

## ***Report on Textile Labour History of Indore Town***

### **The Life Story of Composite Cotton Textile Mills in India**

Mechanized production of cotton began in India between 1855 and 1865,. Textile machines were set up in Ahmedabad, Bombay, Bharoch, Kanpur and Indore. The mechanized production proved a success and in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, many entrepreneurs, who were looking for profitable investment avenues, invested in textile mill production. First spinning and then composite mills incorporating spinning, weaving and processing were set up in many parts of the country.

The 'Swadeshi' movement, which began just in the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the development of cotton textile mill sector supported each other. Large-scale production of cloth in the country was crucial for the Swadeshi movement to gather momentum. The entrepreneurs on the other hand made profits by providing Swadeshi cloth and also felt proud that they contributed to the freedom struggle. By 1914, there were already 214 composite mills set up in India. The number of mills increased to 271 by 1921-22. There were nearly 7 million active spindles and 1, 25,000 looms, producing more than 300 million kg. of yarn and 1500 million meters of cloth.

At the time of independence cotton textile mill sector had the pride of place in India's industrial profile. It was spread over the entire nation and had a huge turnover. Its supplies had helped the country accumulate huge sterling balances during Second World War. It was the largest industrial employer and the biggest exporter.

Its growth, however, got constricted in the post independence period. In the national planning scheme, textile sector was identified as a reserve sector for promoting small and village industry. The weaving capacity of the mills was frozen at the 1956 level and the establishment of new composite and weaving units was prohibited. New spinning units were permitted only in the co-operative sector. The government also restricted modernization of the existing machinery. Ninety percent of the weaving capacity in these mills consisted of obsolete non-automatic looms. Automatic looms were permitted only if

the mills undertook export obligation, and not otherwise. The existing mills were also prohibited from producing certain popular consumption items like *Saris* with borders, certain types of towels etc. These were exclusively reserved for the handloom sector.

Mid 1950s restructured the textile sector due to two developments—introduction of synthetic yarn and emergence of powerloom sector. Nylon and polyester became extremely popular and demand for cotton textile items reduced drastically. Weaving activity on the other hand got relocated to small and low cost powerloom workshops. The powerloom sector made use of synthetic yarn produced in India or smuggled from abroad. The composite mills however could not shift to synthetic yarn for that would have made their own spinning units redundant.

The mill owners responded to these developments by not investing fresh capital in the mills. The profits were diverted away to alternative ventures and huge payment dues were accumulated from banks and electricity boards. Towards the end of 60s the composite mills with decrepit machinery, constrained production and huge outstanding payments started reporting themselves as sick. In 1973, 103 units were in the sick list. The government established National Textile Corporation (NTC) in 1968 to take over the sick units and nurse them back to health. The government takeover could not revive the sick mill sector.

In 1982, around 2 lakh workers from Bombay textile mills went on 20 months long strike. The workers were demanding better wages (real wages had remained frozen for a long time), better working conditions, abolition of *Badli* system, and repeal of Bombay Industrial Relations Act of 1946 (which facilitated mill owners favoured union to monopolize the trade union representation). The mill owners took a tough stand and refused to negotiate with the workers. They were, in fact, looking for an excuse to close down mills. The mills were locked and looms were shifted to the powerloom units in Bhiwandi on a massive scale. With the lock outs in Bombay mills, began the journey of closure of the composite cotton textile mills through out India. The legacy of ‘Swadeshi’

movement had lost its relevance 30 years after independence. During 1990s private and NTC composite cotton textile mills closed down all over India.

From different angles, different entities (government, mill owners and/or the workers) can be blamed for the ultimate demise of composite cotton textile mill sector. It should, however, be realized that isolated blame on individual entities cannot provide the correct perspective. Neither can it offer creative solutions. The national industrialization plan in the independent India has always been a compromise between various conflicting interest groups. In the event, such anomalies as in the textile mill sector are bound to crop up. Localized solutions are often not available. Only clearly identifying national priorities and taking bold macro level structural initiatives can obtain solutions where modernization and development processes do not entail a regressive trend in the labour market structure and do not involve social costs unacceptable to a modern civilized society.

### **Emergence of Indore as a Textile Center**

The town of Indore is situated on the Malwa plateau near Vindhyaachal and Satpuda ranges. Holkers took control of this town in 1730, when Peshwa of Pune gave the *Jagir* of this region to MalharRao Holker. Initially the capital of Holker State was Maheshwar. Ahilya Bai made Indore a military center. After the treaty of Mahidpur between Britishers and Holkers in 1817, Indore became the capital of Holker State on a permanent basis.

TukojiRao Holker II became the head of the Holker State in 1844. At that time, cotton grown in Malwa and Nimad was being exported to England. TukojiRao took the decision to set up a textile mill in Indore. The cotton, instead of being exported, could be used for producing cloth in the country. This would improve State's financial situation and also generate employment for the weaver community in and around Indore. It was necessary to obtain permission of British Resident General for setting up the mill. The machinery had to be imported from England, and British expertise was also needed for training the

workers and the management. The British government gave this permission after hard negotiations. The building construction of the mill was completed in 1866.

However, when the machines arrived at the Bombay port in the year 1867, they were confiscated on frivolous grounds. After fulfilling many formalities, the machines were finally released. The machines were transported by railway till Khandwa. Between Khandwa and Indore there was no rail, hence machines were loaded on elephants and brought to Indore. The production started in the first mill of Indore from 1871-72. By 1873-74 the mill was working at its full capacity with 224 looms and 10,272 spindles. The mill was producing *Saris* and long cloth. It gave a boost to cotton production in Malwa and Nimad, provided employment and initiated the process of making Indore a trade center and an industrial town. In 1884-85 the mill was producing drill, plain cloth, towels, tablecloth and *Saris* with border. The produce of the mill was in great demand. Encouraged by its performance, TukojiRao Holker set up one more textile mill in 1883. Both the mills performed well for a few years. In 1897, there was an outbreak of fire in the second mill. The mill got badly damaged and it took seven years to revive it. In 1902, a cotton-ginning factory was also set up in Indore. By 1904 Holker State had earned enough profit to recover the cost of both the mills. At the same time the profitability of the mills had declined due to wear & tear of the machinery. Both the mills and the ginning factory were leased out to a private contractor for fifteen years.

