A.	10-8-5	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	N.A.	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1796-97	N.A.	10-8-5	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	N.A.	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1797-98	N.A.	10-8-5	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	N.A.	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1798-99	N.A.	10-8-0	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	N.A.	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1799-1800	N.A.	10-10-3	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	N.A.	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1800-01	N.A.	10-10-7	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	N.A.	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1801-02	N.A.	10-10-3	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1802-03	N.A.	10-10-7	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1803-04	N.A.	10-8-5	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1804-05	N.A.	10-8-5	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1805-06	N.A.	10-8-5	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1806-07	N.A.	10-8-2	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1807-08	N.A.	10-8-2	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1808-09	5-0-0	10-8-3	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1809-10	5-0-0	10-7-8	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1810-11	5-0-0	10-7-9	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1811-12	5-0-0	10-7-9	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂

1812-13	5-0-0	10-5-4	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1813-14	5-0-0	10-7-8	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1814-15	5-0-0	10-0-9	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1815-16	5-0-0	10-3-1	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1816-17	5-0-0	10-3-3	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1817-18	5-0-0	10-2-6	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1818-19	5-0-0	10-1-11	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1819-20	5-0-0	10-1-6	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1820-21	5-0-0	10-0-1	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1821-22	5-0-0	10-3-9	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂
1822-23	5-0-0	10-0-0	3-0-0	2-8-0	3-0-0	0-8-0	12-8-7 ¹ / ₂

Source : Progs of Board of Trade - 29th June, 1827

Prog no. 48. Vol. 453, Part - II

Mitra, Debendra Bejay, Cotton Weavers of Bengal, Page - 128 - 129

There were intermittent protests, petitions before the council by the weavers of Santipur but that was not enough to bring about any substantial change in the system neither it could resist the decline and misery. Between 1793-1833 the Indian economy turned into British economy.

In 1779 indigo cultivation was started in Bengal. The company assessing the situation invested in indigo, raw silk, and sugar export. This encouraged increased indigo cultivation. The company was interested in export of raw silk from the days of 1765 after acquiring Diwani. But the famine in 1770 took large toll on human lives of which about 1/3 of them were involved in raw silk cultivation. In 1775 its export increased. But again the export of raw silk declined and company focused upon increasing indigo and other cultivation. In the words of N.K. Sinha - " Indigo became the principal article of export to England, the commodity market being almost exclusively dominated by British private traders

in the Bengal presidency. In 1800 forty thousand maunds of indigo were exported from Calcutta to England, in 1815 one hundred and twenty thousand, between 1826-30 on an average about one hundred and eighteen thousand. In 1810, Calcutta price was one hundred thirty rupees per maund. In 1824 it rose to Rs 330 per maund. There was a slump in 1829 and London price dropped from 10 to 3 pounds. Calcutta was the world's chief supplier of indigo. It was produced in the delta regions of lower Bengal and Bihar. Indigo became almost entirely a forced cultivation".⁹⁴ From 1800 the company started exporting opium to China. The business was carried between India and England through Canton. Between 1813-33 the volume of business increased. Products from Manchester flowed into the Indian market. Narendra Krishna Sinha comments "During these years 1813-33 India became flooded with Manchester goods".⁹⁵

Turmoil continued between 1780-1790 and reached climax in 1800. Bengal started turning into a textile production centre to centre of raw material production. The economy became dependent upon indigo, opium and other agricultural products. In the interest of English industrialization agricultural and industrial policies started maturing in Bengal. N. K. Sinha says - Muslin was first affected. In 1801 cloth investment in Dacca was reduced to about 3 lakhs. In 1814-15 investment in Bengal muslin was totally discontinued and company's investment in Dacca and Santipore stopped altogether. Export of calicos continued for sometime but gradually came to an end.⁹⁶

Industrial revolution and huge volume of production along with some other reasons were responsible for curbing the export from Bengal. In 1793 the Anglo-French war affected export adversely. Little after that Napoleonic war began. Though the export was hurt but some of the English traders were interested in exporting Bengal muslin. Hence export was still continuing. But in 1806 the Milan Decree banned Bengal goods to continent. Even in 1803 the Bengal muslin

were sold at high prices in France, Holland etc. the cost of remitting goods were high. Hence goods were priced extremely high. Bengal goods started losing market in these countries. England meanwhile following the samples of Bengal muslin, had started manufacturing the same varieties and they were priced low. Hence Bengal lost its market. In 1804 SRS was 60,13,004, in 1805-56, 65,785,⁹⁷ 1809-22,39,441⁹⁸ the latter included all commissions and charges.

