

The Political Economy of the Textile Industry and Its Labor

The Report of the Medical Committee of the Factory Commission of 1884 most distinctly lays it down that mill operatives do not exhibit any material deterioration in health or condition . . . the women were found to be particularly healthy and strong as compared with women labourers outside the mills. . . . The mill hands are the best class of patients, they bear operations well, their progress in the hospital is satisfactory; their wounds heal quickly; and their recovery is rapid. It is healthy wound [*sic*] that do well and heal rapidly, and healthy wounds require healthy flesh and healthy blood, and healthy flesh and healthy blood can only belong to a healthy and well nourished body. This one single fact more than any other truly tells the condition of the Indian mill-hand and ought to soothe and settle at rest the troubled minds and hearts of mistaken humanitarians.¹

Thus wrote Dr. K. N. Bahadurji, commenting on a government-appointed factory commission. These discursive constructs of vigorous and healthy workers were in sharp contrast to the images of overworked and fatigued mill laborers documented in contemporary reports on factories and labor.² However, in late nineteenth-century Bombay, most nationalists and reformers, the local press, and millowners adhered to Bahadurji's views about a healthy and contented workforce, ignoring the realities of millworkers' harsh working and living conditions. Their silence over the issue of overwork and their fierce opposition to factory reforms did not come only from a lack of knowledge or from class biases. Rather, they evinced a broader nationalist desire to promote a nascent

Indian industry, which they viewed as an example of Indian enterprise in a colonial situation.

In the late nineteenth century, anti-colonial nationalism mainly centered on a politics of petitioning, urging the British to extend colonial institutions and services to include Indians. However, some leaders of this “moderate” phase, most notably Dadabhai Naoroji, Romesh Chunder Dutt, and Mahadeo Govind Ranade, articulated a radical critique of colonial economy.³ The late nineteenth-century growth of economically sovereign nations such as Germany, Italy, the United States, Russia, and Japan exemplified the advantages of nationally regulated capitalism, as Manu Goswami describes.⁴ Such examples sharpened the contradictions between a colonized and a national economy. The links between the autonomy of the nation-state and economic development influenced the nationalist discourse across geographical regions. Reflecting these transnational ideals of nationhood and progress, Indian leaders analyzed how colonialism integrated India into a world economic system, a linkage that gradually impoverished India and enriched Britain. This integration transformed the country into a producer of cotton, jute, wheat, sugarcane, and tea—raw material and agricultural products needed to sustain the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Simultaneously, colonized India became a captive market for finished British industrial goods.⁵ The colonial government’s support for British industries eroded domestic, artisanal industries, intensifying Indian dependency on agriculture as a source of livelihood. By the late nineteenth century, the nationalist critics of colonial economic policies claimed that the rapid expansion of modern industries could reverse the process.

Thus, Bombay’s rapidly expanding, Indian-owned cotton industry represented progress and self-reliance. Consequently, Indian nationalists anxiously guarded this industry from all possible threats, a policy that informed their opposition to any legislation regulating Indian factories and mines.⁶ The development of Bombay as an industrial metropolis significantly informed its demographic features and the changes in the city’s environment. As subsequent sections show, millworkers were at the receiving end of these environmental and demographic changes. However, the proponents of unimpeded industrialization ignored harsh working conditions, neglected the dismal living environment of millworkers, and maintained a conspicuous silence over issues such as the lack of sanitary industrial housing. But economic nationalism, although a significant factor in the late nineteenth century, was not solely responsible for the

tepid responses to the well-being/ill-being of millworkers. The economic rivalry between Lancashire and Bombay cotton producers, the dominant positions of millowners in the power structure of colonial Bombay, and the abundance of labor and lack of organization among millworkers all contributed to the lack of concern about the ill-being of laborers.

THE RISE OF BOMBAY CITY AND ITS COTTON MILLS

One of the most striking features of Bombay's cotton industry was the dominance of Indian ownership. Although British entrepreneurs created jute mills, coal mines, railways, and plantations during the colonial era, Indian traders and financiers launched the cotton textile factories of India, particularly in Bombay.⁷ During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, indigenous businessmen and traders collaborated with the British in the profitable international trade of raw cotton and opium and accumulated capital for this industrial investment.⁸ The rise of successful Indian entrepreneurs was intimately linked to the growth of Bombay as the *Urbs Prima in Indis* (the First City in India), the primary hub of industrial and commercial activities in colonial India.⁹

