

A comparative analysis of two major cotton textile centres of India-Bombay & Ahmedabad

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1. Introduction

1.1. Traditional cotton textile industry of India

India is known as a home of cotton. Cultivation of cotton, art of cotton weaving and use of cotton, are as old as the Civilisation of the Country (4000 B.C.).

Marco Polo in the 13th century and Tavernier in the 17th Century were attracted to the high quality of Indian cotton fabrics. The world famous Dacca Muslin, described as 'a web of woven winds' is believed to have been spun from a superior variety of cotton called 'Forma Bengalenese'. The trade of cotton fabrics then was with Europe and U.K. through the 'Silk Road' which connected China and Europe.

Skill in the manufacture of cotton was highly developed and was handed down from one generation to another. The spinners and weavers of India, inspite of their excellence in skill, had no organised bodies like the guilds of Europe. (Not to mention modern concept of Trade Union). On the contrary, carders, spinners, weavers, dyers, printers, etc. were sagmented in to sub-castes. Their income was low and their future depended on the good will of merchants. The expertise they achieved was due to the refined tastes and love for luxury of the rich people; this ensured the prosperity of the textile Industry.

In urban areas, the Industry was organised in form of 'Karkhanas' which thrived on royal patronage. In the reign of Aurangzeb, François Bernier

observed that a wide variety of piece goods were being produced by these 'Karkhanas'. But in the country as a whole, the cotton Textile Industry was essentially a family enterprise and depended on a large and assured home market. Economically, it was second to agriculture.

1.2. The impact of the British on the traditional industry

Against this scenario of the antiquity of cotton textile industry in India, the significance of the two major textile centres of India viz; Bombay and Ahmedabad can only be appreciated in the light of their evolution. The development of Bombay as a port is relevant, as the Industrial Development of Bombay was completely export oriented, while Ahmedabad, situated in the heart of cotton growing areas served the indigeneous market.

It is well-known, in the midst of 17th Century, Britishers acquired Bombay, a group of fishermen's islands. They organised the natural potentials of the harbour and lost no time in developing the port and the harbour. In 1672, they transferred the Head quarters of East India Company from Surat to Bombay.

The advent of the Britishers in India, first as traders and then as rulers made a great impact. It led to the collapse of the traditional industrial structure of the country and textile industry was no exception. In the beginning, the East India Co. made large profits by selling Indian cotton goods in Britain and elsewhere, but within two decades it was reduced to negligible proportions. Instead cotton as raw material was exported to feed the industries of England and on the other side, Indian markets were flooded with foreign textile goods, specially from Lancashire.

TABLE 1.
Exports of cotton goods from Lancashire to India
(in million Yards)

Year	Cotton piece goods
1835	52
1907	2532
1913-14	3159

Source: Report of the Committee Mill Owners' Association 1920.

The penetration of the British manufactures, into the country was rendered possible by the introduction of railways. This led to destruction of home industries and influx of foreign goods flooding Indian markets. As Oxford History of India puts it, 'The machine goods of Lancashire together with the free trade policy had killed the Indian cotton industry'.

1.3. Beginning of the modern cotton textile industry of India

The inception of the modern industrial era in India with the cotton Textile Industry, as the major mechanised and organised industry, dates back to the mid 19th Century. A series of new developments to usher the modern industrial era laid a sound foundation for the growth of industries in Bombay Island.⁽¹⁾

Eventhough Bengal and Pondichery had an early start over Bombay, both slipped back in the race of industrialisation and Bombay took the lead in establishing a large number of mills in rapid succession after 1854.

2. The growth of the modern cotton textile industry in India

2.1. The development of the cotton textile industry in Bombay

Entering the field of modern industrial activity through establishment of the cotton textile industry in India was a challenge for the enterprising promoters of those days. Those pioneers were British and French as well as Parsis, Hindus and Muslims. They established a strong base to support a gigantic industrial structure with research centres at Bombay and Ahmedabad. The technical co-operation of Lancashire for nearly fifty years was also an asset to the development.

In 1821, British traders established the first ever cotton Textile Mill in India at Calcutta but it had to be sold at one third of its cost. Second again was established by the Britishers at Hooghly near Calcutta but it functioned only upto 1857. In 1828, two Frenchmen Blin and Delbruik tried to establish the Salva mills in Pondichery but succeeded only in 1860; however, it was shortlived.

These successive failures led to strong doubts about the success of such ventures without protection of the Government. It was a Parsi businessman of Surat, Cowasji Nanabhai Davar who made a breakthrough by not only establishing the cotton textile Industry but also ushering an industrial era in the country. In 1854, he established Bombay Spinning and Weaving Company and in 1859 Throstle Mills, both in Bombay. Davar's successful ventures proved contagious with the result that five companies were floated in 1860 and two more in 1861. By 1862, some four more units went in to operation and by 1865, there were ten working mills in Bombay island; all basically motivated by export trade. Thus in the early stage, the industry was located in Bombay Presidency-primarily in the city of Bombay. Whereas in the interior, growth was comparatively slow.

No study of the cotton Textile Industry would be complete if one did not take into account the major contributions by some individuals. One such was Mr. J.N. Tata, who, after his return from Lancashire, established three mills

in Bombay island in 1868.⁽²⁾ Thereafter, Morarji Gokuldas, Mulji Thackersey entered into this field by 1875. Due to their efforts and organisational abilities cotton Textile Industry was firmly established in the Island.

2.2. The spread of industry to other centres

Broach and Ahmedabad also developed as centres within a short time. James Landon, a British expert, on cotton growing technology, was appointed to develop 'The cotton Experiment centre' at Broach by the East India company. Within five years of his appointment, he started a ginning mill in Broach and then, on the basis of the choice, clean and very bright cotton of Broach, he successfully established the Broach Cotton Mills Co., in 1865; this marked the advent of organised cotton Textile Industry in the interior. The second mill in the interior was started in Ahmedabad Sheth Ranchoddas Chotalal, an ex-government officer, with modest means of his own, was planning to set up a small cotton mill in Ahmedabad since 1848. He was discouraged by the wealthy people as they were sceptical about the success of the project with limited means. But Sheth was a man of strong determination and he managed to get expert guidance of James Landon. In 1861, he successfully established first cotton textile mill in Ahmedabad. His success provoked a large number of ambitious wealthy businessmen to venture into this field of activity.

2.3. Factors responsible for the relative decline of Bombay

The spread of Industry to the interior and the unequal consumption of cotton necessitates the analysis of the developments. The contributory factors were as follows:

1. Development of Railways helped the spread of the industries in the interior. Movement of coal and cotton to the industry and finished products to the market was made possible by railways. (Table n^o 3).

