

## CHAPTER XIII

### JUTE BALING INDUSTRY

Development  
of exports.

In order to present a complete picture of all the aspects of the industry, we have briefly examined the jute baling industry in relation to the export trade. The export trade in the nineteenth century was confined to raw jute, the principal buyers being U.K., France, Germany and U.S.A. U.K. was the largest single importer. Calcutta being the main port for export, the markets for raw jute grew round Calcutta even as the mill industry became localised in that area. The larger markets were Cossipore, Chitpur, Shambazar and Hatkola. The functionaries who took part in the raw jute export trade comprised, (a) loose jute dealers, (b) jute balers and exporters, (c) jute brokers, (d) pucca balers, and (e) baled jute shippers.

Jute pressing, which was introduced in the latter half of the nineteenth century in order to reduce the bulk of the fibre and make its transport easier, developed as an auxiliary industry mainly round the Calcutta area. Seventy five per cent. of the hydraulic presses handling about 35 lakh bales and employing over 6,000 workers came to be located round Calcutta. Presses which were not of the hydraulic type were also used at main jute buying centres by balers for preparation of *kutch*a bales as distinct from the *pucca* bales used predominantly in the export trade. The main trade Associations which handled the export trade in raw jute were the Calcutta Hydraulic Press Association, the Calcutta Baled Jute Association, the Calcutta Baled Jute Shippers' Association, the Jute Balers Association, and the East India Jute and Hessian Exchange, all located at Calcutta. The foreign importing countries had their own complement of Associations, like the London Jute Association, the Jute Importers' Association, Dundee, and the Burlap and Jute Association, New York.

For the purpose of the export market, marks and gradings prescribed by the Calcutta Baled Jute Association, gained general acceptance in overseas markets, namely, London Jute Association. The grouping for both varieties of white jute and tossa was as follows:—Reds, Firsts, Lightnings, Hearts, Tossa and Daisee. There was also a system of balers affixing their own private marks to indicate selection of qualities.

The procedure of purchase and assorting jute for the hydraulic presses does not differ from the procedure explained for raw jute purchases, the difference being only in the matter of the process of baling. The expenses for the preparation of pucca bales have been estimated at about Rs. 20 per bale including all baler's charges allowing for wastage, insurance, Calcutta brokerage at 3/4 per cent. and shipping charges including port Commission's charges and Bengal raw jute tax, but excluding export duty.

At the beginning of the century exports of raw jute exceeded the quantity consumed by mills in India. This was natural, as the manufacturing industry was established in overseas countries earlier than in India. The overseas industry suffered a set-back after the first World War while the Indian industry expanded. From that time till World War II exports of raw jute and of jute goods had kept pace in accordance with world business activity. As explained earlier, since Indian production was tending to be in excess of the world demand, restrictive measures were adopted as regards both the acreage of jute and the working hours of mills. During the War period, export of raw jute naturally fell drastically but the production of jute goods to meet war time demands was kept up. Controls were introduced in the interest of ensuring steady supplies. After the War the export demand for raw jute increased gradually as the industrial capacity of many importing countries had to be rehabilitated. Due to lack of sufficient indigenous production of raw jute after partition, free exports were stopped in September 1949 as a conservation measure.

Various importing countries had preferences for different kinds of Indian jute. The U.K. Mill Industry in Dundee for instance bought large quantities of *daisee* jute which Calcutta mills did not prefer. The bulk of fabrics manufactured in the continent of Europe used to be produced

with North Bengal and Bihar jute which too were used by Indian mills but only in limited quantities because of their being considered too soft in texture and weak in spinning. With partition, Indian mills had to depend more on Indian jute and exports gradually tapered off. The Indian mills have therefore adjusted their methods of production to use not only lower grade fibre but also fibre of texture and quality like *tossa* which at one time they did not prefer to the same extent as did the overseas buyers of jute. Cuttings, and even fibres which were considered once of lower quality such as *mesta* and *bimli*, are now freely used. In a way, the readjustment of the industry to use exclusively locally grown jute and the development of production of quality jute simultaneously with the scaling down of imports from Pakistan, would be a complementary factor to the drive for self-sufficiency in jute.