In 1813, besides the company, India too had its decisive indications. In 1813-14 imported British cotton fabrics amounted to SRs 91,800 but in 1822-23 it was SRs 67,77,279, 1829-30 it was 50,61,861. Imported items included English as well as American machine produced goods. Export potentials of Bengal goods to Great Britain was completely destroyed. In export volumes were in 1813-14 Srs 34,29,043: 1818-19-13,98,926, 1827-28 Srs was 3,05,683, 1828-29 it was Srs 1,64,408. Thus Bengal lost its market in Great Britain and other countries in the international market. Levy of huge amount of tax upon goods also completely stopped its export to England. In 1797 it was 18%, 1800-30%, 1823-37.5% (in case of Muslin). In case of white lengths and like varieties, the rate of tax was in 1797-40%, 1800-60%, 1823-67.5%, and after 1830 they levied 85% tax on muslin products.

In the international market Bengal goods lost its market to English products. C. J. Hamilton says that in 1787 it was computed that not less than 500,000 piece of muslin were annually made in Great Britain.⁹⁹ In this period calico was produced and was exported.

Travelyan, keeping the huge tax crisis in mind, has given the accounts of import-export of the company between 1813-1833. In this report upon the inland customs and town duties of the Bengal presidency (1835), he gives the following figures of displacement first in the foreign market and then in the home market:

TABLE NO. - 6

Years	Cotton goods Exported) Rs	Cotton goods (imported) Rs	Twist (imported)
1	2	3	4
	SRs.	SRs.	SRs.
1813-14	52,91,458	9,070	
1814-15	84,70,760	45,000	
1815-16	1,31,51,427	2,63,800	
1816-17	1,65,94,380	3,17,602	
1817-18	1,32,72,854	11,22,372	
1818-19	1,15,27,385	26,58,940	
1819-20	90,30,796	15,82,353	
1820-21	85,42,763	25,59,642	
1821-22	76,64,820	46,78,650	
1822-23	80,09,732	65,82,351	
1823-24	58,70,533	37,20,540	
1824-25	60,17,559	54,96,816	1,23,145
1825-26	58,34,638	41,24,159	75,276
1826-27	39,48,422	43,46,054	8,82,743
1827-28	28,76,313	52,52,793	19,11,205
1828-29	22,23,163	79,96,383	35,22,640
1829-30	13,26,423	52,16,226	15,15,321
1830-31	8,57,280	60,12,729	31,12,138
1831-32	8,49,887	45,64,047	42,85,517
1832-33	8,22,891	42,64,707	23,87,807

Source : Trevelyan, S. C. - Report upon Inland Customs and Town Duties of the Bengal Presidency.

Mitra, Debendra Bejay - Cotton Weavers of Bengal, Page - 186

Trevelyan also commented that the trifling quantity of piece goods which Bengal still exported is for the most part made from English twist. The loss of Indian market was explained in the following words: " In Mughal times transit duties were tolls rather than duties, collected according to the distance travelled, in small instalments. This new regulations (sec.30.Reg.IX.1810) aggregated all the instalments on goods travelling the greatest distance. It was a frightful augmentation. There was an endless multiplication of chokeys or customs outposts. Inland trade was thus rendered intricate, dangerous and disreputable during the years 1810-1833. By the charter act of 1813 British imported goods paid 2 and $\frac{1}{2}$ % but no corresponding reduction was made in internal duties. Cotton piece goods in the Bengal presidency still paid $17\frac{1}{2}$ p.c -- 5 p.c. on the raw material, $7\frac{1}{2}$ p.c on the yarn, $2\frac{1}{2}$ p.c on the plain and $2\frac{1}{2}$ p.c on the dyed cloth. This was in effect an encouragement of English at the expense of local Indian manufacturers. It is no wonder that Indian piece goods lost their home markets so very rapidly in this unequal struggle. The anomaly of foreign goods enjoying a preference in the home market undoubtedly helped to bring this. The total displacement of Bengal piece goods in the Indian market and the foreign market has been estimated by Trevelyan at a crore and eighty lakhs. This happens between 1813 and 1833 The sword of Brennus was thrown into the scale, not with the words " woe to the vanquished" but perhaps with a smile " This is for your benefit."¹⁰⁰

