

CHAPTER - VI

OTHER CRAFTS

Marine proto-industries during the period under review were found more or less throughout the rural Bengal. Most of the marine proto-industries were densely established throughout the length and breadth of the 'pull' and 'Pull Corridor' areas. It was the geographical set up of the 'Pull areas' of Bengal that proved suitable for the extensive and intensive establishments and development of marine proto-industries. 'Pull corridors' in rural Bengal were adjacent to the pull areas of Bengal. Hence, subsidiary proto-industries grew here extensively. Fishing, working with sānkha, and salt manufacture were the most important marine-proto-industries in the 'Pull' and 'Pull Corridor' areas of Bengal.

Fishing and proto-industries related to fish catching were practised in 'neutral' and 'push' areas. Fishing and allied proto-industries were not the year round industries of these areas. These proto-industries were only seasonal. During most part of the year, the primary producers were dependent on agricultural employment. They took up fishing and other allied proto-industries only during rainy season when fishes flooded most of the parts of these areas of rural Bengal.

Other marine proto-industries like manufacture with sānkha and salt were generally confined to 'pull' and 'pull corridor' areas because of the easy availability of natural raw materials. These marine proto-industries throughout our period were not pushed or pulled towards 'neutral', 'push corridor' and 'push' areas of rural Bengal.

Proto-industries in pottery and ivory were developed in

those are as where raw materials were available easily and in abundance. Pottery proto-industry was organized on the basis of jajmani system. The contemporary documents are silent about the mode of organization of ivory proto-industry.

SHELL CRAFTS

The conch-shell industry was one of the oldest proto-industry in the delta but was confined entirely to the town of Dacca.¹ Hence, the shell bracelets and ornaments of coral of Dacca, fine and delicate in form and texture formed an important local industry.² Besides bracelets of conch shells,³ bangles of various designs and patterns formed a considerable proto-industry of Dacca.⁴ Amulets, charms, table napkin, rings, brooches, churis, chains, rings, buttons etc. of various designs and patterns were also manufactured. These articles were sometimes set with pearls or gold.

The shells brought to Balasore from Maldives, Ceylon, Madras and sometimes also from Bombay were sent to Calcutta where they were purchased by the merchants or their agents sent from Dacca. The work of the shell cutters or sāṅkhārī was divided into three branches, namely, the pointing of the shells, sawing them into rings, here the shells were first prepared for the saw by having the points knocked off with a hammer, they were then sawn into rings⁶ and finally, polishing, carving and joining the different

1. S.G. Panadikar, Wealth and Welfare of the Bengal Delta, (Calcutta, 1926), p.63.

2. Dr. Anjali Chatterjee, Bengal in the Reign of Aurangzeb, 1658-1707, (Calcutta, 1967), p.85.

3. Birdwood, op.cit., p.229.

4. S.G. Panadikar, op.cit., p.63.

5. Ibid, p.63.

6. W.W. Hunter, A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol.V., (Delhi, 1973), p.111.

pieces.⁷ These rings were either coloured or left plain as the case may be. The shell bracelets were the outcome of an elaborate process. The rings, neatly engraved with different devices and brilliantly coloured, were artistically joined together to form beautiful chains and bracelets.

The work of polishing the bangles by rubbing them against a sand-stone could be done by all men and even by boys. But the ornamental designs and patterns could be worked on the bangles with fine tools by expert artisans only. The other articles were made out of the parts that remain after the bangles were cut out and beads were made out of spirals.⁸ The saw used was shaped like an arc of a circle, without teeth, but the lower edge was notched and the edge was oiled to make it cut freely.

The shells from which these bracelets were made were univalves. Titkauri s̄ankhā, univalve and a valuable shell was brought from Ceylon; p̄atī, another univalve shell were imported from Ceylon. Dhālā and jahājī shells were also brought from Ceylon. Garbaki shell came from the Madras Coast. The sur̄ti, doānā-p̄atī and ālā-bilā kinds of shells were brought from Bombay.⁹

The manufacture of mother of pearl-button was another important cottage industry, which existed mostly in number of villages in Dacca district. The shells were obtained from fishermen generally through middlemen. Men cut out suitable pieces from the shell and the rest of the work was performed by women with very simple implements. The buttons were not of uniform size, shape and thickness and the holes in them were not equidistant from each other.¹⁰

7. S. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p. 189.

8. S. G. Panadikar, Wealth and Welfare of the Bengal Delta, p. 64.

9. W. W. Hunter, A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. 5, p. 112.

10. S. G. Panadikar, op. cit., p. 64

FISHERY AND FISHING CRAFTS

In India fish formed an important article of internal trade and fishing provided employment for several distinct classes of people. Most prominent among these were the jāliā kaivertas whose main occupation was fishing and the Muslim kabaris who sold fish.¹¹ In 1757-1766 the total jama' of the maimahal of Chittagong district on fisheries amounted to Rs.1480 or 52000 dams.¹²

Fishing industry was one of the important indigenous industries of the delta. In the delta regions and most probably in other regions of Bengal, middle-men known as the ijāradārs secured leases of fishing rights along rivers and bills from landlords either annually or for a term of years. Ijāradārs supplied boats and nets to fisherman who paid from Rs.1 to 5 a month per boat and they had only their labour to supply in the business. Many simple and complex methods were applied for fishing purposes in tanks, ponds, marshes and rivers.