The British Crown acquired Bombay from the Portuguese as part of Catherine Braganza's dowry when she married Charles II in 1661 and subsequently transferred it to the East India Company (EIC) in 1668.¹⁰ A natural harbor on the western coast of India on the Arabian Sea, Bombay was a cluster of seven islands poorly integrated with the mainland.¹¹ Until the late eighteenth century the EIC considered Bombay a barren, rocky island, an unhealthy site with feverish swamps, and an unlikely site for commercial exploitation.¹² Consequently, Surat, which was farther north, retained its position as western India's prime coastal trading post during the eighteenth century. Situated in the rich cotton-textile-producing region of Gujarat, Surat had been, since the Mughal period, the center for western India's trading communities.¹³ Unlike Surat, Bombay lacked merchandise to ship, a resident trading and mercantile community, and efficient port facilities.¹⁴ The EIC could not immediately begin local production of textiles, one of the most lucrative export items, because Bombay lacked a resident weaving community.¹⁵

Bombay's subsequent growth into a thriving commercial and industrial colonial city was contingent upon several political and economic elements. Two key factors were the eclipse of Surat—a result of political and military clashes between the Mughals and the Marathas—and the rapid growth of the cotton and opium trade with China during the late eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries.¹⁶ Prior to that, in 1687, the EIC had moved its headquarters in western India from Surat to Bombay to escape the trade supervision and custom duties imposed by the Mughals. Moreover, the EIC's possession of Bombay enabled it to operate without competition from the rival European trading companies of the Netherlands, Portugal, and France.¹⁷ The EIC deployed this relative advantage to attract the indigenous trading and mercantile communities away from Surat to Bombay.¹⁸

By the early nineteenth century, the British had extended their hegemony over the Marathas in western India. The 1817–1818 British conquest of the Deccan transformed Bombay from a trading town into the capital of a large province.¹⁹ The British could now control a vast regional hinterland and the production of raw cotton.²⁰ The port town of Bombay facilitated both the export of raw cotton to the textile industries of Britain, and the import of finished British textile goods to the colony.²¹ The opening of new road networks and the expansion of a railway network during the 1850s and 1860s expedited the movement of trading goods.²²

Historians of colonial trade and commerce have argued that it was not just the export of cotton to China and Europe that acted in Bombay's favor. In the 1820s, Bombay began to contribute to the EIC's ongoing export of opium to China. The export of opium provided the company with a commodity, other than raw cotton, to exchange for tea in China.²³ With the outbreak of the American Civil War, the demand for and export of raw cotton rose sharply in the early 1860s. This war periodically dried up the supply of raw cotton from North America to Britain, stimulating exports from Bombay.²⁴ The expansion of the credit market, the banking sector, and the shipbuilding industry complemented this commercial boom.²⁵ The end of the Civil War in 1865 resulted in an economic crash that adversely impacted Bombay's trade and commerce. However, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and a further improvement in the railway and road network, ensured a profitable trade with British and continental markets.²⁶ These business activities accelerated Bombay's establishment as one of the principle centers of trade and commerce in colonial India.

The advent of experienced, successful, and enterprising indigenous trading communities in Bombay began in the early nineteenth century.²⁷ Willingly accepting the security and stability offered by the British, the leading indigenous commercial and trading communities of western India—Parsis, Hindu Baniyas, and Muslim Bohras, Khojas and

Memons—migrated in large numbers to Bombay City.²⁸ As shipbuilders, traders, bankers, guarantee brokers, and agents of the British mercantile firms, these indigenous groups cooperated with Britons in their inland and sea trade.²⁹ These trading communities, especially Parsis, significantly profited from the raw cotton and opium trade with China. Popularly known as *shets* or *shetias*, the financially successful Parsi families, such as Wadias, Jehangirs, Petits, and Tatas, acquired considerable wealth, established mutually profitable relationships with the British colonial rulers, and emerged as leaders in their communities and in local governance.³⁰ In the mid-nineteenth century, the same *shets* or *shetias* pioneered the cotton mill industry of Bombay.

The uncertainties of the raw cotton trade encouraged Indian traders to explore more profitable and secure investments. Access to raw material, labor, and markets facilitated their new entrepreneurial ventures. With its rich cotton-producing hinterland, ranking second only to the United States, Bombay had an obvious advantage.³¹ The recurrent agricultural distress of the nineteenth century in western India ensured the availability of cheap and abundant labor. There was a ready market for the mill-produced yarn in China and the Indian countryside.³² Although Bombay, unlike Bengal, lacked proximity to coal mines, coal imported from England enabled Cowasji Nanabhai Davar (1814–73) to establish the first cotton mill in Bombay in 1851 and to inaugurate Bombay's growth as an industrial center.³³ By 1889, Bombay had sixty-nine cotton-manufacturing mills. Within the next two decades there were eighty-two mills in the city, which employed an average of 106,710 millhands daily.³⁴