TABLE 2.
Development of railways in India for selected years

Year	Miles of Railway Track
1853	50
1860	838
1870	4771
1880	9162
1885	16401
1900	24752
1910	24909
1920	36735

Source: Report of the Committee ...1920 Mill Owner's Association. Bombay.

TABLE 3.
Total export of piece goods and twists within the country by railways

Year	Piece of goods in bales of 400 lbs each.	Twists in '000 lbs.
1911	6253	2724
1920	173134	93076
B.B. & C.I. RY.		
1911	10814	14473
1920	15569	37648

Source: Report of the Committee 1920 Mill Owner's Association. Bombay.

2. Growth of cotton Textile Industry in Japan adversely affected the spinning industry of Bombay. In 1891, 36 mills with nearly 3,80,000 spindles, were established in that country. This offered employment to nearly 18,000 persons and consumed over 6 million pounds of cotton. This followed by the fall of export trade with Japan.

TABLE 4.
Exports of yarn by India to China & Japan for selected years
(Bales of 400 lbs each)

Year	China	Japan
1877	28516	142
1880	63194	4527
1885	154517	19020
1889	254697	62220
1890	325060	37722
1891	365038	10939

Source: Report of the committee. Mill Owner's Association 1891.

Indian export of yarn to both the countries had increased by nearly 50% between 1855 and 1890. But in 1891, while trade with China continued to increase gradually, that with Japan, which had reached its peak in 1889 showed a sharp decline of about 61% in relation to previous year data and by nearly 80% with respect to the peak year 1889. This trend became accentuated after 1891. The trade with China also received a set back.

TABLE 5.
Retreat of India from Chinese market. Indian yarn export to China
(In million lbs.)

Year	Yarn
1911	158.8
1920	126.6
1923	41.0

TABLE 6.
Spindles installed in China

Year	Spindles
1911	831,000
1920	1585,300
1923	2680,000

Source: Report of the committee, Mill Owner's Association 1924.

Due to the decline in yarn trade with Japan by 1891 and with China by 1923 Bombay lost the foreign market so Bombay had to erect new looms to utilise the spared spindles and divert the production to cater to the local markets in competition with cotton goods from Japan, China & England, which had already flooded the market.

Loss of the trade was a blow to the industry. In addition, during the labour unrest of 1892-93, Bombay was the worst hit centre. At the same time, the Government action in closing units to free Silver coinage worsened the situation.

Thus during the first decade of the present century there were significant changes in the character of the Industry.

Predominance of purely spinning units diminished and several composite units came into existence. This is highlighted in the graphs (Fig.Nos. 2 & 3) where it is seen that there is higher percentage increase in looms than spindles in subsequent years. With increasing number of mills, especially in the interior, there was 34% increase in number of spindle and 134% in number of looms. By the end of first world war, there was a further increase of 23% looms.

By the end of first world war, there were as many as 253 mills in India with 6.7 million spindles and nearly 120 thousand looms installed. The total cotton consumed by all the mills of India was nearly 2 million bales. The percentage share of Bombay and Ahmedabad in relation to India, with respect to mills was 32.8 and 20.16. However, their share in terms of other indicators was spindles 43.8 and 15.96; no. of looms 50.94 and 19.08 and that of cotton consumed was 49.02 and 11.01 resp. The average size of the mill in terms of cotton consumption was approximately 11,600 for Bombay and a little over 4000 in the case of Ahmedabad. The average size for the rest of India was about 5600.

From the above, it is clear that eventhough there were severe problems for

textile Industry of Bombay, the role of Bombay as the country's foremost textile centre was not deviated. This was mainly due to the good transport facilities available in Bombay for getting raw cotton both, internally and from abroad and also the convenience of exporting yarn to countries like China, availability of indigenous capital, availability of capable entrepreneurs etc. and above all, concentration of cotton Textile Industry in Bombay was due to its export oriented location (One of the best natural harbours of the world). Dispersal of the industry in the cotton growing areas of the interior became more and more pronounced due to the fact that export markets for India dwindled in importance. Ahmedabad being located in the cotton growing areas, developed steadily and gradually.

During both the war periods, cotton Textile industry of India, had to meet foreign demands. But after the first world war there was a world wide depression and cotton Textile Industry of Bombay was more affected than those in the rest of India. The factors responsible for the change enables one to understand the difference in the spatial assets of Bombay and Ahmedabad. They also contribute to the dispersal as well as the shift of Centre of Gravity of the Cotton Textile Industry.

2.4. Changing locational Pattern

We may summarise the sequence of developments which help to account for the changing locational pattern of the industry. They are:

1. Export of cotton yarn and piece goods to China and Japan brought a boom to the industry. The inception of the industry was rested in the export trade.

2. The American Civil war of 1861, proved to be blessings in disguise to the Indian cotton merchants. At that time cotton turned out to be 'White Gold' for them. But the war disturbed the mills at home.

3. Loss of foreign markets i.e. exports of cotton yarn and piece goods to China, Japan and England declined and eventually disappeared. Cut throat competition at home markets due to the quality and price of manufactured cotton goods, sold by Japan, China and England, in India local markets contributed to the dispersal of industry.

4. First world war offered opportunity to meet the foreign demands. During war, influx of foreign goods had considerably decreased in home markets, it proved to be a prosperous time for cotton Textile Industry, specially for industries in Bombay.

5. A world wide depression after war, did not spare cotton Textile Industry of India. Bombay mills were severely affected. Mill Owner's association of Bombay tried to get protection specially against Japan. However, they were successful only in getting partial protection.

6. Second world war again ushered a period of prosperity for the industry and thereby for the country.

7. After the War, the protection period also expired and the home markets were again flooded with foreign materials. Consequently indigenous industry suffered a setback.

8. Swadeshi movement came to the rescue of the Indian cotton Textile In-

dustry, particularly Industries of Bombay and Ahmedabad. Boycott of foreign goods offered an impetus to Indian production.

9. After independence (1947) Indian Industry was given protection by the Government and during the plan period development programmes were offered specially for the development of rural and backward areas in the interior.

10. Wide spread irrigation provided in planning policies infused with modern technology and use of fertiliser and better seeds led to increase in cotton growing areas and production. In quality and quantity India attained self sufficiency. Increase in capacity of cotton growing areas attracted many ginning and spinning mills in the country side. Horizontal distribution of industry was dominant in the cotton growing areas. Besides, co-operative ventures were protected by Government and were carefully looked after under rural development programme. i.e. Synthetic fibre was mainly used in the big cities thus availability of raw material in cotton growing areas remained unaffected and consequently assisted dispersal of locations.

