

# A Glance at the Industry in the Phulkian States

## Abstract

There was no large scale industry in the Phulkian States with the exception of a cement factory at Surajpur on the Ambala-Kalka railway line which fell under Patiala State and a few big flour mills and wine industry of Nabha State. It was in 1897 that the first cotton ginning factory was started at Narwana in Patiala State. In leather and other related industries the most common were those of tanning, boot and shoe-making. The wood industry included the cart, *rath*, sawyers, carpenters, veneery, plywood and basket makers. This was the hereditary occupation and met most of the needs of the villages. Among the chemical industries found in the states were the manufacture of fire-works, aerated and mineral water, refining of vegetable oil soap and manufacture of some dyes, paints and lac products. There was no industry for the manufacture of chemical and other pharmaceutical goods as also manufacture of paper. What so ever development of industry was made in the Phulkian States, it was mainly due to the efforts of the people and not of the government.

**Keywords:** Industry, Phulkian States, Nabha, Patiala, Jind, Embroidery, Cement, Leather, manufacture.

## Introduction

As per Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, the Phulkian States of Punjab included the three Native States of Patiala, Jind and Nabha. They represented the most important states of the Cis-Sutlej territory with a population (1901) of 2,176,644 and occupied an area of 7,599 square miles. The regional boundaries were formed by district Ludhiana on the north, Ambala and Karnal on the east, Rohtak and Hissar on the south, Ferozepore on the west. There was no large scale industry in the Phulkian States with the exception of a cement factory at Surajpur on the Ambala-Kalka railway line which fell under Patiala State and a few big flour mills and wine industry of Nabha State. The chief raw materials required for making cement were chalk or lime stone and clay. Pinjore area of the Kohistan had very vast lime stone deposits of fat quality within eight miles of Surajpur railway station. Thus, the factory possessed a capacity of producing 1,00,000 tons of cement a year.<sup>1</sup> The manufacture of portland cement here was supposed to be equal to the test English brand.<sup>2</sup> In Nabha State a number of iron and steel mills had been started at Mandi Gobindgarh in 1924.<sup>3</sup>

## Aim of the Study

One of the most striking features of Indian industrial life was the vitality of the old domestic industries, also called cottage or small scale industries.<sup>4</sup> These were carried on a very small scale and members of a single family took part in it. Most of the industries depended mainly on local demands. Though the agriculture was the main source of livelihood in the Phulkian States, but the other important means of livelihood, in which the population of the Phulkian States was engaged, was industry. Here is an attempt to trace the growth of industries in the Phulkian States.

## Discussion

Cotton industry was the principal domestic industry of the Punjab. Coarse cotton cloth was woven by hand in almost every village.<sup>5</sup> In the Phulkian States this industry was the biggest domestic industry. Textile industry had the largest number of workers and dependents. Cotton ginning or cleaning was done both by machine and by hands. In the village hand-mills were used which were called belni. The work was generally done by women. Spinning was not a menial occupation. Women of the middle, even the higher class did it.<sup>6</sup>



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It was in 1897 that the first cotton ginning factory was started at Narwana in Patiala State.<sup>7</sup> In Jind State it was started in 1902.<sup>8</sup> Coarse cotton and woolen fabrics were manufactured throughout these states. The checked cloth of thick material was called *susi*. It was manufactured at Patiala, Bassi and Amloh. The *Lungi* or *Pagri* was a long strip of a cloth worn by men round the head as a turban or as a band round the waist.<sup>9</sup> Other articles like *khes*, *dhotis*, *daris*, cotton carpets, shirting, curtain cloth and towels were also produced from the cotton. There were bigger factories for ginning and-pressing in Nabha, Gobindgarh, Jaito and Phul. There were a number of handlooms in the jails.<sup>10</sup> The textile was the chief industry which brought good income.

Lace and crepe embroidery industry was mostly restricted to Patiala town and Sangrur. Gold lace was manufactured at Patiala town. Lace and *gota* were also manufactured at Nubha.<sup>11</sup> Silver cups and silver burtons were made at Patiala and Narnaul. Gold and silver wire which was made here was said to be superior to that made in Delhi.<sup>12</sup> The silk cloth and striped silk of Patiala State was well known. In Sangrur embroidery was done by women for local sale and some of it was exported.<sup>13</sup> A piece of red cloth or red muslin embroidered with fancy designs was called 'Phulkari'. While a piece of coarse or fine red cloth of the same dimensions embroidered on the borders and with stars of different colours inside was called *chop*. These garments were worn mostly by the peasant women especially at wedding and on other festive occasions.

In leather and other related industries the most common were those of tanning, boot and shoe-making. In rural areas the chief occupation of the leather workers was the tanning of leather and making foot wear for the people. But in urban places the manufacture of boots, hand bags, saddlery etc. was also carried on.<sup>14</sup> Indian shoes were made in the Kotha Guru in Barnala district and Narnaul.<sup>15</sup> They were known far and wide for their finish and get up and were in great demand. In cities and towns, however, English shoes were also made by shoe makers who had migrated from the United Provinces,<sup>16</sup> but the number of such persons was, however, very small. The shoe-makers of Sangrur and Dadri tehsils made good *desi* shoes which were light and flexible. Many kinds of shoes were prepared in states. Some were ornamented at the toe and around the sides and others were completely covered with embroidery. The ornamental work was generally done by the women.<sup>17</sup> Sangrur and Dadri were its main centres.