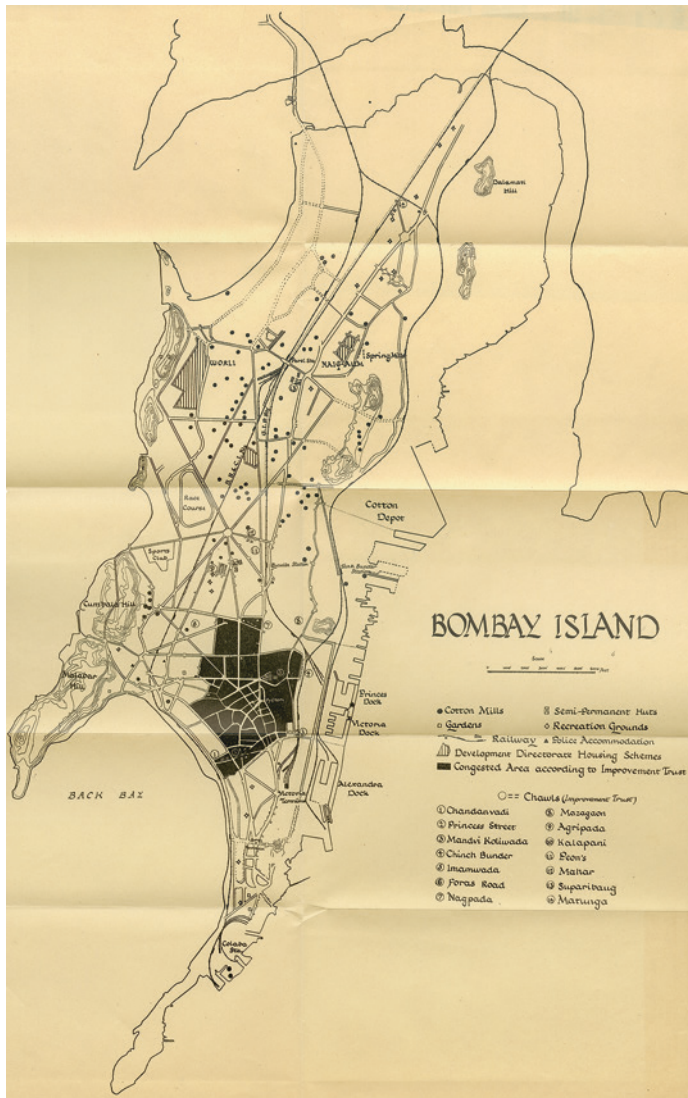
Although the earliest mills in Bombay both spun yarn and wove cloth, until the early 1900s the industry primarily focused on the production of yarn for its East Asian markets.³⁵ Bombay had become the chief exporter of factory-produced cotton yarn to China. Its export of cotton yarn to China grew from 2.4 million pounds in 1873–1874 to 45 million pounds in 1882–1883.³⁶ However, by the 1890s, Japan's entry into the Chinese yarn trade had challenged Bombay's predominant position and stimulated its industrialists to shift to weaving.³⁷ In the early twentieth century, the nationalist promotion of Indian goods gradually opened local markets for the finished textile goods of Bombay mills. Together, these factors contributed to the growth of production. Between 1875 and 1905, the number of spindles increased fivefold, while the looms expanded about sevenfold.³⁸ Despite fluctuations, in

the early twentieth century the industry remained one of the biggest employers of laborers and was the mainstay of Bombay's economic, social, and political life (Map 2.1).

The development of cotton mills in Bombay was significant in several ways. Although the cotton textile industry grew in other cities, such as in Cawnpore in the north, Calcutta in the east, and Madura in South India, Bombay remained the hub of the industry because it had several advantages. The Bombay Presidency produced most of the raw cotton, so transport was quicker and cheaper. Moreover, the moist climate of Bombay City was well-suited to spinning and weaving the Indian variety of short-fiber raw cotton.³⁹ The geographical location of Bombay as a port city made the export of produced yarn to China and Africa easier and cheaper. Therefore, despite the expansion of the industry elsewhere, Bombay continued to dominate this industry, because even in the early 1900s, more than half the looms and spindles in the country were still located there.⁴⁰ Moreover, the pioneering role of Indian entrepreneurs underscored the political significance of this industry. The city and its commerce might have owed its origins and its initial development to the EIC and the British. However, its subsequent commercial and industrial growth was not simply a result of Western modernization. Financed and administered by Indians, this industry reflected the enterprise and diligence of local entrepreneurs and served as an example of Indian capital's progress in a colonial situation.