11 Further development of industries have been strictly restricted in big cities like Bombay and Ahmedabad to avoid congestion and to overcome severe problems of environmental pollution.

12 Industrial relations, most of the time remain tense, due to Labour unrest, Labour Union relations with political parties and use of political power by parties to exploit mandate of Labour Unions to their advantages for example, most of the textile workers in Bombay were in strike for 30 months. The crippling effects of this is evident in recent years. Considering all these factors, it would be illusive to think that the Bombay mill industry could continue to have a commanding position as it had in the past.

Ahmedabad has also reached a saturation point. To save the city, instead of moving industries out of the city, the capital has been shifted to Gandhinagar.

2.5. Changes in the locational pattern of the industry

The growth and changing locational pattern of the cotton Textile Industry in relation to traditional raw material cotton, for the four time points 1920, 1940, 1960 and 1983 have been analysed against the above backdrop of the sequence of developments in the industrial atmosphere of the country.

2.5.1. In 1920

Upto 1920 over seventy years have elapsed since the inception of the industry of India, initially, localised and concentrated in Bombay. It still dominates the spatial pattern of the industry. In 1920, Bombay was the Capital of Bombay Presidency which included major parts of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Sind (Pakistan of today). So, Ahmedabad was not separated out as another centre. The consumption of cotton of Bombay and Ahmedabad is separated out from that of the whole of presidency, then, the consumption of the rest of the presidency becomes insignificant. What is true for the presidency is equally true for the whole of India. Compared to the gigantic size of Bombay, the other centres of India, like Kanpur, Delhi, Calcutta, Coimbatore, Akola, etc. are of negligible significance.

2.5.2. Pre independence 1940

Though Bombay continued to dominate the locational patterns, its share in the consumption of cotton is definitely on the decline, while that of the rest of the Presidency including Ahmedabad, has increased considerably.

After the Second World War, Swadeshi movement helped the industry to survive. Boycott of foreign goods created a great demand for Indian made goods in the home market. Hence, to serve the local markets many centres developed & old ones which were on or near cotton growing areas & in near proximity to transport arteries for example Kanpur in the north, Bangalore and Coimbatore in the south, Indore in the centre and Calcutta, in the east all showed significant growth. Consumption of the Bombay presidency also remained noteworthy.

2.5.3. Post independence 1960

India achieved independence in 1947, so industries of 1960 had benefits of two plan periods. Compared to 1940, this stage showed a significant growth in terms of consumption of cotton at the major centres as well as at the states. Bombay remained dominant as it did earlier. However, the growth rate of Bombay and Maharashtra showed a clear decline. Whereas growth rate of Ahmedabad and Gujarat continued to be positive.

The most eye-catching phenomenon was the unprecedented growth of the industry in Tamilnadu, even though the major centre Coimbatore had not attained much growth as far as cotton consumption is concerned. This unequal growth rates of the centre and the state indicate that other centres in Tamilnadu must have grown simultaneously during the period of twenty years.

Other centres like Kanpur, Delhi, Calcutta, and Bangalore did show gradual growth but were over shadowed by the phenomenal growth in the south.

Centres in non-cotton growing states depicted nominal growth. The image of locational distribution and growth in terms of cotton consumption of 1960 when compared with, 1920 and 1940, raised an interesting issue as to how would the locational pattern differ in the following 20 years. Shifting of centre of gravity indicated a change but it remained unpredictable.

3. Major trends in locational pattern 1920-1983

(In order to bring the image upto date, instead the data of 1980, that of 1983 has been used (cotton Textile Industry in the country had been nearly paralysed in 1983). If all the figures showing locations of cotton Textile Industries in India with cotton consumption, for the time points 1920, 1940, 1960 & 1983 are viewed together, two very distinct locational trends emerge.

1. Centripetal tendencies, resulting in centralization and concentration.
2. Centrifugal tendencies, resulting in Dispersal of industries towards and within cotton growing areas.

3.1. Centripetal tendencies concentration and centralization

Locations of cotton Textile Mills in 1920 and 1940 show a centripetal tendency. The Industry had been centralized at Bombay for nearly 100 years since its inception. Bombay having the port location has retained its dominance. Soon after 1940, because of swadeshi movement, centres sprouted in the interior and the pattern started taking noticeable change and by 1960, centrifugal tendency leading to dispersal of industry was very clearly observed.

3.2. Centrifugal tendencies-dispersion, decline of Bombay

Ahmedabad emerging as the leading centre and Tamilnadu as a leading State, having phenomenal growth rate. The image in 1983 appears to be a further projection of the situation of 1960. However, the rapid decline of Bombay centre is due to industrial unrest. Indicators like, no. of mills, spindles, looms, daily average workers and cotton consumption, all show declining trend of Bombay since 1940. Whereas Ahmedabad shows an upward trend to an extent that in the recent years, Ahmedabad, located in the heart of cotton growing area and serving home market, has outgrown Bombay. Another striking feature of these figures is tremendous increase in spindles in India. Nearly 60% of Indian Mills are spinning mills and these are dispersed in the interior. Increase in no. of spindles in India is not at all seen in Bombay or Ahmedabad. This indicates that most of the mills located in the rest of India are spinning mills meeting the demands of handlooms and power looms.

The percentage share of Bombay and Ahmedabad in relation to India, indicating no. of mills and amount of cotton consumption also shows the decline of Bombay as compared to the development of the rest. Prevailing major centres are not as dominant as they were before 1940. This also is an indication of dispersal and development of the industry in the cotton growing areas of the interior. The map showing locations of cotton textile Industry in Bombay Island -1983, does reflect remains of its glorious past. Decline of Bombay and rise of Ahmedabad is also highlighted in figs. 1 to 5, which represent no. of mills, spindles and cotton consumption. Decline of the cotton Textile Industry in Bombay Island is unprecedented and the major causes may be recapitulated.

1. Industrial unrest which was prolonged upto 30 months. Close of mills and lock-outs were not uncommon— hence decline in cotton consumption.

2. Use of man made fibres and production of blended material in big cities like Bombay.

3. Government restrictions on further development of major Industries in the city to check the high level of congestion and environmental pollution.

4. Abandoned mill compounds of Bombay are rebuilt either for residential purposes or for small industrial units. Fast growth of poserloom industries in greater Bombay, Bombay metropolitan region and areas in vicinity of Bombay.