SALT INDUSTRY

From very early days salt had been one of the principal articles of inland trade in Bengal. The salt was produced from the earth found impregnated with sea salt at the mouths of the Ganges, in the 'pull areas' between Balasore and Chittagong.¹³ In Bengal proper, salt was manufactured in those 'pull areas' that were situated along the sea coast of Bengal from Chittagong

11. Dr. Anjali Chatterjee, Bengal in the Reign of Aurangzeb, 1658-1707, (Calcutta, 1967), p. 83.

12. Ibid, p. 84.

13. W.K. Fiminger, Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of East India Company, Vol. I, (Calcutta, 1917), p. 37.

to Jaleswar which extended over a huge area about 700 square miles. Fuel wood, necessary for boiling salt was easily available from the coastal forests.¹⁴ The East India Company divided the salt producing area into various agencies in the closing years of the 18th century. Hijli and Midnapore formed two important agencies. Salt was also produced in the 24 Parganas, Noakhālī and Chittagong. Rock salt was manufactured in the 'push areas' of Bengal. Some amount of salt was manufactured in the 'corridor' and 'neutral areas' of Bengal. Every agency was divided into the aurangs and the aurangs were divided in numerous hoodas or independent jurisdictions.¹⁵ Tamluk had four hoodas, while Murshidābād had seven. Noyna, Sabang or Mohar were important centres of salt manufacture in the Tamluk agency. Tamluk contained about 16,867 bighās of Jalpai lands (Fuel lands) and around 29,787 bighās in Murshidābād. The salt agencies employed shikārīs to kill wild buffaloes and pigs, which were very much destructive to the jalpai trees and shrubs. The central salt store (golā) of Tamluk agency was at Ghāt Narianpur. Hijli was the largest among the Bengal agencies with its headquarters at Contai.¹⁶

14. Balai Barui, The Salt Industry of Bengal, 1757-1800. A Study in the interaction of British monopoly control and indigenous enterprises, (Calcutta, 1985), p. 5.

15. Ibid, pp. 5-6.

16. Ibid, pp. 7-8. This agency comprised of nine aurangs; Birkal, Bahrimuta; Nuramuta, Elach, Majnamuta, Bogrui, Jalamta, Auranganapar and Gungar. The first six aurangs had altogether 83 hoodas which had the capability, in favourable season, of producing from 8 to 11 lakh maunds of salt.

The extensive saline tracts of the Sunderbans in the district of 24 Parganas were appropriate for salt manufacture. Salt was also produced at Kulberia, Haligar, Shahpur, Maidanmal, Magra, Murgacha, Panchakuli, Azimabad, Mayda, Hasimabad, Balia, Dakhin Sagar, Kodey, Kashipur etc. were significant salt manufacturing centres of the 24 parganas. Salt was transported to Nahua, Ghughudanga, Suktal etc. There were more than 2600 khalaris and 18,655 malangis in 1774.

During 17th century, salt production was carried on by ajoorā system. In this system the zamīndārs farmed out the land to malangīs on condition that malangī would produce and deliver a certain quantity of salt at a specified rate. Merchants were financed the production of salt through advance money to the zamīndār, who distributed it to the malangīs through muggadams, who were in direct relation with head malangīs. It was predominantly a local affair in which zamīndārs played significant role.

During the 1st half of the 18th Century, the nawābs had the right to grant generally the management of salt production and distribution as a monopoly to their favourities or to the highest bidders. It, therefore, is obvious that granting of monopoly in salt to some favourities or merchants was in actual effect a method of farming out the management of salt in Bengal.

During the 1st half of the 18th century salt was sold at an average rate of Rs. 2 per maund. The average rate at which the production merchants sold the commodity to the trading merchants was not known. But the malangīs or the primary producers of salt could not get higher price than Rs. 50 per hundred maunds from the production merchants.¹⁷

Before 1757 the production of salt and its trade were controlled by indigenious merchants. The system of advances prevailed. Advances were made to petty producers of salt by the merchants. On receipt of advances they were bound to supply the amount to the merchants promised. The manufacture of salt was financed by the production merchants. They worked in collaboration with the local zamīndārs who had overall power of supervision. The zamīndārs were assisted in the management of salt by mugaddams and siggdār, the chief of the criminal justice. No exclusive monopoly

was operated before 1757.

ORGANISATION OF SALT MANUFACTURING AFTER 1757

After the Battle of Plassey the private trade of the Company's servants in salt and other commodities had formed a source of acute friction between the Company and nawābs of Bengal for some years.¹⁸ The tax imposed on salt varied from time to time. During nawābi period, it was levied on the value of the total production, the Muslims paid on a reduced rate i.e. 2.5% while the 'Gentoos' paid 5%. Later, the imposition of tax was made on each salt pan or khalā according to their size with a khalari rent of Rs.3 per pan. In 1762 the Company's President and Council established a tax of Rs.30 sicca Rs. per khalari and abolished all former duties.¹⁹ At last by Article III of the treaty with Mīr Zafar, concluded on the 10th July 1763, it was agreed that on salt a trifling duty of 2.5% was to be imposed, while other commodities in which the Company's servants traded were to be exempted from duties. On the 8th February, 1764, however, the Court of Directors sent an order directing the whole private trade of Company's servants to be discontinued and a formal transmission of the right to be made to the nawāb.²⁰

The farman provided to the Company by the then nawāb, offered the Company and their servants a free trade clear of all customs, in all articles of commerce, to be imported and exported

18. H.R.Ghosal, op.cit., p.95.

19. Somendra Chandra Nandy, Life and Times of Cantoo Baboo, (Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1978), p.97.