LABOR AND LABORING CONDITIONS IN TEXTILE MILLS

Like its entrepreneurs, the labor force of the cotton mills migrated from other parts of western India. In 1668, when Bombay became an EIC possession, its local population of about 10,000 residents consisted of fishermen, cultivators, a few artisan communities, and petty officials.⁴¹ Its rise as a commercial and industrial center resulted in rapid demographic changes. By 1872, its population was 644,405, while the census of 1891 recorded over 821,764 inhabitants.⁴² The migration of impoverished peasants, agricultural laborers, and artisans from the adjoining rural areas and towns was decisive in this demographic growth. Agricultural scarcity, and the recurrent famines of the late nineteenth century in western India, accelerated the migration of impoverished peasants to Bombay, who sought to obtain employment in the mills. These migrants, who were primarily Hindu Marathi, came from the neighboring regions



Map 2.1 Map of Bombay displaying the location of mills, 1925. *Source:* A. R. Burnett-Hurst, *Labour and Housing in Bombay: A Study of the Economic Conditions of the Wage-Earning Classes in Bombay*, 1925

of the Deccan and Konkan, especially the Ratnagiri district in Konkan, a densely populated impoverished area on the coast to the south of Bombay.⁴³ Thus, although the population fluctuated because of epidemics such as the bubonic plague during the late 1890s and early 1900s, population growth continued in the early twentieth century, especially in the mill localities of Parel, Tarwadi, Sion, Sewari, Byculia, and Mahim.⁴⁴

A consistent influx of rural migrants to Bombay created a steady supply of labor. The great famines of 1876 to 1878 had resulted in the desperate migration of whole families—including married, single, and widowed women, as well as men—to the city. The first decennial census of Bombay, in 1881, observed that the availability of steamboats and railways encouraged “the women of the Deccan, Konkan and Gujarat to come [to Bombay] and share their masters’ fortunes in the factories and the docks.”⁴⁵ Between 1884 and 1899, the number of women employed in the mills increased, from 8,816 in 1884 to about 19,000 in 1899. The proportion of women in the workforce grew consistently. In the early twentieth century, women constituted between 20 to 25 percent of total persons employed in Bombay mills.⁴⁶ In the formal industrial sector of colonial India, the cotton mills of Bombay, like the jute factories of Bengal, became one of the biggest employers of women.

Most migrant workers maintained their rural links and periodically went back to their villages.⁴⁷ Maintaining rural ties didn’t necessarily imply pre-industrial tendencies, as historians have argued in recent years.⁴⁸ Rather, workers’ visits to their rural bases highlighted structural problems inherent in the textile industry of Bombay. The millowners’ strategy of adjusting production according to fluctuations in demand created undulating demands for labor. The oscillating production patterns resulted in greater casual hiring of labor, making workers’ employment dependent on the market. Thus the workers’ return to their rural base was their safety net.⁴⁹ In the absence of a welfare infrastructure in Bombay, millworkers relied on rural and familial networks. Because of inadequate medical aid, women workers in the mills and the wives of male laborers had to return to their villages for childbirth.⁵⁰ In times of sickness and old age, most workers took refuge in their rural homes. This dependence on their rural base was only one aspect of the precarious situation that workers faced in the early industrial economy of Bombay.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the textile mills of Bombay were notorious for their unregulated and unhealthy working routines. This exploitative labor situation was directly linked to the

organization of production in the industry. Migration created a surplus pool of labor that enabled employers to pay low wages.⁵¹ The abundance of available labor enabled millowners to avoid the extensive use of high-cost machinery, instead making production a labor-intensive process. The Sassoon group, considered one of the most efficient in Bombay, used machines that were more than forty years old, and in some cases, the employers had not upgraded machines for over sixty years.⁵² In the absence of sufficient and sophisticated machines, the extension of the working day became one of the primary methods of ensuring rapid production and generating greater surplus value or profits. According to Morris D. Morris, in his 1965 study of Bombay textile mills:

The critical object was to guarantee the continued operation of the machines. This pressure was increased, during the first half century [the late nineteenth century] particularly, by the fact that the managing agents, the decision makers in each mill, were paid a commission per pound of output. Thus the relative price of factors and the specific incentives for the entrepreneurs were both strongly on the side of having the mills operate long hours, producing as much product as possible.⁵³

The long working day demanded of millhands was one of the worst features of early factory life in Bombay. No limit on working hours was mandated until the 1890s. In 1875, Philip Edmond Wodehouse, the governor of Bombay, appointed a commission to inquire into the need for labor legislation. The commission reported that “the hours of work are stated to be from sunrise to sunset, with half an hour rest time in the middle of the day. In the longest days of the year this would give about thirteen hours of work a day, including the half-hour rest. In the shortest days of the year, it would give about eleven hours.”⁵⁴ The Bombay Factory Labour Commission of 1884 observed a similar working day of eleven to fourteen hours.⁵⁵ With the introduction of electric light in 1887, the working “day” began to claim laborers’ night time also. In 1899, the Bombay Millowners’ Association (BMOA) reluctantly passed a resolution that “it is undesirable, under any circumstances to work the mills with the same set of hands more than 13 hours per day.”⁵⁶ This resolution proved to be totally ineffectual and the mills continued to operate longer hours with the assistance of artificial light. By 1905, electric lights were installed in sixty out of the existing eighty-five mills and the hours “as a rule were from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m.”⁵⁷ Because markets in India

and China were buoyant, the emphasis was on production regardless of human cost.