5. Growth of other cotton textile centres in Maharashtra just as Akola, Nagpur, Wardha, Sholapur, etc. released pressure of Bombay.

6. Because of the growth of various other major industries, importance of the textile industry in Bombay is subdued. Hence, once the most organised

and dominating industry of Bombay, has by and large lost its ground. In 1983, Ahmedabad out grew Bombay in every aspect as far as the cotton textile industry is concerned.

Another important feature of this pattern of 1983, is the phenomenal growth of cotton textile Industry in Tamilnadu, which changes the whole picture of dispersal. It is difficult to predict the future pattern of dispersal but it appears to be certain that several centres will emerge in cotton growing areas with many centres having pavity in their growth. Ahmedabad may remain one of the major centres.

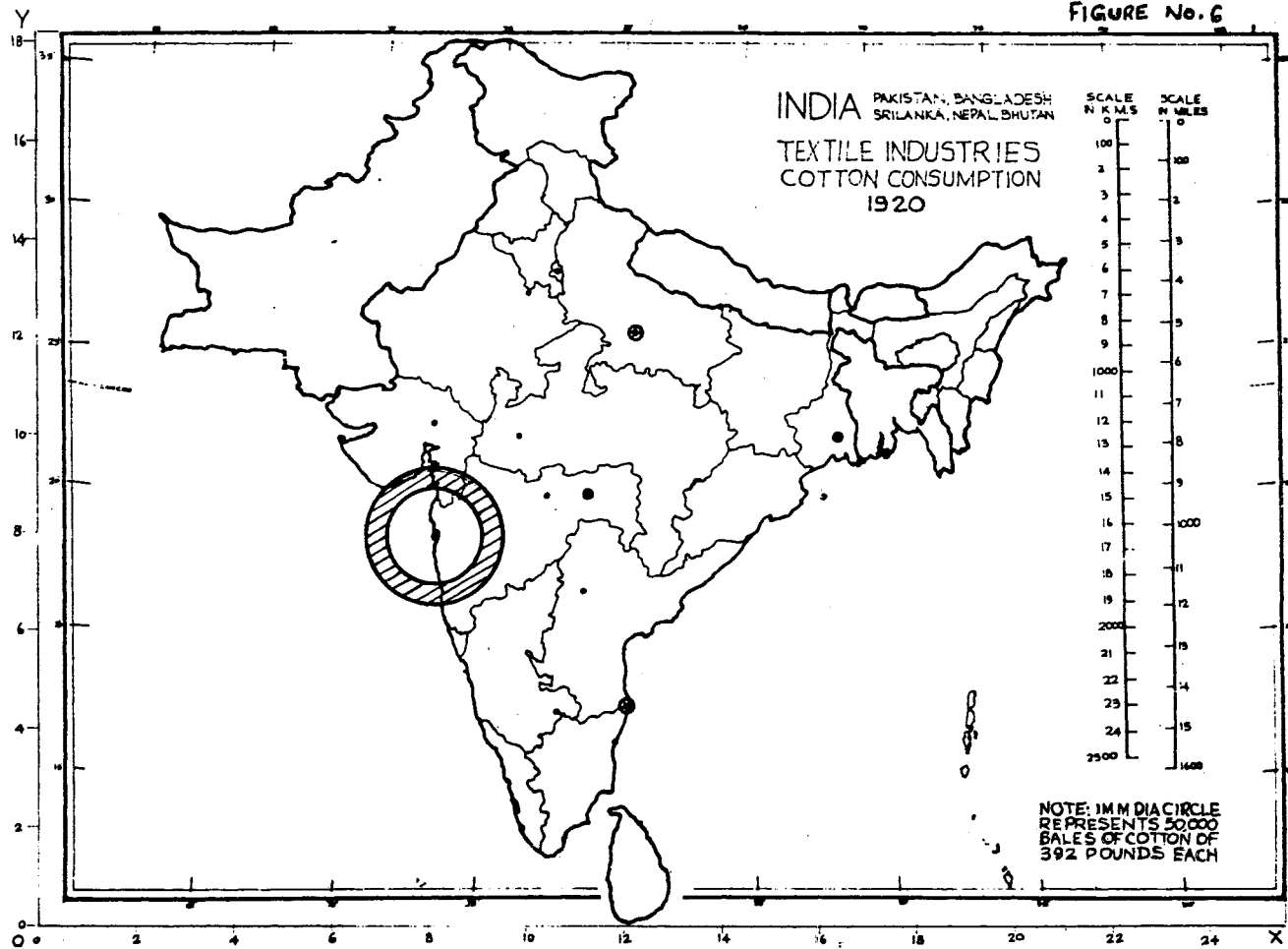


FIGURE No.7

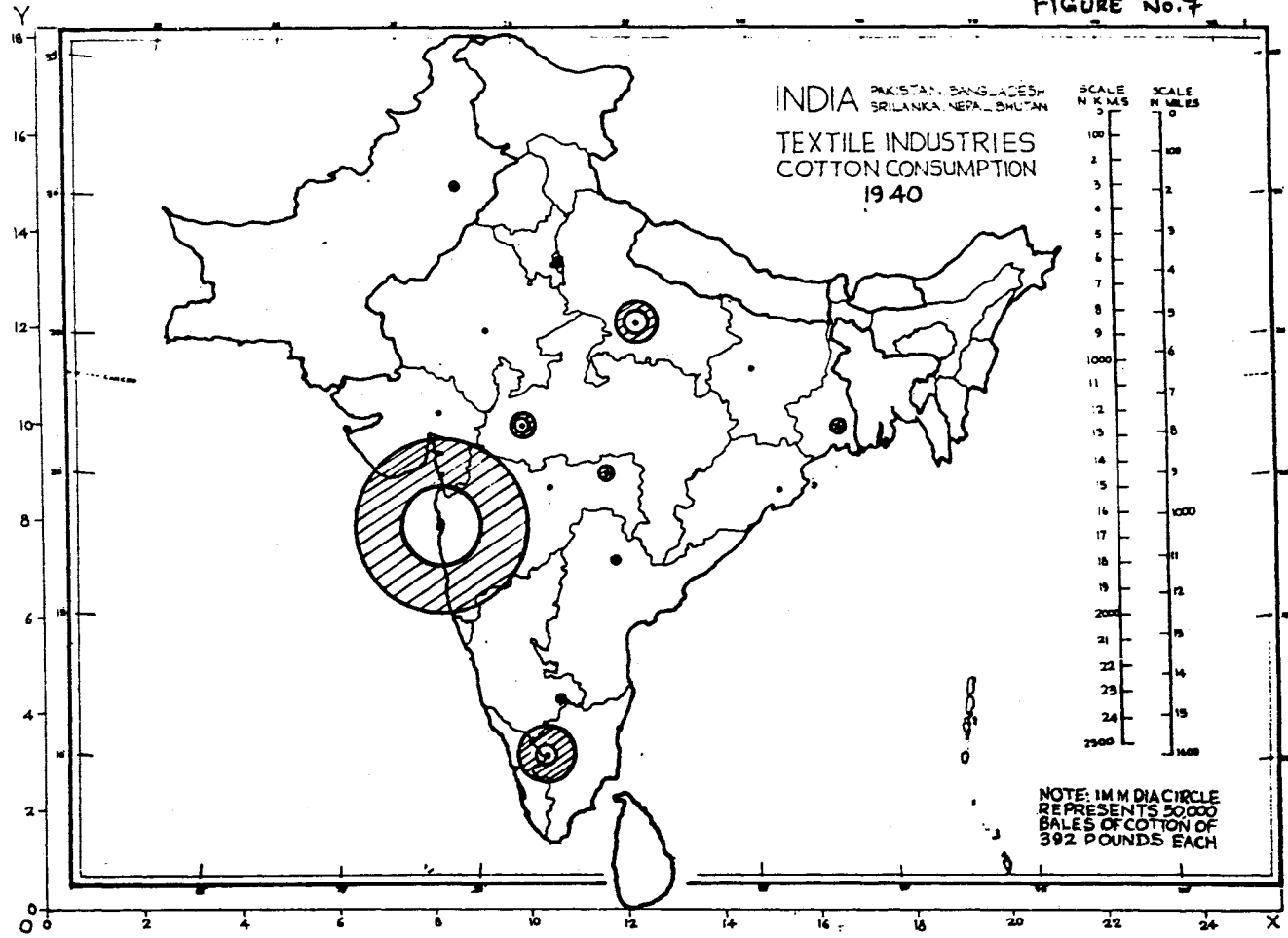


FIGURE NO. 8

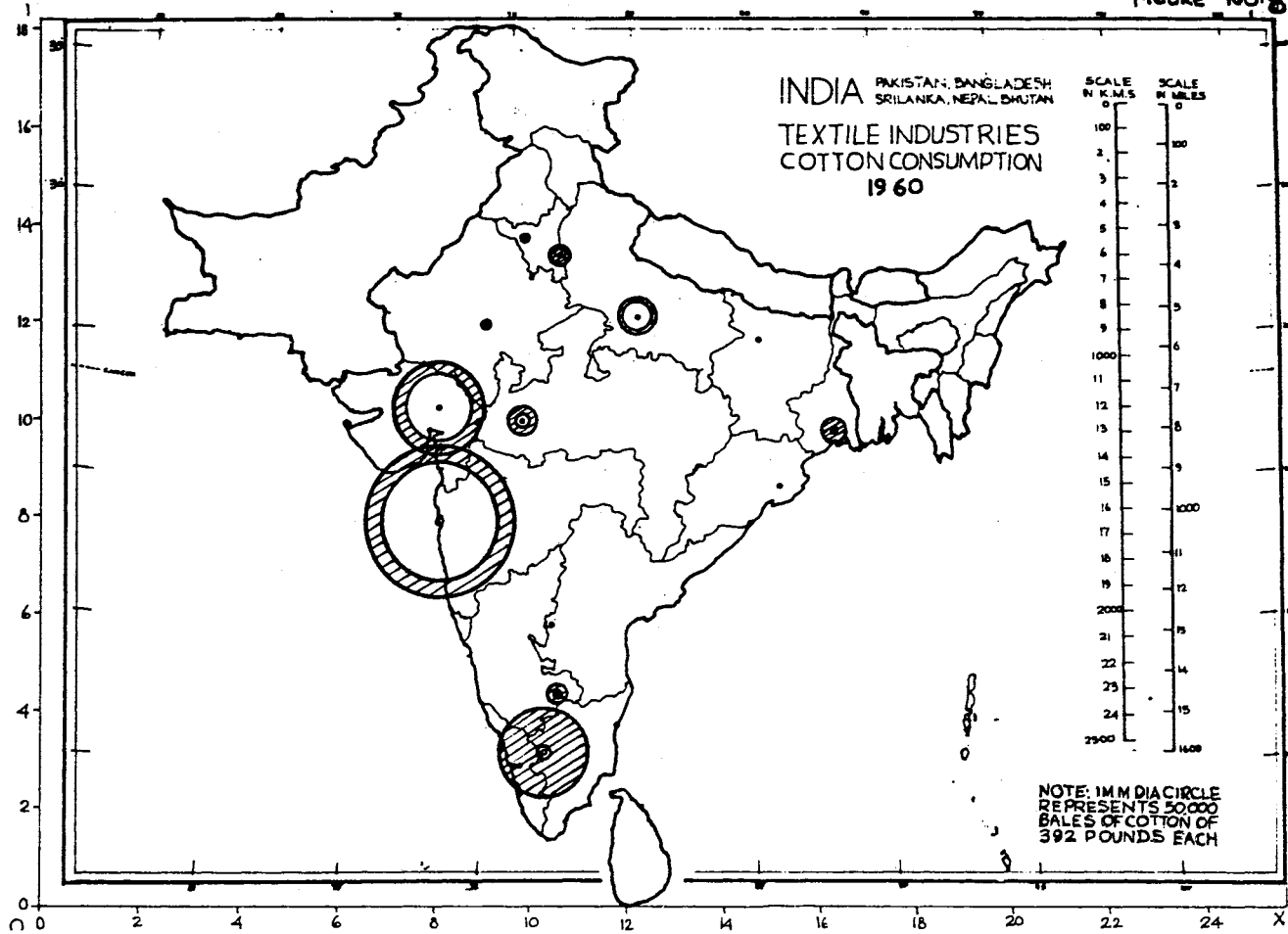
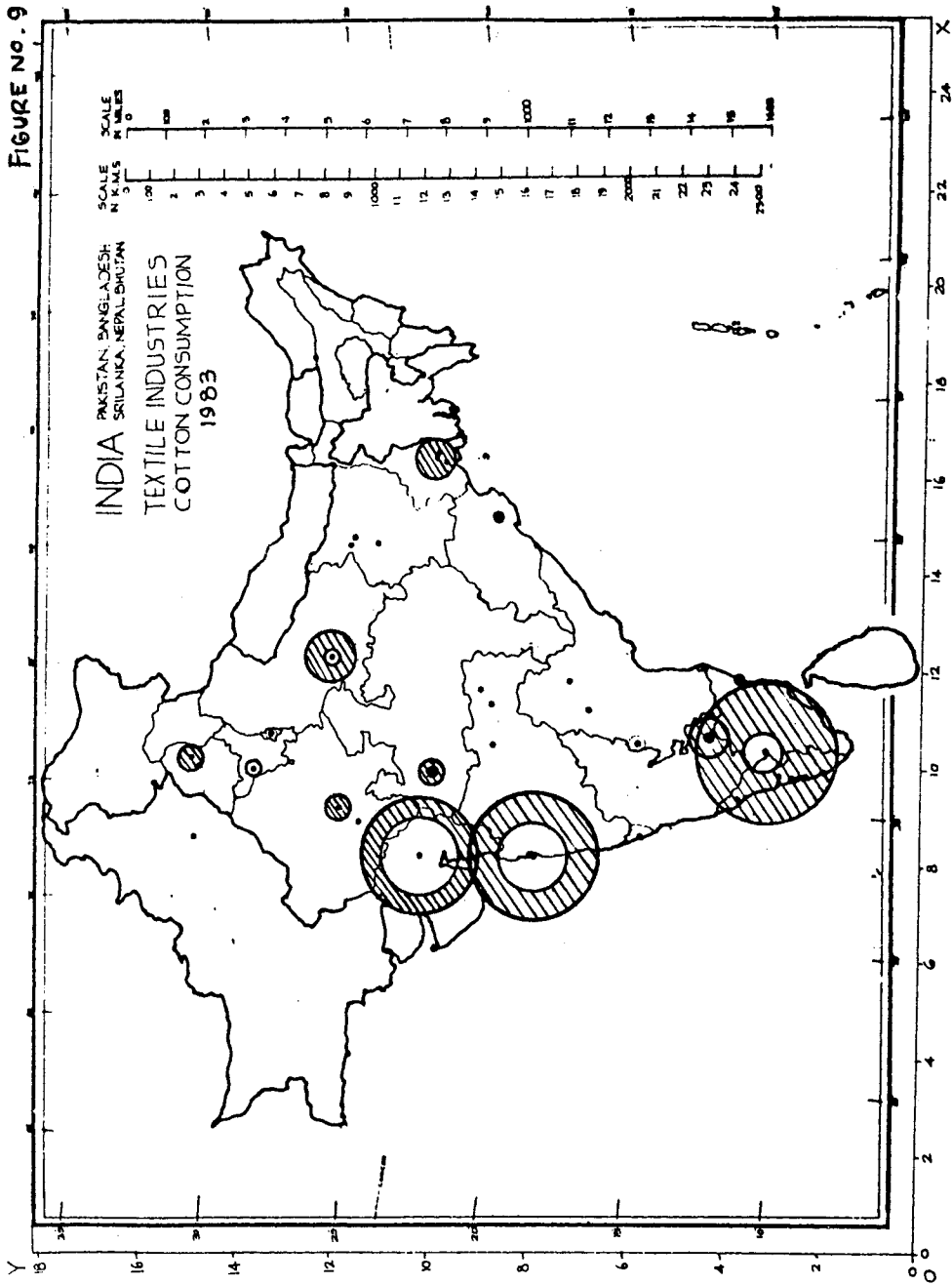