Thus owing to the British business policy, Industrial Revolution, low prices of mechanized English products, the Bengal textile market was destroyed in the beginning of the 19th century. Meanwhile the Nawab's reign has come to an end. The successors of Nawab preferred the finer and machine-made English products to handloom Bengal products. The European products by then had

become the status symbol for many.

In 1828 the Dacca settlement was closed. The Santipur settlement was closed in the same decade. The Bengal products could not survive the competition with the British goods. The British government did not make any effort to revive the Bengal industrial production. Bengal goods could not face the consequences of the Industrial Revolution, huge production with huge investment or the organized division of labour and mechanized devices. Overall there was lopsided trade. In the words of R. C. Dutt - "The Invention of the power loom in Europe, completed the decline of the Indian industries."¹⁰¹

In the context of the destruction of Indian or Bengal textile industry a relevant topic would be the gradual fall in the quality of the products since the last phase of the 18th century and reasons behind. Since 1793 the English company had tried to establish its authority over Bengal textile industry but was not completely successful. It has been already discussed. After the war in 1783 the English faced strong competition with the French and the Dutch. The English in order to survive competition started interfering into the business of the other companies. They made announcements in different places like in Santipur that prior to the complete quota of investment of the English company no weaver would be allowed to work for any other companies. In 1786, Mr. Fergusson informed the Board of Trade that the weavers who had been working with the company against advance for long years will be the one to follow the notice in the announcement. Against the dominance of the English company, the Dutch gomastahs and brokers in 1786 informed their Board of Trade that the notice and the announcement of Mr. Beauland their business is getting almost wound p.

As a result not only company's business of the independent businessmen are getting closed as well.¹⁰² After the regulation of 1787 the condition of the weavers

worsened further. The conspiracy of John Bebb made it complete. After 1793, after the renewal of Charter the situation improved. The individual traders captured the Bengal cotton textile market to some extent. In order to maintain huge supply and expecting high profit the textile lost its range and elegance in quality.

The uneven investment by the company due to expenses of war is also significant in this period. The lesser and irregular investment in the weaving industry shut down many workshops and discouraged many weavers and they were compelled to opt out for new professions like agriculture and other works. The residents of various Arongs also informed the Council of such issues. Between 1809-10 the situation reached its peak. Charles Beilley (Resident Santipur Workshop) reported that to retain a fine weaver and finer product regular and adequate investment is necessary.¹⁰³ Else the weaver would tend to compromise with the quality and sell it accordingly. Consequently the finer designs with chikon and floral embroidery, which were in great demand in England, would lose the grandeur and appeal in the English market. In 13th October, 1810 the weavers at Santipur raised a protest against the inconsistent investment of the British in the weaving industry. So long the Bengal textile were higher in price and finer in quality than their English counterparts. But Industrial Revolution and lower price of the English mechanized products compelled the weavers to lower the price compromising with the quality to survive the competition. This slowly led to the loss of elegance and delicate designs of the finer variety of textile that Dacca and Santipur had used to produce earlier.