During the first three decades of twentieth century, private entrepreneurs with state encouragement and state support set up six more composite cotton textile mills in Indore. In 1909, one company from Bombay set up United Malwa Mill Ltd with 500 looms. Local entrepreneurs, moneylenders and traders from Rajasthan, established the other five mills. These traders were exporting opium to China and had accumulated substantial funds in that business. In 1911, when China stopped opium imports, these traders were forced to look for alternative business avenues. Newly established textile industry in the country, the accompanying Swadeshi movement, and the export possibilities arising out of First World War encouraged them to deploy their capital in this sector. Soon after Malwa, Hukumchand Mill was set up in 1916. In 1919 Kalyanmal Mill and Swadeshi

Mill were established; and in 1924, Rajkumar Mill and Nandlal Bhandari Mill started working. Actually Hukumchand, Kalyanmal and Rajkumar Mills belonged to the extended Hukumchand business family. Seth Hukumchand had obtained exclusive rights to export opium and had accumulated immense wealth from this trade enterprise.

During First World War, the cotton textile mills made a significant contribution to the national production and exports. During 1930s cotton production and trade were disrupted due to great depression. There was also local crisis in water and power situation. The mills were adversely affected and production got disrupted a few times. The Holker State came to the rescue of textile mill owners. It offered subsidies, particularly to the state mills, which were leased out to contractors. The mills survived the crisis of 30s. Once again during Second World War the production grew with increased domestic and international demand. Indore mills made their contribution to the accumulation of sterling balances.

Indore town developed around these mills. The most direct input and output linkages were cotton trading and ginning and marketing of cloth produced by the mills. The soil and climate conditions in and around Indore district are most appropriate for cotton growing. Establishment of mills led to a substantial increase in cotton acreage. This was accompanied by growth of cotton trading centers and establishment of cotton ginning factories. Initially ginning and pressing factories cropped up in Indore town at a rapid rate. Holker state restricted concentration of ginning factories at one place and arranged to diffuse it over a wider area. Even then Indore had seven ginning factories and three pressing factories.

The most important accompaniment of growth of textile mills has been the development of a well-coordinated cloth market. The share of coarse cloth in Indore mills produce was greater than the all India average. The mills were producing very famous gray and bleached long cloth (*lattha*), *Daries*, Blankets, Khakis, *Majari* and printed cloth. These products were bought by the wholesalers and reached to retail centers all over India. In 1970 there were around 150 wholesalers in cloth market each having a turnover of more

than Rs. 50 lakhs per annum. Even today the cloth market of Indore is ranked fifth on the country's map of cloth business.

Development of road, railway, power, communication and financial infrastructure followed as in the case of any growing industrial town.

During 50s and 60s, the composite cotton textile mills, the workforce therein and direct and indirect external linkages of the mills determined the economic, social and political identity of the town.

*Detailed profiles of the mills are given in the appendix 1*

## **Workers in the Textile Mills of Indore**

### *The Initial Recruitment of the Work Force*

The first composite textile mill was started in 1866 by the Holker State with a view to provide employment to the weaver community in and around Indore. There were weavers from Maharashtra, who were brought here during Ahilya Bai's reign. Again there were Muslim weavers, who were displaced from Uttar Pradesh during 1857 freedom struggle, and had got settled in Indore. However, when six more mills were set up in Indore in rapid succession, there was a massive increase in demand for labour. This was also the time when the local population of Indore declined due to epidemic conditions. Labour requirements of the mills were met by the migrant unskilled labour from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Many of them came alone leaving their families behind. The census figures of 1921 and 1931 conform this in terms of adverse female male sex ratio for Indore town, which was 76:100. In 1940s there were already more than 30,000 workers in the textile mills of Indore.

### *Work Organization in Textile Mills and working conditions*

Composite cotton textile mills had three main departments: spinning, weaving and processing. Each department was further subdivided according to different activities carried out therein. For instance, spinning department was comprised of cotton mixing,

blow room, carding, drawing sections. Similarly, weaving department included winding, warping, sizing; and loom sections. And processing department had dyeing, bleaching, folding sections etc. In addition there used to be engineering department and administrative department.

### ***Badli System***

Like textile mills elsewhere, mills in Indore also had a well-entrenched system of *Badli* workers. As the workers were recruited from outside and had linkages in agriculture and other related sectors, they remained absent from the mills for long periods. Under such circumstances, it became necessary for the management to find substitute workers. *Badli system* in textile mills emerged from this background. In every textile centre, in addition to permanent workers there was a pool of reserve workforce known as *Badli* workers. *Badli* workers were given a pass by the mill management. They arrived at the mill gate at the shift time and got work depending upon the number of absent permanent workers. Obviously a *Badli* worker did not get the work everyday. His monthly wage was much lower than that of a permanent worker. In Indore, the absenteeism among the permanent workers was much higher as compared to other textile centers. Correspondingly the proportion of *Badli* workers was also much greater.

Workers have worked with *Badli* passes for years. Quite a few of them retired as *Badli* workers. *Badli* workers in Indore have had their own agitations and struggles and they received most of the benefits available to a permanent worker.

### ***Wages and workload***

The wages and workload of the textile mill workers of Indore were fixed according to the agreement signed by the trade union and management. The wage structure of Indore textile workers followed the Bombay mill workers pattern. The basic wages were fixed according to time rate or piece rate depending on the particular section, but the dearness allowance was uniform. Basic wages were very low and were not revised for many years.

Prior to 1947, the mills in Indore were working only in two shifts. Third shift was introduced in 1947. The third shift from 12.00 midnight to 7 a.m. was one hour and thirty

minutes shorter than the other two. Indore and Ujjain were the only two places in the country where shift rotation did not take place. A worker normally worked all his life in the same shift.

The workload on the mill workers, defined in terms of number of workers per 1000 spindles or number of workers per 100 looms, is found to be significantly less in Indore than that in Bombay or Ahmedabad. Whereas in Bombay 30 to 34 workers worked per 100 looms and in Ahmedabad 40 to 44 workers worked per 100 looms, the number in Indore was 50 to 59. Similarly number of workers per thousand spindles was 4 to 5 in Bombay mills, 2 to 4 in Ahmedabad mills and 5 to 10 in Indore mills.

In the initial years these unskilled migrant workers worked for 12 hours a day. There was no standard wage fixation and no payment of bonus. Holker State did provide some facilities and looked after workers' interests but it was a feudal relationship. The situation started changing after the First World War. The workers became conscious of their own crucial role in the production process and realized the strength of collective bargaining. In 1926 the workers went on strike demanding payment of bonus. The working hours were reduced to 10. Later in the 1940s the hours of work were further reduced to 9. After Independence, the textile workers got their wages standardized and hours of work regulated. Their service conditions were made secure and welfare provisions were made available through a number of legislative Acts, such as Factories Act, 1948, Employees Provident Act, 1952, Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, Payment of Wages Act, 1936, Industrial Relations Act, Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, etc.