FIGURE No. 9



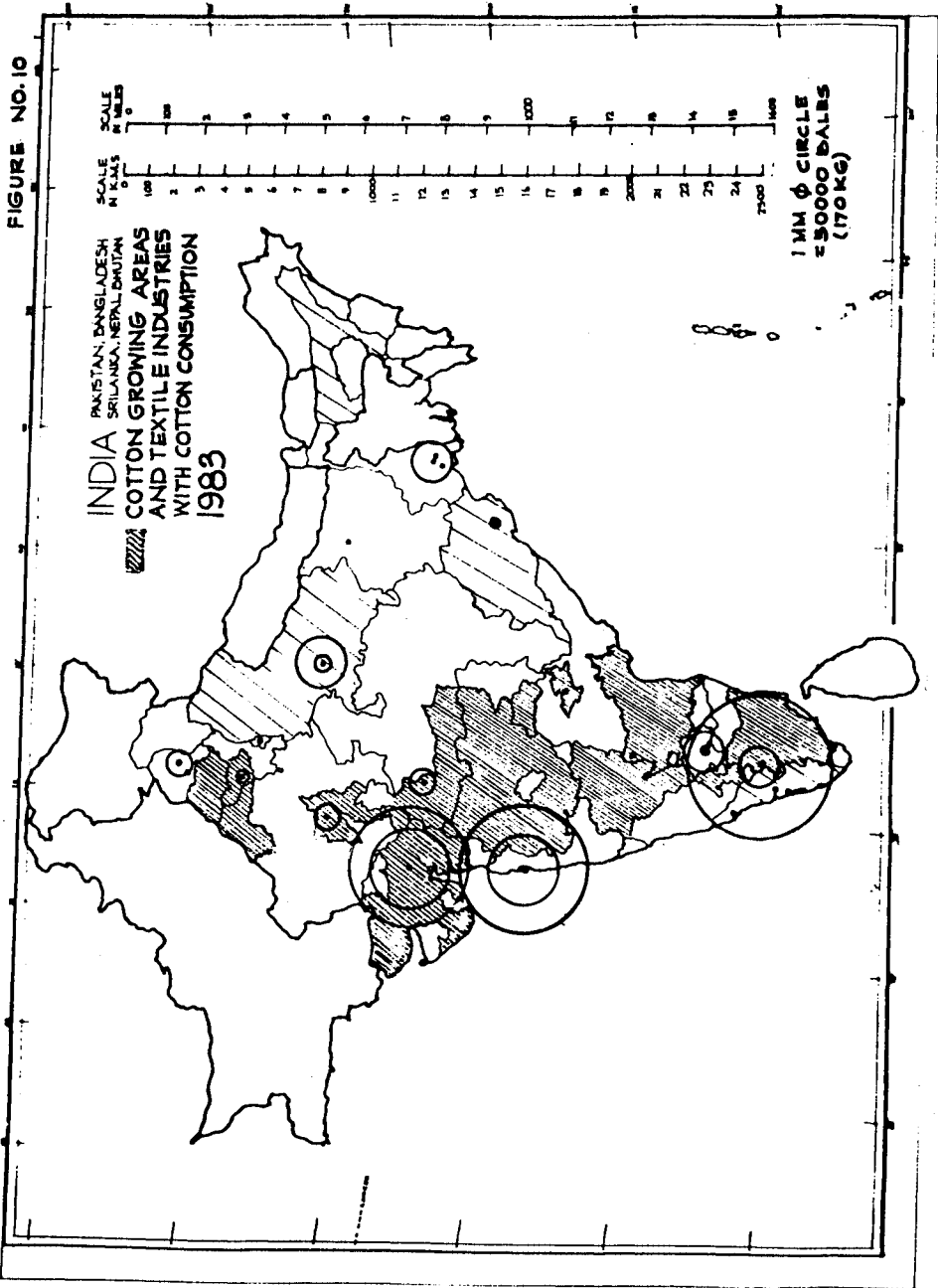


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