20. H.R.Ghosal, op.cit., p.95.

by shipping. But the trade in salt, betel nut and tobacco were free to particular persons only. These favourities had not been included within the privilege of the dastak. The right to trade in these articles were opened up for the Europeans only by paying the usual customs to the government whereas the natives were charged custom duties.²¹

The regulation proclaimed that the Company and its servants should pay the duties to the shāhbunders on salt at the rate of Rs. 9, 14 ānas and 30 paise per hundred maunds at Luckypur. The prime cost of salt, purchased by the gentlemen of Luckypur factory, was generally about Rs. 60 per hundred maunds, so that the duty they paid on salt amounted to about 15% on the prime cost.²²

With the acquisition of the dīwāni, the inland trade in salt, betel nut, and tobacco was vested in an exclusive Company.

21. Copy of a letter from the Governor and Mr. Hastings to the Council, dated Dec. 15, 1762, at Mongheer, See, Henry Vansittart's, A Narrative of the Transaction in Bengal, 1760-1764, Anil Chandra Banerjee and Bimal Kant Ghose, (eds.), (London, 1966), pp. 215-217. Thus the following regulations were proposed to prevent the disputes:

(i) For all trade imported or exported by shipping, the Company's dustaks shall be granted and it shall be passed unmolested, and free of custom as usual.

(ii) For all trade from one place in the country to another, in commodities produced in the country, as salt, betel-nut, tobacco and C. the Company's dustaks shall not be granted; but it shall go with the dustaks of the bux-bunder, Shahbunder or other office of the country government.

(iii) At the time of taking out the said dustak and before the dispatch of the goods, the duties shall be paid according to the rates, which shall be particularly settled and annexed to this government.

(iv) That the said duties, so to be paid before exportation, shall be the whole that are to be paid; so that after the dispatch of the goods, nothing shall be paid at any chockeys in the road, nor at the place of sale."

22. Extract of letters from the gentlemen at Luckypur to the Board. Dated Nov. 6, 1762, See Henry Vansittart's, A Narrative of the Transaction in Bengal, 1760-1764, Anil Chandra Banerjee and Bimal Kant Ghose (eds.), p. 210.

for the benefit of the European servants who enjoyed the profits of the concern in lieu of salary.²³ That was why, Lord Clive set up a society "for the exclusive purchase and sale" of salt, betel nut, and tobacco by the Company's servants. It was called the 'Society of Trade' and established in 1765 in Bengal. By establishing control over production and sale of salt, betel nut and tobacco, the Society of Trade established virtual monopoly on these commodities. On 10th August 1765, the Select Committee in which only Messrs. Sumner and Verelst were present, adopted an important resolution to the effect that the entire trade be carried on by an exclusive Company called the Society of Trade. It would consist of senior servants of the East India Company. Any salt, betel nut and tobacco produced in or imported into Bengal should be purchased by this Society. On September 18, 1765, another resolution was passed with agreement on the following issues that inland trade of the salt, betel nut and tobacco should be subject to a duty to the Company. It was calculated that the Company's revenue from salt would be increased to £ 1,20,000 per year.²⁴

The Society of Trade in 1765 levied 35% duty on salt payable to the Company valuing the 100 maunds at the rate of 90 Arcot rupees. All khalari rents were abolished. It also fixed the rate at which the article was to be sold, which was 15% below the average of the preceeding twenty years.²⁵ The price

23. W.K. Firminger, Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company, Vol. I, (Calcutta, 1917), p. 37.

24. Balai Barui, The Salt Industry of Bengal-1757-1800, pp. 14-15.

25. H.R. Ghosal, op.cit., p. 95.

of salt was fixed at Rs.2 per maund or Rs.200 for 100 maunds. The regulation of the 3rd September 1766, fixed the price at which salt should be sold, in lots to the natives, at Rs.200 per hundred maunds. It prohibited the sale of salt on these terms to any other person or merchants.²⁷ The retail price of the salt to be sold in the bāzārs was strictly fixed. Any increase, even by a 'cowry' in the price of salt fixed by the Company was productive of harsh punishment, a fine of Rs.1000 for every 100 maunds of salt sold and the forfeiture of all salt in Company's possession. Half of the money recovered in this way went to the informer while the other half to the government.²⁸

The Governor's letter to Saiful Malik dated October 11, 1767 stated that since the Europeans began dealing in salt, betel and tobacco, the trade of the Company had suffered greatly. Reviewing this account the Governor decided to forbid Europeans including English, French, Dutch and Danes to have trading intercourse in the aforesaid articles; and only native merchants were permitted to trade in them. These orders were issued to all the gumāshtās and servants at the factories under the English Government and it forbade them of any traffic in those articles. And if any of the gumāshtās violated the orders, his property was confiscated to the sarkār.²⁹

The idea of oppressive monopoly during the existence of

26. Somendra Chandra Nandy, Life and Times of Cantoo Baboo, p.97.

27. W.K.Firminger, Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, Vol.I, pp.37-38.

28. Somendra Chandra Nandy, op.cit., pp.97-98.

29. Ibid, pp.159-160.

the Society of Trade in Salt may be formed from the fact that the price of salt during our period went up to Rs.250 per 100 maunds. They even held that labourers were well paid, if they paid at the rate from Rs.2.5 to 3 per month. They calculated that supposing every man consumed half a chattack of salt a day at the rate of Rs.250/100 maunds, he consumed the salt amounting to only about 1 āṅca a month which was a reasonable expenditure.³⁰

The Society of Trade was abolished in 1768, under instructions from the Court of Directors, and salt manufacture was under certain restrictions opened to indigenous merchants and zamīndārs. During the next few years the Company's salt revenue consisted of a transit duty of thirty rupees per one hundred maunds plus a khalari duty levied on salt works and credited in the land revenue accounts.³¹ The merchants might employ the manufacturers.