After the Permanent Settlement in the last half of the 18th century the social values changed with changed economy. In the past, Bengal was truly the place for business. There were many rich industrialists and investors. But the inclination towards trade and commerce the Bengali had at the core of their

heart slowly started disappearing. At the beginning of the 19th century most of the big investors pioneering trade in Bengal had expired and their successors were not interested anymore in reinvestment and continuing the trade. They are rather spending money in religious and other reformation works. Ganga-Gobind Singh had spent 15 lakhs rupees on her mother's last rituals in those days. After the Permanent Settlement many used to acquire zamindari as investment and blocked the money. It could be seen that they used to derive very little profit out of it. They had the consolation of possessing large areas of land.¹⁰⁴

The Marwari and the Gujarati still retained the entrepreneurship despite the western disturbances for longer period than the Bengali traders who were most influenced by caste and creed. The phenomenon grew to prominence after 1793, it reached the crest after 1818. In 1817-1818, imports of piece goods from Britain exceeded for the first time Bengal's exports of piece goods to Britain. After 1818 most of the cotton textile workshops were closed down and this could be another possible reason for the above occurrence. Trade with the western countries decayed in Bengal but western culture and taste started influencing the Bengal taste deeply. Since the 3rd decade of the 19th century Bengal that was earlier business and agriculture based started becoming solely dependent on agriculture. Decay of handicrafts paved way for easy availability of labour. The labourers were hardly left with any interest in developing skills. The scope for skilled weavers had already reduced. In a nutshell Bengal turned into one devoid of trade and commerce, contemporary touches but just religious minded mediocre and backward society. The destruction of trade and commerce in Bengal had affected the following factories/workshops at Dacca, Malda, Haripal, Katoa, Khirpoy, Midnapore, Santipur, Patna, Sonamukhi, Kumortuli, Rongpur, Benaras, Mao, Azimgarh, Lakshmipur, Chittagong. Out of these 17 workshops only 3 were outside Bengal. Still many weavers used to weave dhoti, bedcovers and

bafta and earn their livelihood. They used to sell these products to the Indian traders. Many had opted for agriculture. Some places saw very limited use of British cotton fabric like Malda.¹⁰⁵

At Santipur there was reasonable demand for British cotton fabrics. The common idea was goods imported from England were good especially among the native rich community.¹⁰⁶ But the British goods did not have the durability like the native goods. At the onset many weavers lost job and many died out of hunger. From 1823-24 yarns were exported and many weavers got engaged in making and spinning yarns. The textile out of this yarn sold very cheap even cheaper than before.

As a result weavers at Santipur were compelled to use British yarn to sustain in their traditional profession. Board Of Trade mentioned that if Indian weavers purchase and weave textiles with British yarn it would do well against English goods in the market. Another discrimination was made in case of duty; Indian goods were taxed at higher rate when exported. Again British yarns were available at inflated price in the Indian market due to higher duty imposed. Consequently the Bengal textile started suffering from both the sides.¹⁰⁷ Meeting the regional demand the weavers compromised with the quality and started selling inferior quality to earn two square meals but in two decades the weavers lost the ultimate hope too.

In this situation, some of the natives of Bengal who were manufacturers and delivers in cotton and silk piece-goods, the fabrics of Bengal, presented a petition, dated Calcutta, 1st September, 1831, to the Right Honourable the lords of his Majesty's Privy Council for Trade & Co. 117 natives signed this petition. They wrote,.....that the fabrics of Bengal are charged with the following duties when they are used in great Britain :

“On manufactured cotton, 10 percent,

on manufacture of silk, 24 percent.”

“They therefore pray to be admitted to the privilege of Bengal subjects, and humbly entreated your lordships to allow the cotton and silk fabrics of Bengal to be used in Great Britain “free to duty” or at the same rate which may be charged on British fabrics consumed in Bengal.”¹⁰⁸

But this petition was failed. The situation was very important. Because while the Christian natives of England were congratulating themselves on the expansion of their trade to India Company in 1813, what was the state of affairs regarding the Export Trade of Indian-cotton and piece-goods to England. The following table will answer this question:

TABLE NO. - 7

Years	Bales	Pieces
1814-15	3,842	—
1818-19	536	...
1823-24	1,337	106,516
1824-25	1,878	167,524
1825-26	1,253	111,225
1826-27	541	4,572
1827-28	736	50,654
1828-29	433	32,626
1829-30	—	13,043

Source :P. 883. Appendix to Report from select committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, Vol-II, Part - ii (London.1832)

Basu, Bamandas, Major - Ruin of Indian Trade and Industries : 1867 - 1930 - Page - 63

The number of cotton-goods went on decreasing year after and this state of affairs was not indicative of the material prosperity of the natives of Hindustan.