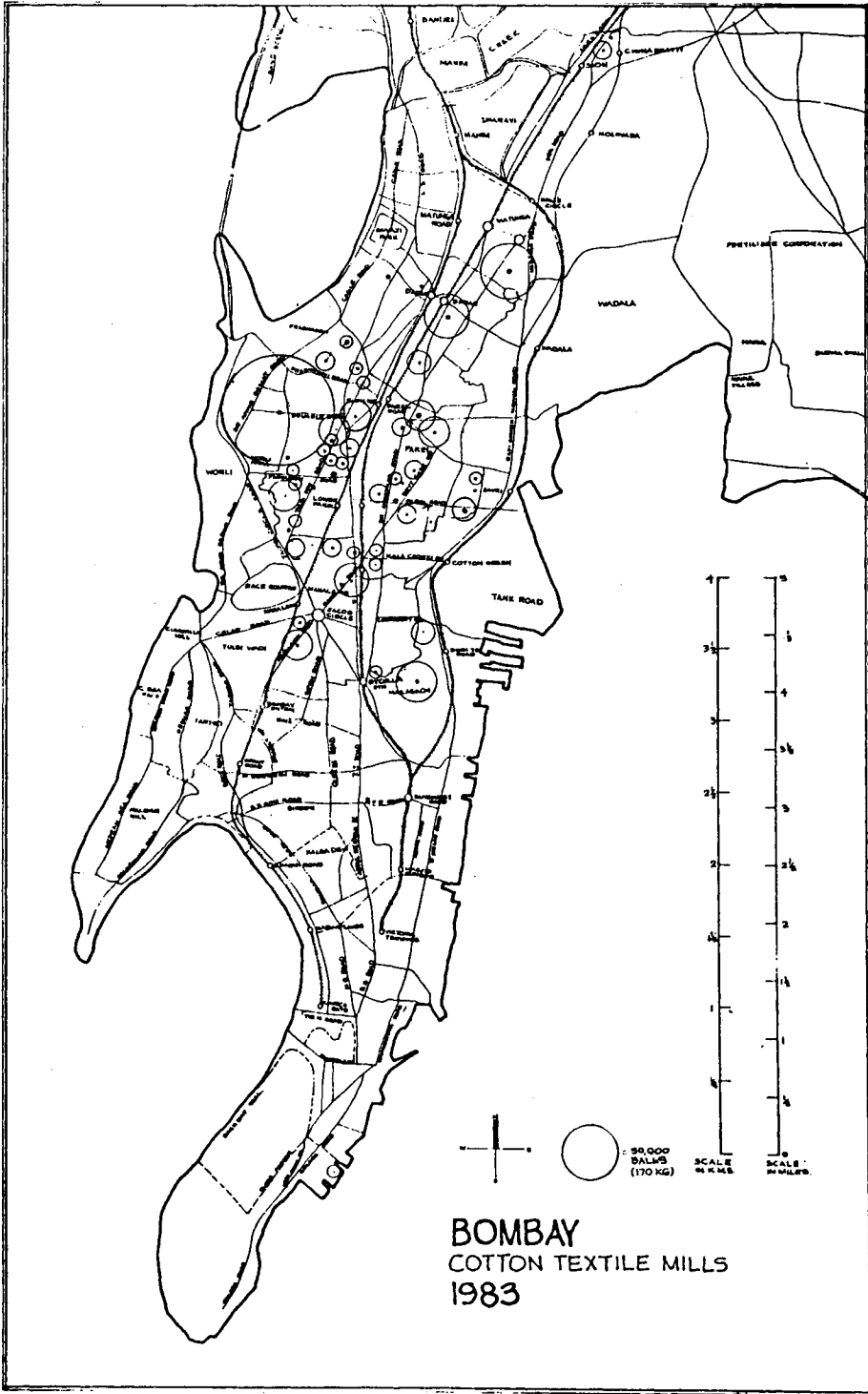
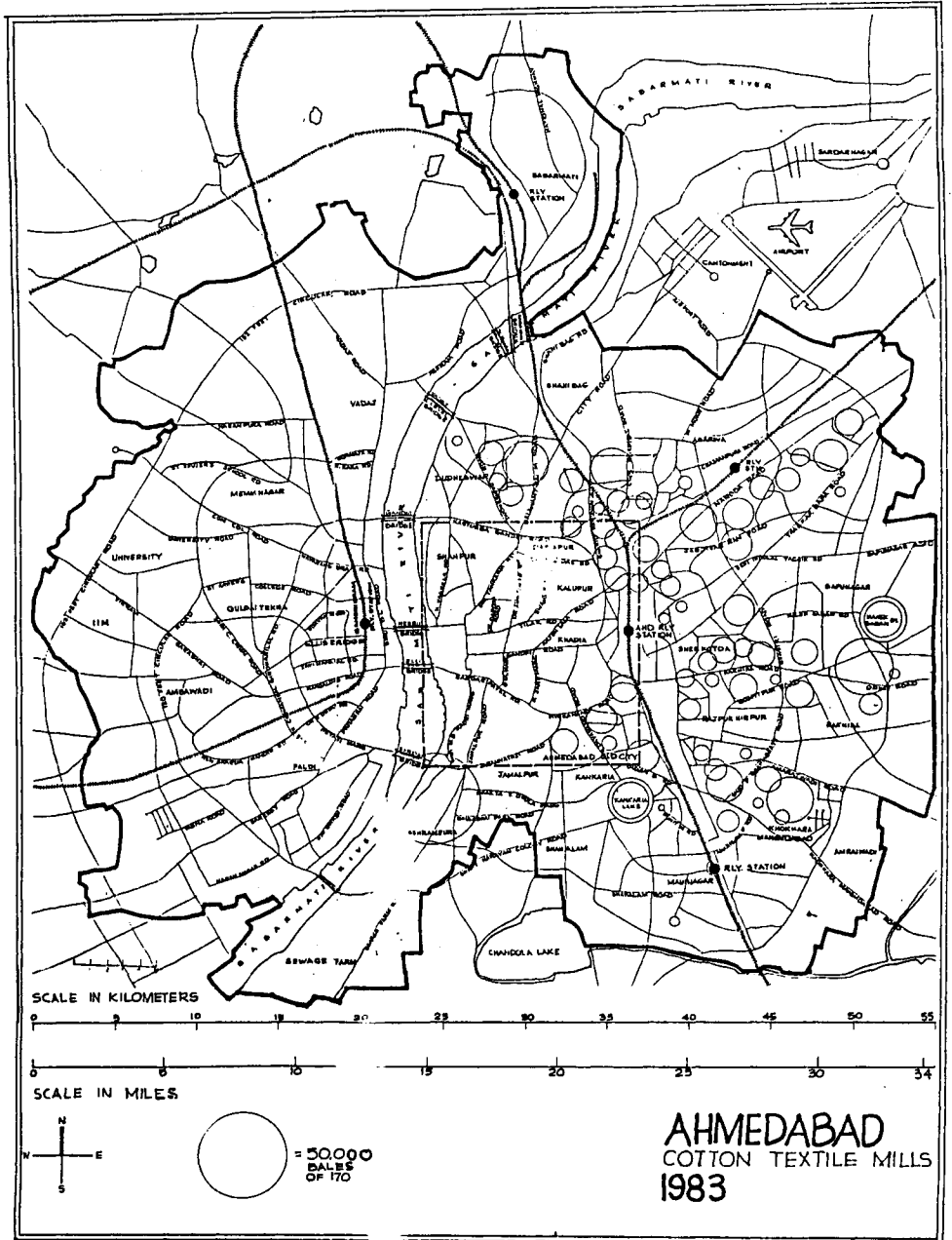