Seventies onwards the real wages of textile workers stagnated. In fact, towards the end of 80s textile workers' wages were the lowest among the organized work force. Taking consumption loans and doing subsidiary job had become a common phenomenon among the workers. The 70s then marked the beginning of their downhill journey.



## ***Living Conditions of Workers***

### ***Housing***

The migrant workers who came to work in the mills could not afford to rent out already available houses in the neighbourhood. They did not have transport and therefore could not afford housing away from the mills. Hence, they set up cramped *kachcha* housing colonies around the mill premises. *Patnipura*, *Pancham ki phel* and *Goma ki phel* are colonies set up by the workers from Rajasthan. Uttar Pradesh workers set up *Pardesipura* and *Banganga*. When Holker state started the first cotton textile mill, weavers were brought from Maharashtra. These workers settled in *Shivaji Nagar*. Muslim weavers from Uttar Pradesh were settled in *Nayapura* and *Ranipura*. It should be noted that in these initial stages workers' housing was divided according to caste, religion and region.

In 1929 Indore state government issued orders to the mill owners of Indore that 5% of their profits were to be set aside to build workers' houses in areas allotted by the government. Blocks for this purpose were allotted to different mills in 1931. In 1939 Yashwant Rao Holker sanctioned a scheme for providing better housing to mill-hands. The government took *Sukhlia* and *Khajrani* scheme for constructing 4500 houses for the workers. Later the scheme was revised and merged with central government's subsidized housing scheme. *Nanda Naga* and *Nehru Nagar* tenements were made under the government schemes. These houses are modern with electricity, sewerage and drinking water facility.

Trade unions also contributed toward workers' housing. In 1944 Indore Mill Majdoor Sangh reconstructed *Jeevan Ki Phel*, a labour colony devastated by fire. Two hundred and fifty families were rehabilitated. In recent years AITUC helped the workers to take possession of government land and build houses there. They set up Vijay Nagar (1980) and Sarvahara Nagar (1975) in this manner. The government subsequently regularized these colonies.

### *Labour Welfare Works by Employers*

As early as 1934 the Bhandari Mill constructed a well-equipped maternity home for the workers' families. Subsequently all the mills opened dispensaries to give free medical aid to workers and their families. The Rajkumar Mill opened a crèche for the babies. A co-operative credit society was formed in the Rajkumar Mill. It made cheap credit available to the workers. In 1937, Malwa Mill organized a school and a crèche for the workers' children. By 1940 tea stalls, dining shades and bathing facilities were provided in all the mills. Kalyan Mill started a crèche and a co-operative society. Hukumchand and Rajkumar Mill prepared a playground for the workers. Swadeshi cotton and flour mill started a boarding house to provide subsidized meals.

Subsequently all the mills provided crèche facilities, canteens, toilets and bathrooms, reading room, night schools, libraries, dining shades, hospitals and dispensaries, grain shops etc. Air conditioning was also fitted in the plants where the production required it. The mills also opened cloth shops for the employees at the mill gate. Some of the workers often resold the subsidized fabrics to shops outside. The workers' cooperative credit societies in the mills were given facilities by mill management. These cooperative societies played a very important role in workers' life providing them consumption loans, whenever required.

In short, the workers in the textile mills traversed a long distance from their initial days when it was difficult to distinguish them from the unorganized sector workforce. The workers improved their living and working conditions primarily through a long drawn out trade union struggle. However, it should be mentioned that Holker state did play a positive role in facilitating an improvement in the working and living conditions of the mill workers.

### *Trade Unions and Organised Struggles*

In 1926, Malwa mill workers went on strike demanding bonus payment. Workers in other mills joined in. Mahatma Gandhi was requested to provide leadership to Indore workers. Gandhiji sent Guljarilal Nanda to Indore. He led the strike successfully demanding not only bonus payment but also a restriction on hours of work (maximum 10 hours a day). On this occasion Mill Mazdoor Sangh, which was a precursor of INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress) was introduced to Indore mill workers.

Following the Girni Kamgar Union of Bombay, 'Mazdoor Sabha' was organized in Indore in 1939. It was the trade union wing of the Communist Party of India and is now known as AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress). In April 1941, a long drawn out strike was undertaken By Mazdoor Sabha. The workers were agitated. They came out on the streets and there was police firing. Four workers were killed.

The mill owners wanted to avoid radical trade unionism. In December 1941, the congress leadership formally set up Mill Mazdoor Sangh in Indore.

During the Second World War period the radical Mazdoor Sabha was popular with the workers and had a much larger following than Mazdoor Sangh. When the Communist Party of India adopted a militant stand in its Calcutta congress in 1948, the party was banned by many provincial states. Holkar State also banned Mazdoor Sabha and Communist Party of India in 1948.

Holkar state did not have its independent industrial relations Act and Bombay Industrial Relations Act 1946 was applicable in Indore mills. According to this Act only the representative union had the right to negotiate with the management on behalf of workers. Indore Mill Mazdoor Sangh was made the representative union in textile mills. The ban on Mazdoor Sabha and Communist Party of India was lifted on the Republic Day 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950. However, Mazdoor Sangh remained the representative union of Indore mill workers.

In the year 1960, Madhya Pradesh Industrial Relation Act was passed. The Act was worded on the pattern set by Bombay Industrial Relation Act 1946. Intuc remained the

representative union under the M.P. Act and the possibility of AITUC entering into direct negotiations with the management was permanently ruled out. Even though, the role of AITUC in worker management negotiations was officially marginalized, the political influence of the union remained dominant throughout. The AITUC leadership was dynamic and obviously took a much more radical stand on various issues.

Although workers took the formal membership of INTUC, their demands were concretized and raised by AITUC leadership. Major strikes were planned by AITUC and many a times the management had to unofficially come to an understanding with AITUC before signing the formal agreement with INTUC representatives. Some of the major trade union struggles undertaken by textile mill workers under AITUC leadership are as follows;

1. In weaving department, a worker was given charge of two looms. In 1964, Hukumchand mill decided to increase the workload by giving charge of four looms to a worker. It meant that half the workforce will be retrenched and the other half will have unjustified increase in work load. AITUC leader Comrade Homi Daji and workers went on 14 day long hunger strike against this arbitrary move.
2. In 1972 a strike call was given to all the textile mills in the state. In Indore a successful 10 days strike was organized in which workers demanded and got some major benefits. Seven day's casual leave was sanctioned for the textile workers. Workers were given dearness allowance linked to the price index.
3. In 1979 a 32 days long successful strike was organized in textile mills asking for a wage revision.
4. In 1984 Hope textile mill declared an illegal lockout. There was an 8 day long hunger strike organized by Comrade Daji. Not only was the management forced into opening the mill, the workers' provident fund was also transferred to the Public Provident Fund account.