In 1768 the Governor's commands were issued that the salt khalaris in the pargana of Mandālgḥāt and others should be put up separately for sale and khalaris were always included in the rent lands, since khalaris were the land which were worked as saltpetre land in some cases, as cornfield impregnated with salt in other cases. This being the case they were never disunited from the rent lands. Sometime ago, they were separated for one year with considerable loss on the part of the parganas. Now the gentlemen were desirous of separating the khalaris. They also demanded that the purchase and sale of salt might

30. General letter to the Court of Directors, dated 28th October, 1771, Board of Revenue, Vol. I, pp.66-67.

31. H. R. Ghosal, op.cit., p.96.

solely be allotted to them. They regarded this as the means of removing most of the complaints of the raiyats and of flourishing the village.³²

The right of private manufacture was abolished by Warren Hastings in 1772 and hence forward salt was to be made only by the Company.³³ The khalaris or manufactories were let in farm for five years. By the condition of the farm, a certain quantity of salt was to be delivered at a stipulated price, which was then to be dealt out at a fixed price to the native merchants of the inland trade, who had agreed before hand to aid the farmers by advance of money for the payment of the labourers.³⁴ It also included in the duties in the price of salt; now the duties were secured and the Company was freed from the embarrassment of perplexing and intricate accounts and future demand for old balances.³⁵ The plan was not a success owing to the Company's failure to capture the salt market fully.³⁶

Therefore, in 1776 Hastings adopted a new scheme, under which the privilege of both manufacture and sale was leased out to individuals. The commercial council let the salt mahal in like manner on the most advantageous terms with the exception for ready money rent including duties. The salt was to be left to the disposal of the farmers. No advances were made by government and

32. Letter from Governor to Raja Dheraj Narain, dated 20th Sept., 1768. See Calender of Persian Correspondence, Vol. II, 1767-69, (Calcutta, 1914), pp. 306-307.

33. H. R. Ghosal, op. cit., p. 96.

34. W. K. Firminger, op. cit. p. 38.

35. Letter to Court dated 3rd Dec, 1772, See Bisheshwar Prasad (ed.), Fort-William-India House Correspondence, Vol. VI, 1770-1772, (Delhi, 1960), p. 452.

36. H. R. Ghosal, op. cit., p. 96.

they did not make any claim for balance after the expiration of the leases. Preference must be given to such zamīndārs who had never tried for salt maḥals, lying within the limits of their respective farms; even the terms offered by them was lower than those of the others.³⁷ The lease-holders finding little prospects of gain threw up the leases.

A new system of monopoly was, therefore, introduced in September 1780. The Company now undertook to carry on salt manufacture in the province of Bengal through European agents established all over the salt districts.³⁸ All the salt manufactured through this method were sold for ready money at moderate fixed rates to be ascertained and published at the beginning of every season by Governor-General in Council. Under this system, a comptroller was appointed for the general superintendence of this department, under whom an agent at each of the 6 provincial divisions was stationed. The agent was in charge of the Management of the provision, collection of the duties in addition to price, and seize and confiscation of all contraband salt.³⁹ They received a commission amounting from Rs. 500 to 1300 each per month, a commission of 10% on the difference between the amount of all the antecedent expenses of whatever kind and the produce of the sales.

37. General letters to the Court of Directors, 1777-1780, Board of Revenue, Vol. 4, p. 18.

38. H. R. Ghosal, op. cit., p. 96.

39. Letter to the Court of Directors, dated 19-29, Sept, 1780; See Board of Revenue, Vol. No. 5, 1780-1784, pp. 9-10.

This included duty of all the salt brought to the account of the Company in each division, whether by manufacture or confiscation. This was to be distributed in the proportion of $\frac{1}{4}$ th to the Comptroller and $\frac{3}{4}$ ths to the agent of each division respectively.⁴⁰

The agent at the time of their appointment took a solemn oath to render true and faithful accounts of the expenditure of the sums which should be advanced to them for their business. They also agreed to have no concern in the salt or derive no profit from their agencies besides their salaries and commission during their agencies and afterwards.⁴¹

This system was not very advantageous due to war.⁴² From the accounts of produce and sale of the salt produced by Mr. Griffiths for the account of Government in the Bengal, it is possible to postulate that Mr. Griffiths's concern was successfully managed. It also raised the prosperous state of the industry and the abilities of the gentlemen.⁴³

For abolishing keen competition among the merchants, for the personal, separate and exclusive advantage, the merchants monopolised the salt production, distribution, purchase and sale even at an extravagant offer.⁴⁴ The average price at which agreement

40. Ibid, p.10.

41. Letter to the Court of Directors, dated, 27th Oct. 1780, Board of Revenue, Vol. No. 5, 1780-1784, p. 11.

42. Letter to the Court of Directors, dated, 23rd March, 1781, Board of Revenue, Vol. No. 5, 1780-1784, p. 80.

43. Letter to the Court of Directors, dated May 10th, 1781, Board of Revenue, Vol. No. 5, 1780-1784, p. 102.

44. Letter to the Court of Directors, dated 28th Dec, 1788, Revenue Department's Board of Revenue (Duplicate incomplete), Vol. 6A, 27th Feb, 1785 to 10th Aug, 1789, p. 241.