FIGURE No.18



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(1) **The new developments were:**

1. Fiver dry docks built between the years 1748 to 1811.
 2. Shipbuilding industry was started by Nasarvanji Wadia.
 3. Opening of Suez Canal in 1869, which reduced the distance between India and England by nearly 4500 miles.
 4. Opening of Bhor Ghat in 1830 connected the Bombay Island with interior by road.
 5. First railway line was built between Bombay and Thana in 1853. Until 1900, 24752 miles of railway tracks were laid to ease movement of cotton, coal and textile.
 6. Development of modern commercial and banking institutions just as Bank of Bombay and Merchantile Bank of India are the commercial Banks of India.
 7. Weaving was encouraged in Bombay Island by East India Company to export fine cotton cloth. Weavers from Thana, Bhiwandi and Chawl were offered looms to attract settlement in Bombay.
 8. Automatic steam cotton pressing units were installed in Bombay to bale cotton for export.
 9. In 1961, after having found superiority of Western Ghats, Shri J.N. Tata obtained power rights to develop Hydel Power Station.
- (2) J.N. Tata was the pioneer in introducing some basic industries in the country. To name a few, Tata Iron & Steel Works (TISCO), Locomotive industry, Automobile industry etc. The honour of developing Hydel Power projects in Western Ghats also goes to him. This facilitated the spread of industries in western India where there was scarcity of coal. He also established fundamental, Scientific and Technological research centres to provide solid foundation for modern industrial development. In the field of textile Industry, he being a philosopher and an able organiser, introduced many schemes for the benefit of his employes. He had also foreseen the necessity of manufacturing fine and superfine cloth to enable India compete with foreign competitors.

Anàlisi comparativa de dos centres tèxtils de cotó a l'Índia

El punt principal d'aquest estudi se centra a l'estructura del canvi locacional de la indústria del cotó a l'Índia, on es poden identificar dues fases, una primera amb el domini de Bombai sobre la indústria i una més tardana amb el predomini d'Ahmadabad. Per la seva situació portuària, Bombai ha desenvolupat una indústria orientada a l'exportació. Ahmadabad, situada al cor d'una àrea de cultiu de cotó es desenvolupà per servir el mercat indígena. Ambdós centres es desenvoluparen amb la demanda de dos mercats completament diferents i van prosperar o declinar segons els canvis respectius de l'atmosfera del mercat.

Una sèrie de creixements van contribuir a accentuar les tendències centripetes que van prevaler fins 1940; les forces descentralitzadores creixeren i les tendències centripetes ocasionaren un relatiu declinar de Bombai. Successivament, centres situats en àrees de cultiu de cotó com Ahmadabad, Coimbatore i altres van adquirir importància.

L'estudi perfila els factors responsables d'aquestes estructures espacials de la indústria i d'altres factors contribuents, com vagues, polítiques de desenvolupament del govern, interferències polítiques...

Pel que fa als centres més importants d'indústria tèxtil a l'Índia, Bombai i Ahmadabad, hem intentat explicar dues tendències de comportament espacial. En absència de comerç exterior, el principal factor que contribueix a la configuració espacial sembla ésser la seva proximitat a les àrees de cultiu de cotó.

Analyse Comparative de deux grands centres du coton a l'Inde: Bombay et Ahmedabad

Ce rapport traite l'estructure de changement locational de l'industrie du coton a l'Inde, où on peut trouver deux phases: dans la première, Bombay a dominé l'industrie, dans la deuxième, Ahmedabad. Bombay a un port que lui a permis développer une industrie destinée a l'exportation. Ahmedabad se trouve au coeur de l'aire du culture du coton, et la ville s'est développée pour servir la demande interieure: Les deux centres ont grandi grâce aux demandes de deux marchés diferents et chaque un a prospéré ou décliné selon les changements respectivs de ses marchés.

Les tendances centripetes s'ont accentuées à cause de certains développements jusqu'au 1940. Les forces d'industrialisation grandirent jusqu'à provoquer une certaine déclination de Bombay. Les centres situés dans les régions de la culture du coton, come Ahmedabad, Coimbatore et d'autres, acquerirent importance.

Ce rapport traite les facteurs responsables de les structures spatiales de l'industrie et d'autres facteurs qu'y contribuent, tels comme les grèves, les politiques de développement du gouvernement, les interferences politiques...

A propos des deux grands centres d'industrie textile du coton on a traité d'expliquer deux tendances de conduite spatiale. En absence du commerce étranger, le principal facteur de la configuration spatiale semble être la proximité des régions de la culture du coton.