The trade union movement in Indore needs to be complimented for spreading out its activities to a domain much larger than worker-management negotiations. A citizens committee was formed. The union members were encouraged to participate in local electoral processes and represent the interests of the working class. The presence of union members both from AITUC as well as INTUC in the Municipal Corporation became large enough to influence the Municipal rulings. In 1958 corporators successfully abolished the municipal tax on cycles and municipal house tax on slum dwellers.

Comrade Homi Daji's contribution in this direction was substantive. The politicization of union members in this manner paid progressive dividends in many spheres and for a long time.

Comrade Homi Daji was elected to the Madhya Pradesh assembly in 1957 and to the parliament in 1962. Similarly INTUC leader Shri Dravid was a labour minister in Madhya Pradesh government for a long time.

### **Closure of Textile Mills in Indore**

Like elsewhere in the country, the mill owners in Indore town were also affected by the textile policy of the government, the introduction of synthetic yarn and emergence of the power loom sector. Fresh capital was not invested in the mills and profits were diverted in other areas. Hukumchand mill was an exception. In this mill modernization initiative were taken up as late as 1980s.

Actually, in 1965 the mills were functioning at their maximum capacity. However, towards the end of 1960s the mills started reporting sick. In 1974, three mills- Malwa, Kalyan and Swadeshi mills were taken over by the National Textile Corporations (NTC). In 1986, Rajkumar mill was taken over by Madhya Pradesh State Textile Corporation. Hukumchand mill and Hope textile remained in private hands. The first mill to close down was Hope textile i.e. the two units of Bhandari mill. The mill first closed in 1984. The workers agitated which meant workers from all the mills and from all the unions. The mill was reopened and then closed again in 1986. This time it closed permanently.

It was an illegal closure; therefore nothing could be claimed for the workers till the management could be forced to declare a formal closure. Many court cases were fought over the years.

This was followed by the biggest tragedy in Indore working class history. Hukumchand mill, which had got many awards for its excellent performance, was closed down on 12 December 1991. It came as a big shock to every one and workers from all the mills came out on the streets in thousands. Madhya Pradesh government arrested every one of them and like animals, pushed them in jails with little or no space. In the jail, the workers were beaten up mercilessly by seasoned criminals. Many were grievously wounded. One worker lost his life.

This completely broke the morale of the trade unions. The days of trade union militancy came to an end. Hukumchand mill workers have fought for their dues for sixteen long years with numerous legal petitions. Meanwhile, there are 57 suicides on record. Others have died of old age illness and gradual starvation.

The nineties also saw the end of production activities in the three NTC mills. Here the public sector norms required that workers be treated with dignity and empathy. Thus, VRS was offered and idle wages were paid to workers till 2002 and 2003. When the mills formally closed the workers on an average got compensation worth Rs. 3 to 4 lakhs.

The STC mill i.e. Rajkumar mill closed in 1999. In this mill also the workers have got their dues.

*(The exact details of closure in each case are given in the individual mill profiles in Appendix 1)*

### ***Alternative employment taken by mill workers***

When the mills closed down the average age of the workers was not very far from the retirement age. Naturally, it was difficult to start their career afresh. Many of the workers especially those in the NTC mills did not take up any employment after the mill closures.

The workers displaced from the mills have found no employment space in the organized textile sector where they could make use of the skills and could secure respectable working conditions. The administrative staff and the skilled engineering staff did manage

to find employment in the new textile units, which have come up in and around Indore. The production workforce has been scrupulously kept away from these units. Two specific factors are mentioned to justify this exclusion. The demographic profile of the mill workers is a disadvantage. A modern industrial unit always prefers younger workforce. Secondly, their background as a unionized workforce, which was a matter of pride fifty years ago, is now considered a positive handicap.

The employment space which is related to their skills is, then only in the power-loom sector. The power-loom sector in Indore is relatively small in size. The workforce comprises largely of ex mill workers. Many of them are past their retirement age. They are frail and unfit to take up physical hardship. However, economic hardship makes them desperate to take up any employment possible. The deplorable working conditions and miserly wage structure in power-loom sector need to be rectified through government intervention.

Apart from power-loom sector, the other in regular job available to mill workers is in the private agencies hiring security men. These jobs also entail long working hours and inadequate compensation.

Majority of mill workers have however taken up self employment in petty trade casual employment as semi-skilled or unskilled worker. As casual workers and self-employed they are *hammals*, plumbers, *kirana* shopkeepers, and so on. Workers in their new employment do not make use of the skills they acquired in the mills. The process of informalisation has also entailed deskilling.

The alternative employment increased their working hours and reduced their earnings. Every reported a cut in the expenditure level, mounting loans and sale of consumer durables and jewellery.

*(Detailed case study of mill workers is given in Appendix 2)*

### ***Indore as an Industrial Town in 2006-07***

In the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century Indore has emerged as the commercial and industrial capital of Madhya Pradesh with a population of more than 18 lakhs. It can boast of a phenomenal industrial and business growth. Two important industrial centers have emerged in the neighbourhood of Indore. Dewas is 35 Kms away and Pithampur, which is a conglomerate of new and modern industries, is at a distance of 25 Kms.

The notable industries in Dewas are Tata Exports, Gajra Group, Steel Tubes, Kesari Steel, S.Kumars, Prestige Soya, Ruchi Soya, Ranbaxy Laboratories. It also has Bank Note Press of the Govt. of India. Pithampur is referred as the *Detroit of India* due to heavy concentration of vehicle industry. It has plants of Kinetic Honda, Bajaj Tempo, Eicher Motors, and Larson & Tubro etc. It has also steel plants and consumer goods plants.

In Indore town itself there are many small and medium scale industries. The town is known for its oil seed extraction industry. There are factories producing asbestos products, RCC pipes and poles, machine tools and accessories, electrical machinery and appliances, electronics goods. Bicycles industry is an old well-established industry here. Garment manufacturing is developing rapidly.