was made was at Rs.312 per 100 maunds at Dacca on the 15th
 March, 1788.⁴⁵

This system was so oppressive that several zamīndārs avoided to attend the Comptroller in order to provide their claim on account of khalari or salt rents. They were informed that their claims were admitted unless they attended in future and forbade the collection of rents from the rāiyats.⁴⁶

The system introduced by Hastings continued unaltered down to 1786-87. In that year Lord Cornwallis introduced a little alteration in the management of the salt revenue under which the article was to be henceforward disposed of by public auction periodically. Cornwallis passed some regulations in order to protect the malangīs or salt makers from oppression.⁴⁷

Under this system, the price of salt was enhanced considerably and was expected to further go up as a consequence of the deficiency of the produce of the last season unless further measures were taken for increasing the quantity in the market. Accordingly, advertisements were published for the delivery of six lakhs of maunds of coast salt at Calcutta between the 1st May and 1st Oct, 1789 on contract basis.⁴⁸

45. Ibid, p.256.

46. W.W.Hunter, Bengal MS Records, A Selected list of 14,136 letters in the Board of Revenue, Calcutta, 1782-1807 with an Historical dissertation and analytical index, Vol.1, (London, 1894), pp. 44-45.

47. H.R.Ghosal, op.cit., p.96.

48. Letter to the Court of Directors (Duplicate incomplete) dated 10th Dec, 1789, Revenue Department, 27th Feb, 1785 to 10th August 1789, Vol.6A, pp.285-286. The quantity of salt contracted by Mr. Talyer to deliver which was around 3 lakh maunds. This was notified in the address of the 6 nov. by William Pitt. A sale of 392437 maunds of salt took place on 1st Oct and of 1,65,000 maunds on the 22nd Dec. The average sale price for the former was at Rs.384, 11 ānas, 1 paisa per hundred maunds and of the later at the rate of Rs.354, 13 āna and 89 paisa per hundred maunds. While comparing this price to the average sale price of the 1788, we trace upward trend in the average price of salt.

In 1793, the administration of the salt department was taken out of the hands of the Board of Revenue and placed under the Board of Trade. An investigation into the affairs of salt manufacture by the Board of Trade revealed that there were then two systems for the Company's supply of the article: the first was a "system of free compact" with persons called thika malangis and the second was practically a "system of coercion" imposed on persons known as ajoorā malangis. On the recommendation of the Board, the Government of Lord Cornwallis placed the ajoorā malangis on the same footing as the thika malangis in 1794 and the contract price of salt at the same time was raised. Malangis and agents benefited by the measures. These measures also increased the quantity of salt.⁴⁹ The ajoorā temur in Tamruk and Hijli was abolished, with directions to make engagements with the salt manufacturers in the same manner as with those who provide salt.⁵⁰ The Governor General had issued instructions to the Board of Trade for the payment of the allowances receivable by the zamindars from the salt office.⁵¹

The revenue from the sale of salt in 1795-96 fell short of the income of the preceding year by sicca rupees 2,09,820, though the quantity sold exceeded that of 1794-95 by 1,40,000 maunds. This was supposed to be partly due to the reduced selling prices of Bengal and foreign salt and the abolition of the ajoorā

49. H.R.Ghosa, op.cit., pp.96-97.

50. Letter from Governor General in Council, letter No.4019, Sept. 30, No.41, 1794, See W.W.Hunter, Bengal MS Records, A Selected list of 14,136 letters in the Board of Revenue, Calcutta, 1782-1807 with an introduction and index, Vol.,II, (London, 1894), p.73.

51. Letter to Hijli Agent, Letter No.4020, Sept 5, 1794, Ibid, pp.73-74.

system which tended to put up the aurang prices in Hijli and Tamluk. The net income due to all these to the government, however, amounted to Rs. 73,80,741 which was nearly double the estimate of the Committee of Accounts.⁵² From the several reports of the Board of Trade especially of the 12th July 1796 and 14th July 1797, which were highly pleasing, it is concluded that the income yielded due to sale of salt was satisfactory during 1796. The later report comprehend that the excess of revenue for 1796-97 was Rs. 4,98,980. It was highly creditable to the prevalent system of management that on a comparison of the net resource from salt for the first four years under the Board of Trade exceeded on an average that for the four last years, whilst it was under a Comptroller, by upwards of 19 lakhs of sicca rupees per annum.⁵³

Private persons and merchants were not allowed to trade in salt. But there were instances and complaints against this regulation. According to the complaint, an English gentleman had carried a large cargo of salt to Chilmaree with muchalka from all the other merchants in the same article by which they were not allowed to sell any salt till his shall be all disposed off.⁵⁴

By the establishment of the Company's salt monopoly the zamindars lost their right to manufacture salt as farmers on behalf of the government. They were permitted either khalari

52. P.C. Gupta, (ed.), Fort-William-India House Correspondence, Vol. 13, 1796-1800, (Delhi, 1959 introduction part), p. XVIII.

53. Letter from Court, dated 15th May, 1799, See P.C. Gupta (ed.), Fort-William-India House Correspondence, Vol. 13, (Delhi, 1959), pp. 182-183.