Here I have presented some data from Basu, Bamandas, Major that have shown how Indian manufactured goods (cotton) ruined to save the fate of the British manufacturer. Here two Statement show (Table - 8 & 9) the value of the principal Article of Export from England to India in 1814 and 1828.

TABLE NO. - 8

Articles	1814	1828	Increase
British Cotton	1,09,480	1,621,560	1,512,080
Manufacture			
British Cotton	7	3,88,888	3,88,881
Twist manufacture			

Source : Basu, Bamandas, Major - Ruin of Indian Trade and Industries : 1867 - 1930 - Page - 77

TABLE NO. - 9

Commercial Year	Cotton goods	Twist
1813-14	91,835	Nil
1814-15	43,346	Nil
1815-16	2,61,846	Nil
1816-17	3,13,102	Nil
1817-18	11,20,909	Nil
1818-19	26,55,192	Nil
1819-20	15,85,890	Nil
1820-21	25,55,908	Nil
1821-22	46,81,870	Nil
1822-23	65,77,279	Nil
1823-24	37,16,278	Nil
1824-25	46,27,765	81,145
1825-26	36,65,461	1,41,305

Commercial Year	Cotton goods	Twist
1826-27	38,04,022	8,09,052
1827-28	49,30,139	18,42,110
1828-29	Nil	Nil
1829-30	50,61,861	14,37,126
1830-31	58,18,247	:: 29,17,969

Source : Basu, Bamandas, Major - Ruin of Indian Trade and Industries : 1867 - 1930 - Page - 78

Charles Marjuribanks, the head of the settlement, in this context, made a very important statement. In 1830, during the seminar on trade with China by England with products generated in India at the House of Commons, it was said that the Chinese can protect their industry but India cannot. The way Indian goods are taxed the Indians cannot derive any profit. England can only benefit from it. This is how economy of a native country is getting destroyed. The fall of Chinese government started in 1838-40. Marjuribanks has compared the power of the Chinese government with that of the time of Murshid Quli, Alivardi or Shiraz's time in Bengal. As after that the weakness of the central power in India led way for the British company to take the advantage and encroach the power. From 1793-1833 the economic theory that was derived in India was in the interest of the English agent. In the words of Narendra Krishna Sinha "British Cotton Industry thus succeeded in reversing the future of India."¹⁰⁹

To compare the two country's situation which is the decline of the handmade cotton weaving industry are not same. Because India was under the British Government, England being an independent country, the decay of handicraft did not hamper their labour force. In the words of Rajani Palme Dutt - "In England the ruin of the old handloom weavers was accompanied by the growth of the new machine industry."¹¹⁰

The major change that took place in the society and economy was not only due to the discoveries of machines. The machines became useful after 1764. The leading authority on English Industrial history Dr. Cunningham says that the major change in economy was not due to the new discoveries only, it is aided by the inflow of huge money into the bank, which was not seen before. From the middle of the 18th century it was possible due to the exploitation of India's economy. Before this Bank of England did not have the fund.¹¹¹ At first the East India Company and later the exploitation by the British Government, the economy and the handicrafts of India were destroyed. East India Company also spoke of the equality of the rate of tax imposed. But the Ellenborough Committee did not agree with it.¹¹²

Thus destroying the productivity and economy of a developed country another developing country became more developed. The country's raw material is used in production but nobody spares a thought about the development of the country as the country is under the rule of British Colony. The exports of raw materials leapt up, especially after 1833, raw cotton exports rose from 9 million pounds weight in 1813 to 32 million in 1833, 88 millions in 1844 and 963 million in 1914.¹¹³

This is how Indian raw material was used in England to manufacture products that received accolade from all sectors. This was the condition of all the British colonized countries in the first half of the 19th century. By 1830 the department of the warehouse keepers were closed down. The pattern of investment in Bengal by the East India Company was getting transformed.

India's exports, commodity composition, percentage shares of selected items in total value.