Next to leather was the wood industry. This included the cart, *rath*, sawyers, carpenters, veneery, plywood and basket makers. This was the hereditary occupation and met most of the needs of the villages. The trained carpenters received training at Rurki and settled in the states. Their work was good. *Rath* and tongas which were manufactured at Patiala had a good reputation and were exported to the other parts of the country. The carpenters made tables, chairs, almirahs and writing desks etc. They also made furniture on English pattern.<sup>18</sup> Their main line of work

was wood-work in connection with the erection of buildings, such as preparation of western and Indian doors, windows and ventilators.<sup>19</sup> At Samana and Narnaul, legs for beds were turned and at Narnaul curved doorways<sup>20</sup> were made. In Jind State, Dadri town was famous for turnery.<sup>21</sup> Other miscellaneous articles such as boxes, bullock-carts, well-gear etc., were also prepared both in various villages and towns.

Out of the other industries ceramics was comparatively important in the states. Ceramic workers were mostly potters and brick layers. Large bricks were moulded in mould of wood or iron called *sancha*, bearing a trade mark. These bricks were baked in kiln. In the town of Sangrur the contractors had begun to prepare bricks with chimney kilns where *purbias* were employed. The *Kumhars* generally worked at brick making, but sometimes made pottery toys etc., and in villages they generally made earthenware.<sup>22</sup> But the replacement of earthen-pots used in Persian wheel by iron ones had affected this considerably.<sup>23</sup>

Metallic industries included blacksmiths, smelters and forger. Almost every village had at least one *lohar* who provided the iron implements required in the village.<sup>24</sup> Most of these people carried on repair work of metallic articles or prepared horse shoes and Persian wheel and their parts. An iron factory had been established at Patiala for the manufacture of email iron articles<sup>25</sup>. At Chaunda, Rauni and Dhamot iron utensils, pans, iron *gagars* or water pots<sup>26</sup> were made. Mandi Gobindgarh in Nabha State had a very good reputation in iron and steel mills. The number of factories had been increasing day by day. As for as the rolling mills were concerned this Mandi took the lead.<sup>27</sup>

Industries of toilet material and dress also occupied an important position. This is natural as it satisfies one of the primary needs. These include tailors, dress-makers, darners, washermen, barber and hair dressers. Tailors were the most important class. In Patiala city there was a large number of good tailors and cutters.<sup>28</sup> Dyeing was done by *nillagers*. The *nillagers* of Sangrur were noted for their light dyes.<sup>29</sup> The oil pressing was done by the *тели* to meet the local needs.

Among the chemical industries found in the states were the manufacture of fire-works, aerated and mineral water, refining of vegetable oil soap and manufacture of some dyes, paints and lac products.<sup>30</sup> There was no industry for the manufacture of chemical and other pharmaceutical goods as also manufacture of paper.

The food industries provided livelihood to numerous people. Under this sub-class fell rice pounders, grain pichers, butchers and sweetmeat and candy makers. Though the number of flour grinders was about the same but their dependents were comparatively fewer.<sup>31</sup>

Beside all these industries there were miscellaneous undefined industries too. Ivory bracelets, *surmedanis* and combs were also made in the states. Bhadaur was noted for its *tokkas*, Kanauad also manufactured these wares as well as iron pans

and spoons.<sup>32</sup> At Pinjore baskets, stone pestles, mortars, curry stones were manufactured. Country carts, *baihlis*, *raths* and wheels were also made in some places.<sup>33</sup> *Ban* and book-binding was another source of income. Industries like cotton and rope-making, thread-ball making, hosiery and printing cloths by blocks were also introduced.<sup>34</sup>

Separate departments of industries were established in the states from time to time and a number of schemes for exploitation of natural resources were brought into effect. All the factories were inspected either by the factory inspector or by Revenue Assistant and a few bigger industries by the Superintendent of Agriculture, the *Nazims* and the revenue member.<sup>35</sup> By the year 1945 there were 120 industries in Nabha State and 44 in the Patiala State. From the industrial point of view the Jind State was very much backward due to its geographical situation. In the beginning, practically no efforts were made to assess and evaluate the mineral resources or set up any industry.<sup>36</sup> For raw materials like coal or caustic soda the states depended upon the British India Government. The rulers were also least interested in the development of industries. Absence of even elementary facilities for industrialization was responsible for continued backwardness in the industry. Whatever the growth and development of industry was in this region, it was generally due to the people's own efforts. The states made a very late effort in the field of industrialization.

#### Conclusion

A critical perusal of the available resources and the foregoing discussion about different aspects of the industry in the Phulkian States amply highlights that there was no industry for the manufacture of chemical and other pharmaceutical goods as also for manufacture of paper. What so ever development of industry was made in the Phulkian States, it was mainly due to the efforts of the people and not of the government. The larger component of the industry was small scale or cottage industry. And most of the industrial units except for cement industry in Patiala State made use of the manual force rather than the machines.

#### References

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