In Bombay, women worked the same hours as men until 1891, when the provincial government of Bombay limited their maximum hours to eleven. However, millowners frequently evaded this law.⁵⁸ Although factory regulations of the early twentieth century gradually reduced the number of children employed in the mills, during the late nineteenth century they were treated no better than the adult workers.⁵⁹ In the absence of regulations on the minimum age of employment, millowners freely employed underage children, sometimes as young as six years old.⁶⁰ The Factories Act of 1881 reduced children's working hours to nine per day, and the Act of 1891 further reduced them to seven hours a day. In practice, these provisions were often violated, and in many cases children worked as long as the adult workers.⁶¹ Despite some efforts at regulation in the first half-century of industrialization, working hours were harsh for all classes of laborers—men, women, and children. Moreover, workers often reached the mill early as they had no way of knowing the time. Watches and clocks were luxuries; there were no public clocks in their districts, and the Bombay Municipality prohibited the use of the steam whistles. The fear of losing their jobs made many of them sleep outside the mill gate until it was opened, or start walking from their homes as early as four o'clock in the morning.⁶²

In addition to the long working day, the mills had limited provisions for rest periods. Most mills claimed that they stopped work for an interval of thirty minutes for lunch.⁶³ However, in their evidence before the Factory Commission of 1884, millworkers unanimously stated that their recess lasted no more than ten to fifteen minutes.⁶⁴ The Factory Commission of 1890 recorded that though most mills claimed that they implemented the thirty-minute rule, "either from selfish motives or for the purpose of getting the operatives up to their work in time, the gong or whistle for recommencing work is sounded ten or fifteen minutes before the full half-hour has expired."⁶⁵ Similarly, no holidays were fixed: "[O]ne [mill] closes every Sunday in the year, one every other Sunday, and others one Sunday in the month."⁶⁶ The Bombay Factory Labour Commission of 1884 observed that, in comparison to British millworkers, who had ten annual English holidays, fifty-two Sundays, and fifty-two half Saturdays, the millhands of Bombay had only fifteen holidays a year.⁶⁷ According to James Jones, the inspector of factories in Bombay, although Sundays were holidays in a few mills, the hands were required to attend work on these

holidays for four to five hours to clean the machinery and production equipment.⁶⁸ Even when the millowners agreed to give a holiday for festivals, they required workers to come to the mill on the following Sunday.⁶⁹

The long working hours, inadequate rest periods, and lack of holidays fatigued workers. Sometimes, they became so exhausted that “they fell fast asleep on the mill floor directly [after] they had thrown the strap off their machines and before some of their fellow hands were able to get out of the mill doors.”⁷⁰ The regulation of rest periods and holidays continued to be difficult to enact and implement. In their evidence to the Factory Commission of 1884, millowners such as Dinshaw Maneckji Petit trivialized the absence and partial implementation of workday regulations, claiming that workers themselves desired to have long working hours so that they could earn more wages per day.⁷¹ Another witness, J. H. Mody, the manager of the National Mill, reaffirmed that laborers had no wish for a weekly holiday. He suspected that “if the mills stopped every Sunday I am afraid the [mill] hands would spend their time in indulgences.”⁷² Other owners and mill managers supported such views.

Unlike their employers, the few workers interviewed during the proceedings of the Factory Commission of 1884 complained about their unregulated, exhausting job schedules.⁷³ In September 1884, workers held meetings under the leadership of Narayan M. Lokhande, the chairman of the BMOA, one of the earliest organizations of mill laborers in Bombay. Lokhande presented a memorandum to the Commission signed by 5,500 millhands. They demanded that:

All millhands be allowed one complete day of rest every Sunday.
That half an hour's recess be allowed them at noon every working day.
That work in mills should commence at 6:30 A.M. and cease at sunset.⁷⁴

The Factory Commission of 1890 and subsequent enquiries observed that workers were consistent in their demand for a weekly holiday on Sunday and regularization of the working day.⁷⁵ In his testimony to the Textile Factory Labour Commission of Bombay in 1906, Yasoo Succaram stated that he worked from five in the morning to seven in the evening with only a brief fifteen-minute midday break. He had no recess to eat during the day and managed on his morning meal, which he consumed before leaving for work. He complained that this exhausting work schedule affected his digestive system and joints; he did not want longer working hours even if it meant higher pay.⁷⁶