TABLE NO. - 10

Yrs	Indigo	Piece-goods	Raw silk	Cotton	Opium	Sugar
1814-15	20.0	14.3	13.3	8.0	available	3.0
1828-29	27.0	11.0	10.0	15.0	17.0	4.0
1834-35	15.0	7.0	8.0	21.0	25.0	2.0
1839-40	26.0	5.0	7.0	20.0	10.0	7.0
1850-51	10.0	4.0	4.0	12.7	34.0	10.0
1857-58	6.1	2.9	2.9	15.6	32.7	4.3

Source : Choudhury, K. N., The Economic Development of India under the East India Company, 1814 - 1858, Cambridge - 1971,

Mitra, Debendra Bejay - Cotton Weavers of Bengal - Page - 189

Indigo was mostly exported then. Raw cotton from Bengal was exported to China in exchange of tea from the latter, which was exported to England.

TABLE NO. - 11

Years	Cotton exported to UK	Cotton exported to World
1823-24	SRs. 4,51,021	SRs. 23,47,586
1824-25	SRs. 5,01,779	SRs. 32,28,335
1825-26	SRs. 4,76,169	SRs. 30,57,130

Source : Tripathi Amolesh - Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency, 1793 - 1833, Page - 202.

Mitra, Debendra Bejay - Cotton Weavers of Bengal - Page - 187

The export of cotton from Bombay started since in 1778. Because of severe famine in China the emperor had restricted the cultivation of cash crops to facilitate exclusive growth of food crops. So the export of raw cotton to China started during this period. In 1801 Bengal exported cotton fabrics to China. Between 1809-12 export of cotton fabrics grew profitable. In order to maintain the equilibrium with China in commercial terms the English started exporting

huge volumes of cotton fabrics there from 1830. Between 1833-34 the price of fabrics went down. The following data validates it further :

TABLE NO. - 12

1829-30- 10 taels 8 masa per picul

1830-31- 9 taels and a half per picul

1831-32 -9 taels 7m. -- 4c per picul

Source : Sinha, Narendra Krishna - The Economic History of Bengal, Vol - III, Page - 18.

Though lower in price, the export to China had kept the Bengal weaving industry alive somehow. But after 1838 and mainly between 1848-50 one can witness how textile is being replaced by opium as a primary object for export. England wanted to establish a huge market in India. So it destroyed the textile industry in India by levying huge tax on it thus barring its entry into the English market. On the other hand the ones who were affected adversely so long by the huge export of finer fabrics from India to other countries now started seeing profit at the destruction of Indian textile industry. They all prospered and the last nail was hammered on the coffin of Indian textile industry. Manchester solved the problem for England. England continued exporting opium from India to China thus capturing the market there. Thus the market for cotton textile industry of Bengal got ruined and in place of once economically advanced region turned into an underdeveloped place. Karl Marx commented that the British colonialism seeded the modern socialistic structure here.¹¹⁴

The economic change in Bengal was rightly measured in the words of Rajani Palme Dutt - "The structure of the economical elements of society remains untouched by the storm clouds in the political sky. This is traditional Indian economy that was shattered in its foundation by the onset of foreign capitalism, represented by British rule. Here the nature of British conquest differed from

previous conquests, in that while the previous foreign conquerors left untouched the economic basis and eventually grew into its structure, the British conquest shattered that basis and remained a foreign force, acting from outside and withdrawing its tribute outside. Here in also the victory of foreign capitalism in India differed from the victory of the capitalism in Europe, in that destructive process was not accompanied by any corresponding growth of new forces. From this arises the "particular melancholy" attaching to the misery of the Indian under British rule, who finds himself faced with the loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one."¹¹⁵

"This loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one, imparts a particular melancholy to the present misery of the Hindoo, and separates Hindostan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions and from the whole of its past history."¹¹⁶

The foreign capitalism entered the country with the British rule and gulped in the Indian traditional textile industry. The capitalists were different from the previous adversaries, as the former had never tried to change the pattern of economy in the country. The British capitalists changed the face of socio-economic picture of India. They had considerable influence in Bengal hence the change in Bengal was remarkable. But still in certain parts of Bengal, keeping pace with the changed socio-economy of the region, some weavers had tried to retain the artistry in weaving and they were in Santipur- a village in Nadia district. The persistent and rebellious attitude and the continued struggle of the weavers of Santipur helped them in sustaining the weaving industry there.

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