

## CONCLUSION

Sericulture production was significant for the development of the human civilization from different aspects. Clothing is a very essential component for human shelter. Since the very early stage of human civilization, one of the reasons why clothes were often worn by people was to upgrade their social status. Textiles had been attached not only with economic factors, it was also attached with the socio, religious and political aspects of men of the entire world.<sup>1</sup> Cloth production happened through various types of components, but silk cloth had always been different and unique from the very early stage. The silk piece goods had been modified in various times as per demand of the consumers.

The silk industry of India was not treated as a newly originated enterprise. It had a long history since immemorial times. The Hindu Epic denoted the origin of the long history of sericulture of India, mainly based on world perspective.<sup>2</sup> Silk was the major export commodity of the Bengal province during the Mughal period.<sup>3</sup> The Mughal rulers considered silk as the symbol of elegance. The Silk industry was patronized by the Mughal Rulers and as a result silk industry achieved the highly prestigious position.

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<sup>1</sup> H. V. Shivappa, *Indian Silk Industry*, Varanasi : Ganga Kaveri Publishing House, 2001, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> Prodyot Ghosh, *Maldah Jelar Itihas* (The History of the District of Maldah, 1<sup>st</sup> Part), Calcutta: *Pustak Biponi*, 2004, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Irfan Habib, *Indian Economy Under Early British Rule 1757 – 1833*, A People's History of India 25, New Delhi : Tulika Books, Aligarh History, 2013, p. 90.

In Bengal Province, Malda had occupied a very important role for the economic development through the silk industry and trade.<sup>4</sup> During the pre-colonial period, silk piece goods of Malda were exported by the local merchants.<sup>5</sup> We know that silk related goods were not only artificial symbol, but were also related with the livelihood of the people of Malda. Up to 1757A.D, Murshidabad was the capital of Bengal Province and Malda with Murshidabad were the main silk production centre of Bengal.<sup>6</sup> This study is mainly based on silk industry and silk trade of Malda through the concerned different chapters during the period 1757 – 1833 A.D.

This study has been covered through many interesting and critical observations to find out the real condition of the silk industry and silk trade of Malda under the colonial condition and pressure. The primary sources helped me in writing original condition and the secondary sources supported these arguments. We know from various sources that the silk industry and silk trade were generated through the different changing phases. We also know that a lot of gap in the condition of silk industry of Malda existed between pre Plassey and post Plassey period. Thus, the different components involved in the production of sericulture in Malda during the colonial period are focused throughout all the chapters. I have expressed my view through the four different chapters. Each of the Chapters researched on the different aspects of the sericulture of Malda. Each Chapter discussed the unique features of the silk industry and silk trade. Each of the Chapters are separate but a continuation has been maintained so that the practical condition of the silk industry of Malda can be traced through a chronological sequence.

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<sup>4</sup> D. C. Roy, ed., *Economy of North Bengal A District Level Study*, Siliguri : N. L. Publishers, 2013, p. 629.

<sup>5</sup> G. E. Lambourn, *Bengal District Gazetteers Malda*, Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1819, p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> Khan Saheb Abid Ali Khan, *Memoirs of Gour and Pandua*, (translated and edited in Bengali version by Chowdhury Samsur Rahaman ), Kolkata : Sopan Publisher, 2011, p. 25.

The first chapter of this thesis looked at the process of the silk cultivation on one side and production / organization on the other side. Mulberry cultivation related works mainly completed in the field and in this works, engaged of the silk cultivators. After completing cultivation process, next stage is production / organization. The male members mainly served the production / organization work. The first chapter mainly focused on the various stages from mulberry cultivation to production / organization system.

The second chapter deals with the various sides of the silk trade of Malda. Those types of trade prospered before the colonial period. In the case of inland trade, the silk commodity of Malda exported to the various markets in the country, like as Nagpore, Surat, Ahemedabad etc. The silk goods from Malda and other silk producing centres exported through the water ways using boats, and vessels.<sup>7</sup> External silk trade were connected with different countries through the ships.<sup>8</sup> Before the Plassey, the English East India Company used different ways, such as good relation with the *Gomastah* or their own profit.<sup>9</sup> The *Pykars* played an important role in the silk business as traders – cum – contractors.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Letter written by J. Monckton, Resident at Rangpore to the J. Money, Secretary to the Board of Trade, Fort William, dated 29 April 1809, Fort William the 12 May 1809, Proceedings, Board of Trade ( henceforth BOT ), Commercial, Vol. No. 232, 1809, West Bengal State Archives ( henceforth WBSA ), Calcutta.

<sup>8</sup> Letter written by J. Clavering, GEO: Monson and P : Francis to ,Company's Servants, to the Court of Directors, dated 16 July 1774, Bengal Letters Received, Vol.13, pp. 21-26, Proceedings, Home Misc., Vol. No.37, 1774, National Archives of India ( henceforth NAI), New Delhi.

<sup>9</sup> Letter written by Kisnodeb Surma Buscey , aspirant Gomastah of Santipore, to the Honble the Governor and Council for the English East India Company, dated 13 June 1753, Fort William 18 June 1753, Proceedings, Home Misc., I. O. Copy, Vol. No.17, 1753, NAI, New Delhi.

<sup>10</sup> Letter written by C. C. Hyde, Resident at Gungypore Factory to George Saunders, Acting President and Member of the Board of Trade, dated 22 February 1831, BOT, Commercial, Proceeding No.17, 1 March 1831, Volume No.498., Part 1, WBSA, Calcutta.