Worker protests moved beyond their testimonies before enquiry commissions. In spontaneous and planned agitations, workers demanded uniform and better work schedules. After a massive meeting held on 24 September 1905, millworkers submitted a memorandum to the government of Bombay requesting restricted and fixed hours.⁷⁷ Sometimes their resistance took a more militant form. The wide variation among Bombay mills in working hours per day stimulated a tense confrontation in October 1905, when groups of operatives attacked the late-working mills, disrupting work and destroying the records of attendance.⁷⁸ In response, the BMOA proposed shorter hours—a scheme that its own members disregarded.⁷⁹ No statutory limits were placed on the working hours of adult male laborers until the Factory Act of 1911, which limited adult male working hours to twelve a day, with a half-hour break after six hours of work.⁸⁰

In addition to unregulated work, the lack of standardization in wage rates, and a variety of payment methods, forfeiture and fines characterized the industry. The early factory commissions categorically dismissed this subject as “matters which must be left for settlement by the operatives with their employers, and any interference on the part of the Government would be alike impracticable and undesirable.”⁸¹ Available sources suggest that in the late nineteenth century, most mills paid piece rates, allowing owners to adjust wages according to their varying production needs.⁸² In the absence of standardized wage rules, management attempted to reduce wages when the demand for yarn went down.⁸³ Income varied since it was based on skills, age, and gender. In 1875, in one mill, men earned ten to twelve rupees, women seven rupees, and children two to three and a half rupees.⁸⁴ Workers received no compensation if the management decided to stop the day’s work for any reason.⁸⁵ Laborers complained that fines for leave of absence and the withholding of wages were widespread.⁸⁶ Employers used wage deductions to discipline labor, with few exceptions for absence due to sickness. Typically, a worker lost two days’ wages for missing one working day.⁸⁷ Employers also withheld wages to avoid desertion or to restrict the mobility of labor.⁸⁸ The late payment of wages compelled workers to take credit from their local moneylenders. The unhealthy working conditions in the mills and the dismal housing underlined the implications of unregulated and unequal economic growth for the industrial working class.

HEALTH AND HOUSING OF MILLWORKERS

The late nineteenth-century factory commissions concentrated on the feasibility of workday regulations; their discussions about health were sporadic. They recommended no mandatory safeguards against the ill-ventilated, fiber-laden atmosphere that prevailed in the mills. Similarly, the commissions suggested no mandatory provisions for sanitary industrial housing. Although health and housing were marginal topics in earlier factory documents, the ill effects of spending long hours in the hot and humid mills were discussed more frequently. The Factory Commission of 1875 observed that “ventilation [in the mills] has not received the attention it deserves from the owners.”⁸⁹ Since the windows throughout the mills remained closed, cotton particles permeated the air, making the atmosphere extremely “fluffy.”⁹⁰ Drs. Joseph Anderson and Thomas Weir, the two medical witnesses to the Commission of 1875, argued that considering the injury to workers’ health that cotton fibers and high temperatures might cause, mills should provide for adequate ventilation.⁹¹ The employers promptly retorted that poor ventilation and the consequent high temperatures were necessary evils. They shut the ventilators and maintained a temperature of at least 95 degrees Fahrenheit to retain moisture and to prevent fiber breakage.⁹²

Elaborating on these hazardous work conditions, Dr. Joseph Anderson who served as house surgeon at the Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy (J. J.) Hospital of Bombay, testified:

There are cases now and then among mill people of chest diseases, inflammation of the lungs and air passages, and derangement of the stomach, all of which are believed to be due to continual employment in mills. Free ventilation is necessary to prevent the prevalence of these diseases. . . . I think the atmosphere of these mills is injurious to all and the temperature is too high.⁹³

Dr. Weir, another medical witness, cautioned that working in ill-ventilated rooms with temperatures as high as 98 degrees Fahrenheit “would slowly undermine the health [of workers and] engender diseases, that might in time prove fatal.”⁹⁴ Although the report of the subsequent Commission of 1884 recorded the fiber-laden, hot, and humid atmosphere of mills, it did not analyze the impact of these conditions on workers’ health.

The Factory Commission of 1884 documented that fresh air and light “so essential for the health of the operatives is to a great extent shut out.”⁹⁵ Before spinning and weaving, different varieties of raw cotton were mixed together. Blowing or cleaning the cotton off foreign materials and carding or twisting cotton into rough yarn followed this process.⁹⁶ All these processes produced a considerable amount of dust and cotton particles. Since most mills conducted these preparatory jobs in the same building where winding, reeling, spinning, and weaving was done, all workers were forced to inhale the air saturated with cotton fluff.⁹⁷ The use of improved machinery, fitted with exhausts, in preparatory processes could have prevented the spread of cotton dust and particles in work rooms, but this was an investment that mill-owners were unwilling to make.⁹⁸ Since ventilation was lacking, the inside air remained unchanged and heavy with dust and fibers.