A number of modern spinning weaving and fabric processing units have also been set up in the surrounding industrial area. These include Maral Overseas, Indo Rama, Maya spinners, Pratibha Syntex, Parasrampur International, STI (India ltd.), Century Denim, S. Kumar Synfab, Maikal Fibers and Indira Exports. The rich cotton base and appropriate climatic conditions induced cotton textile units to concentrate in and around Indore in the past and the same factors attract cotton textile units today also. It is being suggested that



Madhya Pradesh government should establish a complete new textile township near Indore.

Ironically, the old textile industry, which formed the core of industrial development in and around Indore, has been completely delinked from the new modern industrial co-ordinate frame. The new industrial township is spatially separated from the old one. The old machines and buildings could only be disposed off as industrial scrape and was of no use to modern industry. Lastly, the displaced workers and their children have no possibility of getting rehabilitated in the organized sector labour market generated by the new industries. First of all the new industries are far more capital intensive than the old mills and the jobs available are limited. Then the workers of the old textile mills are considered unfit for the available jobs.

## **Conclusion**

*Here, we must unequivocally state that the displacement, informalisation and deskilling of textile workforce is not the story of Indore town alone It is story Ahmedabad, Bombay, Kanpur and so on. It is not an isolated case of injustice to a particular group of workers, which needs to be rectified. It is actually the story of unmaking of the entire working class.*

*It is a question of taking cognizance of the regressive trend, which is reducing the proportion of organized workers in the total workforce of the country. It is a question of deciding, what should be the share of working class in our national wealth. It is a question of comprehending the meaning of development. It is a question of restoring the dignity of labour.*

*If old technology is replaced by the modern capital intensive technology, is it necessary labour is discarded from the economy as a redundant factor? Can it be recorded progress and development on the history pages of human civilisation?*

## **Appendix 1**

### **Malwa Mill**

Indore Malwa United Mills Ltd. was set up in the year 1909 by M/s Karimbhai Ebrahim & Sons –a company from Bombay. In the year 1930, this company went into liquidation and in 1934, the Mill was taken over by a wealthy merchant and financier of Bombay, Seth Govindram Sekseria. In 1965 the installed capacity of the Mill was 1398 looms (including blanket and *dari* looms) and 61154 spindles. Around 5000 workers were employed in the mill.

In 1974 the mill was taken over by NTC under the Sick Textile Undertaking Act. The mill was declared sick on grounds that it had not paid its contribution to workers provident fund and ESI fund. Immediately after the NTC takeover workers were paid their dues. Some efforts were also made by NTC management to improve the functioning of the mill but the results were not very encouraging. The machinery was very old and even after renovation and modernization; the mill could not perform well. Many machines that were installed when the mill was set up i.e. in 1909 continued till the mill finally closed down. There were other problems too like power shortages and the overall decline in the demand.

The workers' unrests and strikes also interrupted mill working. In the year 1981, Malwa Mill incurred losses worth Rs.1.8 crores. The losses shot up to Rs.2.6 crores in next two years.

Finally, in 1988 VRS scheme was introduced in the mill. Between 1988 and 1992 30 to 40 percent workers were laid off. Their posts were abolished and looms in the mill were reduced. In 1991 the mill operated only 832 looms and 40972 spindles. Total number of workers was 3814.

It was also the beginning of mill closure. In October 1992 the processing department was closed. Then in February 1993, weaving department was shut down. Only spinning department was open. The mill started doing job work in spinning. Finally in July 1998, the spinning department also got closed.

The ultimate official closure of the mill took place in June 2003. The mill complex including staff quarters, Malwa ginning factory etc. spread over 90 acres of land. The mill structure has been demolished and the land is to sold off by NTC.

### **Hukumchand Mill**

Seth Swaroopchand Hukumchand was a leading opium merchant of the region. The capital accumulated in the trade had to be diverted into new areas after the Opium War in China. He got permission to start a cotton composite mill in Indore in 1912. However, the Excise department and the Municipality raised certain objections, and the Mill could start production only in the year 1916. The production capacity consisted of 684 looms and 22548 spindles. The Mill made rapid progress and in 1923 a second unit of the Mill was set up in the same compound. The number of looms and spindles increased to 1185 and 41168 respectively. The capacity was further expanded in 1936 and again in 1953. In 1953 the number of spindles increased to 45844. The number of looms was 1443.

Agrawal Seth bought the mill in 1954. In the year 1965 there were 1418 looms including 96 auto looms. The number of spindles was 52352 including 788 Waste

spindles and 1136 doubling spindles. The average number of workers daily employed was 4368.

Hukumchand mill erected three units in its premises. It was considered the most modern and most efficient mill in Indore. It repeatedly received awards for producing good quality export cloth. The export rejects of the mill were also much in demand in local cloth market. The mill installed a computer as early as 1970. However, the working conditions for workers were not satisfactory. From 1976 to 78 the workers agitated many times. They also went on hunger strike and many of them lost their jobs.

The New textile policy of the government in 1985 further clipped the wings of composite mills by reserving many of the textile products exclusively for the power loom sector. In 1980s the mill owner Kailash Agrawal started diverting the funds away from the mill and collected huge payment dues. In 1990 the mill was transferred to a holding company Gannon and Dunker Lay. The finances of the mill could not be brought to order. In December 1991, a crisis stage arrived when there was no money to pay the workers their wages. The mill closed down on 11 December 1991. The closure was sudden and illegal. The workers did not get any compensation. Even their provident fund was paid in six installments. In 1991, around 6000 people were working in the mill at that time.

The mill owed substantial sums to State Bank of Indore, Bank of India, IDBI, and MPEB. In 1993, State Bank of Indore appointed their security as vigilance over mill's assets. In May 1995, IDBI obtained court orders to take possession of mill and appoint a receiver. The workers and staff of the mill made many representations and filed a case in the court for getting the mill officially and legally closed so that they could get their payments. Indore High Court then appointed a liquidator on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2001. IDBI challenged it. The final decision in this regard was given by Bombay High court in March 2002. The liquidations proceedings have begun and the assets of the mills are being sold. By October 2003, the inventories, machines and building had been sold for Rs, 23.75 crores to

a businessman in Indore. The land belonging to the mill is around 48 acres. Tenders for the land are yet to be invited.

Only when the land is sold, workers will be able to get all their dues.

### **Kalyanmal Mill**

The Kalyanmal Mill was established in the year 1919 under the managing agency of M/s Tilokchand Kalyanmal & Co. The Mill started production in 1923. The installed capacity of the Mill was 720 looms and 21600 spindles. In the year 1965 capacity of the Mill increased to 980 looms and 41912 spindles. The Mill had up-to-date dyeing, bleaching and printing plants.