54. Extract of another letter from the same (Hastings) to the same (W.B. Sumner), dated Dec, 12, 1758, See Henry Vansittart, A Narrative of the Transition in Bengal, 1760-1764, (eds.), Anil Chandra Banerjee and Bimal Kant Ghose, (London, 1966), p. 11.

rent deductions from their annual jama' or given an allowance known as musāhirā. These were not exactly compensations paid to them "in consideration of their giving up the privilege of the free manufacture of salt."⁵⁵ With regard to the first, it should be noted that as the revenue paid by zamīndārs prior to the establishment of the monopoly consisted of two items viz, (i) land revenue and (ii) salt revenue, and as the Government by establishing it retained the later item khās, that is to be noticed that at the time of establishing the monopoly some of the zamīndārs were excluded from the management of their estates. These estates were placed under the officers of the salt department and they were entitled to a separate allowance called musāhirā in consideration of the profits previously made from salt manufacture. By 1788, the manufacture of salt had been much extended; the excluded zamīndārs of Tamruk and Hijli in the Midnapore district were nominally restituted in their estates. The actual management of these estate were later vested in the hands of the Collector and Salt Agent. Again, it was proposed to allow the zamīndārs an addition to the musāhirā in the shape of an allowance of 10% to the Fixed land revenue jama' to be paid out of profits derived by the Government from increased salt production. In 1793, the Government resolved to re-admit the excluded zamīndārs to the management of their estates.⁵⁶

The primary object of the Company's salt monopoly was to secure an increased annual revenue from this source. The salt

55. Letter from Auckland to Court, August 10th, 1836, (Beng. separate department proceedings), Quoted by H.R.Ghosal, op.cit., p.97.

56. H.R.Ghosal, op.cit., pp.97-98.

supplied by the malangi was first stored in Government godown³⁵⁷ scattered all over the salt districts, and then conveyed to the salt godowns at Salkia where it was sold by public auction four times a year. The minimum quantity that could be purchased at these sales was not less than one thousand maunds and later sold in smaller lots to others.⁵⁷

Two classes of malangi were known during our period; ajoorā and thika. The ajoorā represented the traditional type of salt workers who were customarily tied to land. Ajoorā was a kind of hereditary occupation.⁵⁸ The malangis under the thika system, which appeared first in Hijli, were generally brought from the outside of the village and were paid much higher rate than the ajoorā malangis.⁵⁹

From around 1770, the malangis protested several times against oppression and exploitation. Many complaints were made before the nawāb against Mr. Chevalier. He was accused of acting in a very violent and arbitrary manner at Chilmaree and Cooregaun by oppressing the native merchants in the monopoly of several commodities, particularly salt. Not a single merchant was permitted to buy or sell salt without his permission.⁶⁰ The native

57. Northern part of Howrah City, Containing docks, Government Salt godowns etc. Ibid, pp. 98-108.

58. Ajoorā malangi had four categories: ajoorā malangi, who was helped by the labour of his family members. It had its assistant who was called dwitta malangi. Dwitta malangi owned a bullock cart etc. and used to bring the fuel. A three fourth ajoorā malangi, had been assisted by some of his family members who were either advanced in years. A half ajoorā malangi did not receive assistance from any member of his family. A quarter ajoorā malangi was either advanced in year or a youth.

59. The thicka malangis were divided into four groups: great jaundārs, jaundārs, madhyam nahdārs and nahdārs. The former was well to do people with a servant, possessed a cart and bullocks to bring fuel. A madhyam nahdār had under him a boy or an old man. The nahdār malangi worked by himself and were very poor.

60. Extract of another letter from the same (Hastings) the to (W. B. Sumner) dated Dec, 12, 1758 same, See Henry Vansittart, A Narrative of the Transaction in Bengal, 1760-1764, Anil Chandra Banerjee and Bimal Kant Ghose (eds.), (London, 1966), p. 11.

merchants, and malangīs protested against this oppressive method of monopoly through their petition to the Agent of Board of Trade. Sometimes deputations were sent to the Agent or the Board in Calcutta. But these deputations were usually interrupted by gomāshtās men they were on their way to Calcutta and forcibly brought them to their khalaris. This exploitation compelled the malangīs, zamindārs, pāikārs, merchants to indulge in illicit manufacture and trade of salt. Consumers were also involved in this illicit trade.

The malangīs were induced to conceal illicit salt and hand it over to the smugglers to compensate for the poor price offered to them. The zamindārs protected this illicit trade to cover up their loss of revenue. The pāikārs were involved because they wanted spectacular profit. The consumers desired to have salt at the cheapest possible rate, which the smuggling of salt made possible.⁶¹

The origin of salt smuggling can be traced to the irregular and insufficient supply of legal salt in the interior. Many areas of Bengal were not served by the authorised traders. Illicit salt from the Marāthā country into Bengal and Bihar was transported. That was precisely one of the reasons that in 1760 the East India Company acquired the jungle maḥals and Dalbhūm from Mīr Qāsim. In 1765, by a grant from Shāh Alam, Chhotanagpur was also added to the Company's possessions. In 1768, Company was keen to stop the illicit trade in salt from the Marāthā country into Bengal and Bihar. The Midnapore Resident despatched troops under J. Fergusson to the Jungle maḥals.⁶² In Jessore agency, at least 20

61. Balai Barui, op.cit., p.143.

62. Swapna Dasgupta, "Adivasi Politics in Midnapore C.1760-1924"
See Subaltern Studies - IV writings on South Asian History and Society, Ranjit Guha, (ed.), (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982), p.103.

markets were existing. In these markets about 60,000 maunds of salt were brought, bought and sold in a year.⁶³

Lack of proper supervision and management on the part of salt agents made smuggling possible. The malangīs were the primary suppliers of the illicit salt. He performed it by various means. A common practice was to set up illicit khalaris. Most of the houses of the malangīs contained illicit khalaris. The female members of the malangi family helped in manufacturing illicit, salt. When the salt work was closed, the malangīs were involved in producing illicit salt. Illicit salt was also manufactured in dense jungles.