Based on its inspection of twenty-five spinning and weaving mills in Bombay, a sanitary report that formed a part of the Factory Commission of 1884 declared this environment injurious to workers’ health.⁹⁹ It recommended special “inlets for the admission of fresh air and outlets for the removal of foul air.”¹⁰⁰ This report insisted that mills should arrange air propellers that allowed fresh air inside the workrooms at regular intervals. However, the final recommendations of the Commission of 1884 included no provisions for regulating ventilation.¹⁰¹ Although the subsequent Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1908 recommended that mills should provide adequate ventilation and reduce their high humidity level of about 75 percent, it did not specify any standards.¹⁰² Consequently, excessive humidity inside the mills persisted.¹⁰³ As later reports documented, the lack of ventilation and floating cotton particles in production areas persisted in the mills into the late 1920s.¹⁰⁴ A factory report aptly remarked that millowners treated this subject with minimum interest, as it did not directly affect their productivity.¹⁰⁵

Millowners neglected the creation and maintenance of basic facilities such as latrines and washrooms. The latrines were found to be “indescribably filthy,” while “offensive matters” from the ill-managed cesspools fouled the mills’ atmosphere during rainy seasons.¹⁰⁶ The inadequate construction of latrines and sewers resulted in the accumulation of water, which freely bred mosquitoes. The prevalence of “malarious and intermittent fevers among mill-hands” was a direct result of these conditions.¹⁰⁷ Completing this grim picture of sanitation were the mill water tanks that were reportedly cleaned infrequently and consequently

gave off an obnoxious “stench of sulphuretted hydrogen.”¹⁰⁸ Although a few mills employed sweepers to clean the “privies” and production areas, most latrines were cleaned infrequently and dust and discarded material accumulated inside the work rooms.

The living environment of workers was equally dismal. Late nineteenth-century industrialization accentuated the class- and race-based spatial organization in Bombay.¹⁰⁹ While the colonial government offices, business centers, and residential quarters were situated in the Fort area in the southeast, the Indian elite mostly resided in the southwest wards of the city. By the late 1860s, these southern areas of Bombay were dotted with magnificent, sprawling official and residential buildings that displayed the wealth of the city.¹¹⁰ The high property rates in southern Bombay excluded mills and their labor. Consequently, mills and their workers were concentrated in the marshy, underdeveloped northern parts of the city that constituted the E, F, and G wards of the municipality.

The expansion of mill industries and consequent demand for labor resulted in a massive influx of immigrants to the city. The Census of 1881 observed that between 1872 and 1881, the population of Bombay grew from 644,405 to 773,196, an increase of roughly 20 percent.¹¹¹ T. S. Weir, the census commissioner, attributed this increase to the continuous arrival of migrant laborers. By the 1880s, the northern localities such as Tardeo attracted “so many people that a properly laid out village for mill-employees appeared desirable.”¹¹² Since neither millowners nor the government arranged for sanitary and subsidized housing, mill laborers, like other workers in the city, lived in privately owned *chawl* tenements with shared bathing and washing spaces. Constructed to make quick profits, these buildings lacked adequate provisions for sanitation, ventilation, and lighting. Consequently, chawls resembled “dark, unwholesome dens, into which the light of day never penetrates.”¹¹³ Congested and overcrowded, a typical millworker chawl room measured “12' × 8' × 8'. . . . No *nahahi* or sink was attached to these rooms.”¹¹⁴ Since most of these buildings lacked well-constructed sewage systems connected to a drainage network,¹¹⁵ “undrained and stagnant sullage dotted the place and bred mosquitoes”¹¹⁶ (Table 2.1).

Because of the insufficiency of housing, overcrowding was rampant. The influx of migrant labor and consequent high demand for accommodation contributed to high rents. The average monthly rent varied from three to seven rupees, which one person or family found difficult

Table 2.1 Population of Bombay City

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>
1864	8,16,562
1872	6,44,405
1881	7,73,196
1891	8,21,764
1901	7,76,006
1906	9,77,822
1911	9,79,445
1921	11,75,914
1931	11,61,383
1941	14,89,883

Source: Edwardes, *City Gazetteer*, Vol. I, 161, 163, 205; *Census of India, 1931, Vol. VIII: Bombay*, 4, *Annual Report of the Municipal Commissioner of Bombay*, 1943, 2

to pay. In this situation, sharing rooms was one available option.¹¹⁷ In the mill neighborhood of Parel, 90 percent of the inhabitants lived in one-room tenements, and the average occupancy per room was four.¹¹⁸ Single-room housing was the dominant trend in Byculla, Tarwadi, and Sewari mill localities, where in extreme instances some dwellers shared one room with ten to twenty other people.¹¹⁹ The subsequent chapter describes how inadequate industrial housing, overcrowding, and uneven development of sanitary infrastructure remained characteristic features of colonial Bombay, rendering the mill working population susceptible to death and disease.