In 1974 along with Malwa mill, Kalyan mill was also taken over by NTC. Here also VRS scheme and downsizing of production operation began in 1988. In 1991 Kalyan mill was operating 640 looms and 36408 spindles. The workforce was around 3000. The production closure in Kalyan mill also began in 1992. In the first phase of VRS 38% workers lost their jobs. The processing department shut down in 1992, weaving in 1997 and spinning in 1999. The mill was officially closed in June 2002. The machinery of the mill has been sold off as scrap to Monali textiles of Ahmedabad in Rs. 3.69 crores. The building and chimney have been demolished and the scrap has been sold for Rs.1.73 crores. Kalyan Mill's 33.57 acres of land is still with NTC.

### **Swadeshi Cotton and Flour Mill**

The Swadeshi cotton and flour Mill was started in 1919. The managing agent of the company was M/s Noor Mohd. Somji & Co. In 1923 the managing agency was transferred to Jagannath Narayan & Co. The new owners started construction work and the production in the mill was suspended. From the year 1925, textile

industry in the country faced difficult times. Mills of Indore were also affected. As a result the Swadeshi Mill resumed working only in the year 1928. The progress was satisfactory. The installed capacity gradually increased. In 1965, there were 558 looms and 28252 spindles. The number of workers employed was 2917. The mill was equipped with dyeing, bleaching, printing, and finishing plants. Turbo heads and air carrier plants provided required humidity and temperature in spinning and weaving departments. The mill also had its electricity generation set.

In 1966, mill's working was interrupted and M.P. government appointed one administrator in the mill management. Mill was then taken over by NTC in 1974. In 1991, the mill's capacity was 436 looms and 24360 spindles. The workforce was 1766.

In 1992 along with VRS, Swadeshi Mill also offered training facility to the retired workers and sold them its old looms at heavily subsidized rates. The production closure took place from 1992 to 1998. The mill officially closed on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2002. The building and chimney have been demolished and machinery and building scrap have been sold off. Machinery is sold to Monali Textile for Rs.2.06 crores and building scrap to Agrawal Brothers for Rs.1.46 crores. Indore Development Authority has submitted a tender of Rs.8 crores for 15.32 acres of land belonging to the mill.

### **Rajkumar Mill**

Rajkumar Mill started in the year 1924 under the managing agency of Swaroopchand Hukumchand & Co. From the beginning the Mill faced unforeseen difficulties. The soil where the buildings were erected proved to be very soft and as a result, buildings alone absorbed the subscribed capital. The mill suffered during the depression of 1930s and incurred continuous losses for several years. It reached a financial crisis in 1939. The commencement of Second World War in the same year averted the crisis. However, the profits were not adequate to build sufficient reserves. After the war was over, the mill again incurred losses and it

was closed down on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1952 for two and half months. The state govt. intervened and recommended measures to reorganize financial and labour structure of the mill. In 1954, the management of the company was taken over by M/s Jaal Bros. Pvt. Ltd. In 1965, the mill possessed 628 looms and 22756 spindles. It employed 1796 workers daily in 1965.

Till 1980 the mill functioned smoothly. Especially the processing and printing departments in the mill emerged as proficient and export competitive. The '*majari*' cloth produced in the mill was demanded in Calcutta, Assam and Bangladesh.

In the 1980s the mill owners realized that the future of cotton textile mill was sealed and like in Hukumchand mill, here also funds were diverted and debts were collected. In 1986 Rajkumar mill closed down for 4 months. Madhya Pradesh government bought 57% of shares and provided assistance worth Rs 3 crores. The mill reopened under State Textile Corporation and performed satisfactorily for four years. Workers co-operated and worked hard.

In 1991, the mill had 528 looms and 25488 spindles. The mill complex is spread over 22.62 acres of land. Subsequently, mill started incurring losses once again. In 1996 the losses were Rs. 25 lakhs per month. On 4 January 1999 the mill closed down. There were 1600 workers in the mill. The workers have been paid their PF, Gratuity and Special Compensation. However, the workers have submitted a proposal for reopening the mill and running it through workers co-operative.

According to workers union it is possible to take job work in spinning as new spinning machines were installed in 1995-96. Job work can also be taken in processing and printing departments.

### **Nandlal Bhandari Mill (Hope Textile)**

Nandlal Bhandari Mill was established in 1922 and commenced production from 1924 under the managing agency of M/s Nandlal Bhandari & Sons. The managing agency was terminated in 1956 and after that a Board of Directors managed the

mill. Additions to buildings and machinery were made from time to time. The mill installed high-speed winding and warping machines, automatic bleaching machines, and humidification plant and backpressure turbine. In 1956, the management of the mill took over all the assets of Raibahadur Kanhaiyalal Bhandari Mill. In 1965, the paid up capital of the company was Rs.25 lakhs. It had 744 looms and 29600 spindles and it daily employed 3052 workers. The gray long cloth (*lattha*) was famous. In 1973 both the units of the mill i.e. Nandlal Bhandari and Raibahadur Kanhaiyalal Bhandari Mill were bought over by a business group from Calcutta, P.K. Potdars Ltd. The mill was renamed as HOPE Textile Mill (House of Potdar Enterprise). The new owner reduced the workforce and expanded production capacity. Soon after that the Potdars lost interest in the mills and started diverting the surplus to their jute mills in Calcutta.

In 1986, Hope Textile Mill declared an illegal lockout and 1100 workers were on street. Even today the mill is officially not closed. The workers have not been paid any compensation. The two units of the mill are situated at different places. The area occupied by unit I is 20.24 acres and that occupied by unit II is 22.24 acres. Unit II is already been demolished and the other unit is said to have started working since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002. According to the management there are 135 workers reporting for work everyday.

### **Raibahadur Kanhaiyalal Bhandari Mill (Hope Textile)**

This mill was set up in 1866 and started production in 1871. It was originally a state mill, but it changed hands many times and was ultimately taken over by Raibahadur Kanhaiyalal Bhandari in 1939 and was named after its owner. The working of the mill proved uneconomical and it was closed down in 1948. In 1956 M/s Nandlal Bhandari & Sons purchased all the fixed assets of the unit. The unit was restarted as a spinning unit supplying yarn to Nandlal Bhandari Mills.