The malangīs also produced more salt than they were permitted for. They also concealed their khurāk salt. The malangīs collected illicit salt from the aurang's aduldārs, chaprāsīs and ziladārs belonging to the Company's weighment department. This was called "Gang Smuggling".⁶⁴ The secret understanding among the malangīs, paikārs and chauki darogāhs formed the backbone of the smuggling.

Therefore, it is pertinent to say that the marine proto-industries had little prospects of developing industrialization in its relative sectors of proto-industries. Marine proto-industries hardly required mechanisation. Neither fishing and associated subsidiary proto-industries, nor sānkhā proto-industries nor salt production etc. required mechanization. These two industries

63. Balai Barui, op.cit., p.143.

64. Ibid, p.145. The darogāh of salt chaukis allowed the illicit salt to pass by taking bribes, both in cash or kind. There was settlement between chauki darogāh and malangi to provide them certain amount of money, and small quantity of salt every month as bribe. Similar settlement was also agreed between the paikars and the darogāhs.

were late comers in the scenario of Bengal's proto-industries and they developed slowly and haltingly. In absence of the capital and energy industries it became very difficult to transform marine proto-industries in capitalist industries.

The form of organization of marine proto-industries, the control, the penetration of capital etc. into it, were most probably at the similar degree of concentration as it was in other proto-industries of rural Bengal. In that sense also it was not far ahead rather lagged behind compared to other proto-industries of Bengal. These factors hindered the development of marine proto-industries into capitalist industries.

POTTERY

The manufacture of household earthenware pottery has its history from the more remote antiquity, but, at least, in Bengal, the pottery industry never attained the position of a sumptuary art.⁶⁵

A new development has been traced in the pottery industry with the advent of Muslim rule in India. This was the glazed pottery⁶⁶ which was hitherto unknown to Indian public. It was a notable contribution of Medieval times. Glazed earthen ware and the coloured tiles for mosques and tombs came in India with Mohamadan traffic.⁶⁷

65. T.N. Mukherji, Monograph on Pottery and Glassware of Bengal, (Calcutta, 1895), p. 2.

66. N.S. Gupta, Industrial Structure of India during Medieval Period, (New Delhi, 1970), p. 103.

67. Ibid, p. 103.

But Bengal was untouched with this muslim influence. Glazing was either not practised in Bengal or practised on an inconsiderable scale because of the availability of ordinary potter's clay in the country.

It was the unrefractory character from the presence in clay of a large proportion of oxide of iron and carbonate of lime and more often for the admixture with it of large quantities of organic matters, that prevented the clay to be used in glazed pottery. The use of oxide of copper for producing beautiful blue tints had never been attempted in Bengal.⁶⁸

The most important of the potteries of Bengal was the black pottery. A black pottery without any kind of ornamentation was made at the village Khanja in the district Khulna.⁶⁹

Everywhere in Bengal, more or less a similar method was practised to produce the black colour. The confinement of the smoke during the firing of the pottery and the utilisation of certain additional materials to the kiln for producing considerable smoke was practised.⁷⁰ A silvery black colour was obtained by the addition

68. T.N. Mukherji, Monograph on Pottery and Glassware of Bengal, p.2.

69. Betel holders, oil pots, smoking bowls etc. were manufactured here with high polish and elegant shapes. Water-pots, betel boxes, oil-pots, smoking bowls, ink-pots, incense-burners and other articles were made at Dinajpur with some degree of finish. The shapes were also good.

70. Rustam J. Mehta, The Handicrafts and Industrial Arts of India, (Bombay, 1960), p.81. In East Bengal, the clay vessels were fired within a closed container by placing it in the kiln. In the kiln some damp straw, oil cake or cow dung had been introduced to produce smoke and soot, sufficient for the proper blacking of the pottery. Before firing, the pottery was carefully polished and treated with a special preparation called kabis, consisting of a kind of Fuller's earth called piri mitti fine powdered mango bark, sajji mathi, and a crude form of Sodium Carbonate. This with addition of confined smoke produced the rick black colour of the clay.

of tin and zinc.

The unglazed terracotta ware of Bīrbhūm must be mentioned. Surahi, drinking cups, spittoons, plates etc. were mostly made here. The shapes were good. Sometimes, a rude attempt was made towards ornamentation.⁷¹ In Bīrbhūm a kind of black ware was made but was of inferior quality.

In Hughli faience pottery was made. In this pottery two flower tubs and two water goblets constituted the body. The body of the ware was the usual red clay coated over with a semi-vitrified green glaze. This seems to be an attempt to introduce the production of glazed pottery in Bengal but without much advancement and success.