After the Plassey, English East India Company wanted closely connect with the smaller merchants for expansion of their business with power.<sup>11</sup> Due to industrial revolution, Members of the Company created pressure to collect raw silk from Malda, as well as in Bengal.<sup>12</sup>

Since the establishment of the colonial power in India, the English East India Company totally controlled both the internal and external market. They derived huge profit from the silk business. As a result, the native people and merchants engaged with the silk trade lost their work with profit. So, at a moment due to the colonial power, native people lost their prominent position, and this position was actively and entirely captured by the Company's officials.

In the third chapter, discussion on the magnificent performance of women in the overall silk production system has been looked into. They worked hard with love, patience and an artistic mind for fulfilling their economic necessities, but their remarkable involvement was totally ignored till now in our male dominated modern society. Although, women silk workers were engaged for silkworm rearing at home, but, sometimes they participated for the marketing of cocoons.<sup>13</sup> Their magical performance was used in the procurement of cocoons. This work mainly was completed by women than male workers.<sup>14</sup> Mainly when decisions were taken for the development of sericulture, the male members did not consider the opinion of the female silk workers. As a result, their activities were fully

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<sup>11</sup> Rila Mukherjee, *Strange Riches Bengal in the Mercantile Map of South Asia*, New Delhi : Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2006, pp. 224 – 225.

<sup>12</sup> A. F. M. Abdul Ali, *The Silk Industry in Bengal in the days of John Company*, Poona : IHRC, 7 Session, 12 January 1925, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> M. Madan Mohon Rao, *Comprehensive Sericulture Manual*, Hyderabad : B. S. Publication, 1999. pp. 54 – 55.

<sup>14</sup> Letter ( as a mode of humble petition ) written by Zamindars, Pykars and Silk Merchants of Bengal to William Barendish Bentinck, Governor General in Council, Fort William 24 November 1834, Enclosed in letter from Secretary to Government in General Department, dated 1December, Letter No. 21, petitioners also send true copy to H. J. Princep, Secretary to Government, Proceedings, Board of Trade, Commercial, Proceeding No. 45, Vol. 542, 11 December 1834, WBSA, Calcutta.

unrecognized and they were not given proper respect with wages as per the male workers in the silk industry.<sup>15</sup>

The fourth chapter of the thesis, is an appraisal of the economic importance of sericulture on Malda. Since the very early times, silk cloth was made and used in this region.<sup>16</sup> A large population of Malda were economically depended on the prospered silk industry. This chapter specially focused on the differences between the pre-colonial and colonial economy, thereby tracing the unquestionable role of the silk related economy of peoples of Malda.<sup>17</sup> In Bengal Province, silk industry was remarked as a large scale industry.<sup>18</sup>

The decline of the silk industry of Malda, as well as of Bengal was due to several causes.<sup>19</sup> Some of those causes were, first, commercial impact of the Plassey (1757) and ‘*Diwani*’ (1765) on silk trade; second, native zamindars were in favour of the English East India Company; third, bad effect of ‘Contract System’ or ‘Advanced Money System’; four, all the silk business related middlemen, like as *Banian, Gomostah, Pykars, Mahajans* or money lenders were directly or indirectly attached with the English Company for their own profit; five, establishment of the ‘Filature System’ without proper training of the native silk workers in large scale; six, Malda was used as a centre for supplied of raw

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<sup>15</sup> Hoque Sabiruddin, ‘Discourse on Rural Development : Women initiatives in Sericulture in Malda District, West Bengal’, *Uttar Prasanga* , Special Issue, February 2019, p. 151.

<sup>16</sup> Jatindra Chandra Sengupta, *West Bengal District Gazetteers Malda* , Calcutta : Sree Saraswaty Press Ltd., State Editor, Government of West Bengal, December 1969, p. 101.

<sup>17</sup> M. O. Carter, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the district of Malda 1928 – 1935*, Alipore : Superintendent, Government Printing, Bengal Government Press, 1938, pp. 18 – 19.

<sup>18</sup> Usha Jain, *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series Bengal* ,Vol.1, New Delhi : Usha Publication, 1984, pp. 83 – 86.

<sup>19</sup> Alok Moitra, ‘*Paschimbanger Resham Shilpo*’ ( Part 1 ),*Grameen, Paschimbango Khadi O Grameen Shilpo Porshod, Kartik – Agrohayon 1391* ( October – November 1984 ), pp. 5 -7.

silk for the English manufactured Company; seven, the English East India Company did not face strong protest from native silk related different classes; eight, the colonial power adopted the two fold policy in Bengal for the textile goods, specially silk made cloths: one was maximum export tariffs and another was minimum import tariffs; and lastly, well management system of the English East India Company, because of which they derived maximum profit through the minimum investment in silk industry.

In conclusion, based on the above discussion, my observation is that since the Plassey, the English East India Company took an 'unique' policy in removing the other Asian and European traders from the silk market. During the climax, the British Company had cut off the weaver's thumbs to stop for production of gorgeous silk piece goods of Malda.<sup>20</sup> This research started with the establishment of the Filature Method at Malda in 1770 for silk procurement and closed through the wound up from silk trade by the English East India Company in 1833. Actually the colonial motives on the colony, in this case India, liberally denoted as a 'domination effect'.<sup>21</sup> As a result, it not only destroyed the employment oriented prestigious silk industry and silk trade of Malda, but they also fell under below economic poverty level. In all the different stages, the silk workers, those who lost economic activities in silk industry in the region of Malda were treated as 'marginal community' during the period under observation. In the global perspective, 'silk' was known as a symbol of 'elegance', but in the case of Malda under colonial oppression, 'silk' was known to the silk workers as a symbol of 'misery'.

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<sup>20</sup> Irfan Habib, *Indian Economy Under Early British Rule 1757 – 1857*, New Delhi : Tulika Books, A People's History of India 25, Aligarh Historian Society, 2013, p.38.

<sup>21</sup> Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *The Colonial State Theory and Practice*, Delhi : Primus Books, 2016, p. 23.