## Appendix 2

### 1. Despair in Hukumchand Mill Workers' Household

Smt. Punia Bai lives in a one-room *kachcha* house, where there is no electricity, no water and no toilet facility. She pays Rs. 350 for this accommodation. She is 60 years old and looks at least 10 years older than her age. Punia Bai has two daughters, both married. The elder one stays outside Indore. The younger one stays with her mother. She is insane. She lost her sanity when her child died without getting proper treatment. Punia Bai works as a domestic help in three houses and earns around Rs. 500 per month. It is difficult to get a steady job, as she is old and slow with her work. She brings the leftovers from the houses where she works and manages to feed herself and her daughter. They do not have any relatives, whom they can ask for help.

Punia Bai's husband Phoolchand Bhagole was a permanent employee in Hukumchand mill in design (processing) department. He began his working life in the mill as a *Kachcha Badli* worker getting work rather irregularly. After three years he became *Jatu* (permanent). He acquired a house and looked after his four younger brothers. He got them jobs and got them married. Phoolchand and Punia had altogether five children, but three of them died in their infancy. The two daughters who survived were sent to school for a few years and then married off. Phoolchand and Punia Bai took loans from the mill and from other sources for marrying their daughters and for other family obligations. Phoolchand was earning around Rs. 1700 per month in 1991 and getting other benefits like bonus, provident fund, ESI facility, paid leave, loan facilities and so on.

When mill closed in 1991, life changed overnight. Phoolchand did not manage to get any of his dues from the mill. He took up casual work as a cobbler and Punia Bai started making *bidis*. Both of them together earned only Rs.1200 per month. All the other benefits of the mill job were no longer available. Phoolchand then fell ill. Loan was taken for treatment. Treatment was inadequate and Phoolchand died. The younger daughter was deserted by her husband and came to stay with her mother. Later, her ten-year-old son died in the absence of treatment and she lost her mental balance.

In order to repay the loans Punia Bai sold her house and pawned her daughter's ornaments.

Punia Bai is angry at life. She has little energy and no resources to fight the unjust system. However, she is not without hope. She still hopes that she will get her husband's dues from the mill and will be able to get her daughter treated. She survives as many others do—waiting for Godot.

## **2. Next Generation's Place in the Employment Hierarchy**

Subhai Saroj was a permanent worker in Hukumchand Mill in the processing department. He lived with his wife and four children—two boys and two girls. He was a good worker and had a very simple life—no drinking, no gambling or any other bad habit. He worked overtime so that he could get extra money. His wife sold vegetables on a *thela*. They saved some money and bought their own house. His wife also bought silver ornaments and vessels. Sometime in the 1980s his wife committed suicide because of a petty property dispute. Children were still very small and were looked after by the neighbours.

When the mill closed down in 1992, Subhai was 48 year old and his children were still studying in school. The eldest one was 16. The closure of mill led to children giving up their education. Subhai took to selling vegetables. Children helped their father and also started working as helpers to tempo drivers. They could not manage to meet their basic requirements. Subhai sold off the vessels, ornaments and other belongings. Four years later, Subhai went to his village because his mother had died and never returned back. He had a massive heart attack there.

Surendra, the elder son had by now become a tempo driver and took the responsibility of younger brother and sister. The younger brother Narendra and sister Sadhna were afflicted with tuberculosis. Surendra got his brother and sister treated. Subsequently Narendra also became a tempo driver. Last year he got Sadhna married. All this required taking loans at exorbitant rate of interest. Surendra himself is married to Rekha who has studied up to higher secondary and also knows stitching. Rekha's father worked in Malwa mill.

Six months ago, Surendra received Rs. 44,000 from the mill as Subhai's provident fund. The whole amount is exhausted in repaying past loans. However, Surendra's small daughter fell ill a few months ago and they have incurred fresh loan for her treatment. Rekha pawned her ornaments for the same. Hukumchand mill workers are expecting some more compensation from the mill. It will help them clear off their fresh loans!

They also have other plans like rebuilding their house, buying an auto-rickshaw or buying a sewing machine for Rekha to start some work in readymade garment business. We wish them luck.

### **3. An Unending Struggle: A Woman Mill Worker**

Narmada Bai worked for 30 years in the winding department of Kalyan mill. This department specially recruited women workers. There were around 100 women working with Narmada Bai in that department.

Narmada Bai's husband Jeevanlal used to work in Swadeshi Mill. He was a heavy drinker and gave up his job early in life. The household responsibility fell on Narmada Bai's shoulders. One acquaintance helped her getting a *kachcha badli* pass in Kalyan Mill. She was only 22 year old at that time. After 8 years she got a permanent status. Narmada Bai has four children. She tells us that the mill used to provide crèche facility and her service was not interrupted even when children were small.

Narmada Bai had a tough life. Husband did not earn himself and took away her earnings for drinking. There used to be fights and she was often beaten up. Narmada Bai came from Beena. In Indore she did not have a kinship support base. She managed to feed her children, sent them to some municipal school and acquired a house for the family.

In 1992 to when Kalyan Mill offered VRS and closed down production activity in many departments, like many others Narmada Bai became very insecure about her future. She withdrew her children from the school as a cut down on monthly expenditure and quickly married off her daughters taking loan from *Pedhi* (mill co-operative). Later Narmada Bai got afflicted with arthritis and her husband got some heart trouble. Both of them took treatment from ESI dispensary.

Son has followed his father's footsteps. He could study only till 5<sup>th</sup> standard, refuses to earn on a regular basis and whatever he can lay his hands on, is spent off on liquor. Narmada Bai has finally found a friend and sympathizer in her daughter-in-law, who provides her support against her son and husband.

In the year 2002 Narmada Bai got Rs. 2.28 lakhs from the mill. She gave Rs.10,000 each to her three daughters and Rs.20,000 was squandered away by her husband and her son. She quickly spent off the rest of the money in acquiring a new house. The earlier house was in a cramped workers' colony near Kalyan Mill. The new one is in a newly developed lower middleclass colony in the outskirts. It's a small, but *pakka* double storied structure. Narmada Bai's family now lives in part of this new house (that is two cramped rooms of 10X10 ft.). The remaining part of the new house and her old house has been rented out. She gets a total of Rs. 2100 per month as rent.

The living standard of Narmada Bai and her family has declined substantially. Not only her monthly income is less than her salary in the mill, she is deprived of ESI facility too. Now she spends Rs. 300 per month or more on medicines. She has three grand children who have to be educated. Son does not allow daughter-in law to take up any earning activity. Narmada Bai is resigned to an unending struggle for existence for as long as she lives.