Sehwan pottery was also produced in Bengal. The colour applied was either black or white and after firing, was decorated by hand with silvery patterns produced by etching the designs and rubbing into the lines an amalgam of mercury and tin.⁷²

The large jars were also made in Bengal and were known as kalsā or kalās. These were either plain red or black in colour.⁷³

IVORY

Ivory was carved all over India but chiefly at Banaras, Behrampur and Murshidābād. Carved ivory fans were the speciality of Sylhet, fine ivory bangles of Cuttack, and mats made of woven stripes

71. The ornamentation on the unglazed pottery was of floral and other patterns. This was drawn on the soft unbaked vessel by means of a sharp tool and afterwards filling the narrow incision with some white substance.

72. The red colour was produced by red lead, yellow by arsenic, green by a mixture of yellow arsenic and indigo, black by lamp black made from charred rice seeds. After the colours had dried, the vessel were varnished with garjan wood oil or with the white of a duck's egg. The painting was crude and inartistic in Bengal.

73. Some of these were excellently polished and appeared to be glazed but they were not in reality. The gloss was produced by rubbing the surface of the pottery before baking with certain seeds or a gum like, to produce a fine polish that remained glossy after the article and been fired.

of ivory of Murshidābād. Minute ornamentation on these articles were drawn. The subjects were generally richly caparisoned elephants, state gondolas in gala trim, tigers, cows and peacocks etc. All these were carved as statuettes and hunting, festive and ceremonial scenes and mythological subjects carved in relief. The carved ivory combs found in every Indian bazar were most artistic in form, texture and detail.⁷⁴

Ivory turning, which was less artistic than ivory carving, was practised on a considerable extent. Some workers in some towns had made bangles, chessmen, antimony boxes and idols. The best specimens of ivory-turning were produced in Tipperah of Bengal.⁷⁵

In several parts of India wood was inlaid with ivory. Bone was sometimes used as inferior substitute for ivory inlaying. Miniature painting was invariably practised on slabs of ivory. Articles made from buffalo horn were largely produced, but generally were not of high artistic quality. The Chief Centres of these art and manufacturing were Hughlī and Serampore in Bengal where broches, necklaces, bangles and the like were made.⁷⁶

Machha Ka data was extensively used and more highly prized than real ivory for use as mills, especially after luring. Fish tooth was enveloped in a mixture called massala and left covered

74. George C.M. Birdwood, The Industrial Arts of India, Pt. II, (Piccadilly, 1880), p. 218.

75. The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire, Vol. 3, Economic, (Oxford, 1908), pp. 192-193.

76. Ibid, p. 93.

for a longtime, for best results. The fish tooth was stronger and had a smother and finer texture than true ivory and had less tendency to slip in the hand.

It were the late 18th century European painters who had introduced the process of painting on ivory (hathi data). European painters imparted the Indian painters the method of painting on the panels of hathi data (ivory).⁷⁷ The paintings on ivory panels were prepared with utmost care especially the selection of the tusk. The tusk used for the preparation of ivory panels should be new as the old tusk turn light yellow; it should not be cracked and finally, the middle part of the tusk should not be either too much transparent or too much translucent. It should be transparent and translucent to a certain degree appropriate for painting.⁷⁸

Small panels of ivory was easily obtainable while the bigger panels of tusk were difficult to secure since bigger panels were used for other purposes too. Two or more panels were joined by making grooves to prepare bigger panels with a degree of perfection in joinery. Such panels served the purpose but were not to be suitably used for fine works. The panels with rough surface

77. Moti Chandra, The Technique of Mughal Painting, (Lucknow, 1949), p. 14.

78. Ibid, p. 15. In a faulty tusk there appeared a horizontal line passing lengthwise. Such tusks were either too much transparent or too little transparent. The panels sawn from such faulty tusk were not suitable for ivory painting. This was because the panels became too much transparent or too much translucent. This unevenness in the surface of the panels of the tusk made the application of colours more difficult since the same colours changes its optic qualities on the defective ground. From the properly selected tusks, panels of the thickness varying from 1/20 to 1/16 of an inch were obtained. If they are to be stored for sometime, they should be wrapped in four-fold cloth and kept safely. If the panels were kept open, it were liable to warp. Wrapped panels were improved by soaking in water, then wrapping in wet cloth and lastly pressing with a heavy weight. Very badly wrapped panels were useless for the purpose of painting.

and the marks of saw-teeth had been smothered by the artist before
 79
 the painting was made. On such panels the drawing was prepared
 by tracing, if the painting was to be the copy of some original.
 The final drawing with likṭī was done. The painting was to be
 an original work, the drawing was made in likṭī. After this,
 required colours were applied in the coatings. The picture was
 finished by stippling.⁸⁰ A special process called ābdārī (glossing)
 81
 was also employed to produce glossiness.

79. Ibid, p. 16. To get a smoother surface the roughness was filled with a sharp razor. It (panel) was then rubbed on a hand and even slab of stone. When the surface of panel became absolutely even the panel was left in the open to dry. In case of any scratches or unevenness after such treatment, the surface was polished with the cuttle-bone (Samundra-phena). Cuttle-bone provided an even and smooth finish to the surface.

80. Ibid, The mistakes were corrected by erasing the required part with cuttle-bone and fresh colour applied for producing the required effect. The zinc-white grounding was not used, the natural colour of the ivory serves its purpose.

81. To produce the glossiness of the oiled hair or the folds of shining silk garments, a weak solution of gum-arabic was applied on the required part after the painting was finished. In applying this solution the artists were required to be careful, of spilling outside its area. The solution should not be strong enough, otherwise, the parts on which it was applied would be rendered too glossy and quite out of turn with the general colour scheme of the painting. The surface became sticky and the colour was definite to flake after sometime. See Ibid, p. 16.