#### **4. Some Exceptions: A smooth transition to a retired life.**

Hiralal Pratap is 53 year old. He retired from Kalyan Mill in 2002 taking VRS and other dues worth Rs 4,50,000. He lives with his wife, two daughters and one son. One daughter is married and lives separately. His wife has done her intermediate and teaches in a primary school. He himself has done B.A. first year. He tells us that along with his wife he also got an offer as primary school teacher but he preferred his mill job. At that time a mill worker's salary was higher than that of a primary school teacher. His father also worked in Kalyan Mill. When father retired, the family i.e. Hiralal and his brothers acquired three Paan shops. The shops provided adequate income.

With both husband and wife earning and with the supplementary income from Paan shops, the household did not face financial crunch at any time. The children studied in private school and studied well. The boy has done B.Sc. and is now doing MCA. One daughter has done M.A. in three subjects and M. Phil., and is now doing her Ph.D. The topic is a sociological study of women convicted as criminals. The young lady told us that she is very much interested in her research and would do further work with these women after she finishes her Ph.D. The other daughter has given up her studies after first year B.A. She is not interested in studying further.

The closing down of mill has not been a trauma for Hiralal. His wife is still earning and children are grown up and well educated. He used part of his VRS money in renovating and extending his house and lives in a large and well-constructed house. The rest of the money he keeps for his children's marriage. He does not feel the necessity to take up any earning activity at this stage. He enjoys a comfortable retired life.

### **5. Unfit for *Hammali***

Motilal Mimrot belongs to Bairwa community and lives in *Lala ka Bagicha*, a labour colony akin to a slum. Forty-eight years old Motilal is short and frail. He looks tired--both physically and mentally. He worked in Malwa Mill for 30 years joining as seasonal worker then getting promoted to *kachcha badli* status after seven years. He retired with a *pakka badli* pass.

He got afflicted by tuberculosis in 1977 and took a loan of Rs. 10,000 for his treatment. He got cured but became permanently weak after this illness. He had three sons. As a *kachcha badli* worker he did not have sufficient resources to educate his children properly. His children dropped out before finishing their middle school. His wife never worked.

In 1992, when his department stopped functioning he had to go to the mill only to sign the attendance register. It became possible for him to look for additional employment. He took to *hammali* with the help of a friend who had contacts in a godown of glassware.

He would hire a *thela* for Rs. 5 a day and carry material to its destination. He would get Rs. 90 for a round trip of 15 km. Later he started getting work from other showrooms and godowns also. He could earn Rs 1500 to Rs. 2000 per month through this new occupation. This was in addition to his mill salary. His financial position improved but the physical strain was too heavy a cost to pay for this increased income. In the year 2003 he got retired from the mill getting Rs.3 lakhs as VRS and PF dues.

In the last two years he got two of his sons married and spent around Rs. 1 lakh in the process. A large part of his VRS and PF money got spent in it. Two of his sons are painters. For his third son he has bought a *thela* for Rs, 2000 and a *charkhi* (indigenous juicer) to extract sugarcane juice. He and his son alternately take charge of this *thela*.

He has now given up Hammali. He thinks he no longer has the physical strength required for it. He has spent rest of his VRS money in buying a house in Ujjain and plans to go there and live.

## **6. A Powerloom Worker**

Venkat Iyer is 58 years old and works in a power loom unit situated in a congested area. He has some problem with his right leg. As a result he does not manage to go regularly for work. When he goes for work, he is able to weave 80 mtrs of cloth and earns Rs. 40.

Venkat Iyer worked in Kalyan mill in the *Saal Khata* as a permanent employee. He took VRS in 1996 and got Rs. 1.8 lakhs from the mill. He used this money to construct a tin-shed with couple of rooms. He rented out this accommodation. He gets Rs. 1500 per month as rent. His two sons who stay with him earn around Rs. 2000 per month. They work in a shop as salesmen.

## **7. Working in Garment Industry**

Sushil kumar Khore (47 years) and his wife Asha Bai (42 years) both work in garment industry. Sushil Kumar worked in Swadeshi mill in *saal khata* and took VRS and other dues worth Rs. 3.58 lakhs in the year 2002. A few years ago he learnt stitching as a

hobby from a tailor. This tailor introduced him to a garment manufacturer. Sushil kumar bought a machine and has been stitching shirts for him since 1994. When he was working in the mill, he used to put in 3 to 4 hours a day in stitching. He also trained his wife to help him. After the mill closed down, he bought one more machine and started devoting 8 to 10 hours a day to this business. Wife helps him as and when she gets time. Sushil kumar stitches shirts with design and gets Rs. 10 per shirt. He requires one hour for finishing a shirt and therefore manages to earn Rs. 80 a day. He himself collects the cloth and reaches the shirts to the shop. He gets work for 20 days a month on an average. In season i.e. during festival time more work is available. Running expenditures are thread cost and machine repair cost. Thread worth Rs. 3 is required for four shirts. Machine repair cost is Rs. 300 to 400 a year.

Sushil kumar tells us that the stitching rates have not increased for last ten years. There is crowding in garment business and getting work is becoming more difficult. The rejection rate is not very high. If a shirt gets lost or soiled because of machine oil etc. the workman has to pay compensation.

Sushil kumar has spent Rs.25000 out of his VRS money in buying a T.V., fridge, water pump, and a sewing machine. He has got his sewing machines motorized. Rest of the money has been put into fixed deposit.

Sushil kumar has two children both going to private schools and Rs.6000 a year are spent on their education. His parents are living with him. His father was also in Swadeshi Mill and one brother was in Rajkumar Mill. Sushil kumar was much happier when the mill was working and he was in garment industry only half time. His monthly income has gone down by Rs. 1000 after the mill closure. Given the crowding in the garment industry, he does not expect to expand his work or earn more money from it in near future.

## **8. Stagnation continues**

Chandra Prakash Solanki is a member of Gujrati Darji community. Tailoring is his family occupation. His father, his mother and two of his brothers are also engaged in stitching

and/or tailoring. He became a mill worker but even while working in the mill he and his wife were stitching garments. He had one machine. He stitches plain shirts and gets Rs 1.50 per shirt. He brings cloth from a readymade garment shop and supplies stitched shirts back. He is able to stitch 30 to 35 shirts a day and earns around Rs. 40 to 50 a day. He also gets work for 20 to 22 days a month. The stitching rates have not increased for past 10 years. He once bought 7 machines and thought he will take more work and employ workers. But he could not get assured work for 7 workers and sold off the machines.

••••