The links among harsh factory life, dismal living conditions, and sickness received relatively greater attention in the early 1900s. In a paper published in 1907, Bhalchandra Krishna, a physician in Bombay since 1885 and a member of the Municipal Corporation, attributed the high rates of phthisis, or tuberculosis, among millworkers to their work.¹²⁰ He claimed:

The reason mill-hands suffer most is that they have to spend more than 12 hours a day in close, stuffy, and often stinking rooms. The atmosphere of the rooms is moist and warm. There are particles of fermenting starch and cotton floating in the air which may be constantly inhaled by the inmates. . . . The particles of starch and cotton floating in the air, get into the lungs and tend to produce irritation of the tissue. There is a distinct class of consumption to which mill-operatives are subject, and which is called cotton-phthisis.¹²¹

Dr. Krishna added that the “dirty home surroundings of millworkers aggravated their susceptibility [to phthisis].”¹²²

In his testimony to the Factory Commission of 1907, Dr. J. A. Turner, the executive health officer of Bombay Municipality, conjectured that phthisis and respiratory diseases were more frequent among millworkers because of the “atmosphere and general conditions” under which they worked.¹²³ Another medical witness, Dr. V. P. Chavan, who, as a private medical practitioner, had treated mill workers for over a decade, related that “as a class they [mill laborers] were deteriorating.”¹²⁴ He claimed that the most common diseases among millworkers were pulmonary. The air of the mills, charged with “impurities and fluff,” affected the lungs and “produced a state of anemia and general impairment of health.”¹²⁵ In his note of dissent, Dr. T. M. Nair, a member of the 1908 Commission, supported these views.¹²⁶ Citing medical professionals from the J. J. Hospital of Bombay, he argued that high humidity and atmospheric impurities in the poorly ventilated mills rendered workers susceptible to lung infections. Based on his inspection of mills, he conjectured that because the harsh working and living conditions depleted workers’ stamina rapidly, they were often compelled to stop working at forty and forty-five years old.¹²⁷

Both Nair and Turner pointed out that because illnesses had not been tracked alongside occupation, they were unable to conclusively establish the links between the harsh conditions and workers’ poor health. Still, they asserted, the opinions of experienced medical men such as Dr. Chavan, and their own observations, convincingly indicated that long hours in poorly lit mills, lack of fresh air, and a diet deficient in fats and nutrients all adversely affected workers’ health.¹²⁸ Moreover, high rents and consequent overcrowding in their unsanitary living spaces meant that “each room was occupied by two families, instead of one. In these overcrowded places they pass their rest time, inhaling foul carbonic-acid laden air.”¹²⁹ These later accounts substantiate an earlier observation made by the municipal health officer in 1887, that only three decades of unregulated industrialization had created a distinctly listless urban working class, “which can be distinguished from their own race engaged in other work, and from every other class by pallid look, which may be called a ‘factory countenance.’”¹³⁰ The colonizers and the colonized responded differently to such unregulated factory life and dismal living conditions.

EARLY RESPONSES TO LABOR CONDITIONS AND FACTORY REFORMS

In the late nineteenth century, nationalist opinion in Bombay was largely unresponsive to the conditions of mill labor. The first demands to regulate labor came from Britain. It was hardly surprising considering the intensifying competition between the cotton mills of Bombay and Britain. By the early nineteenth century, British cotton manufacturers sent one-quarter of their total exports to India.¹³¹ The growth of the cotton industry in India gradually made inroads into this market, stimulating the anxiety of British manufacturers. From the 1850s, the supply of yarn from Bombay mills had eroded the share of British factory yarns in the East Asian markets. In the 1890s, when Bombay mills began to produce cloth, they challenged the English cloth market in India. Although the total yardage imported from England to India continued to increase, Indian mills were gradually decreasing the British share of the market.¹³² In response, the British began to undermine the productive capacities of their rivals.

Since the cheap, unregulated labor of Bombay mills could substantially lower the cost of production, British manufacturing interests targeted this relative advantage of their Indian rivals and demanded restrictive labor legislation. Significantly, labor regulations had played a similar role in Britain. Discussing the growth of capitalism in Britain, Karl Marx emphasized that labor legislation or standardization of laboring conditions was crucial for modern industrial development.¹³³ The regulation of the length of the working day, rest periods, and holidays sought to create a rejuvenated, contented, and more efficient workforce. More importantly, the passage and extension of factory acts in industrializing Britain restricted the unregulated exploitation of human capital and thus sought to create uniform conditions of competition between capitalist entrepreneurs. In this model of capitalist growth, the comparative advantage of Indian capitalists—their ability to exploit labor unchecked—was unsettling. Thus, in 1875, the Earl of Shaftesbury urged the British Parliament to consider factory legislation for India.¹³⁴ He cautioned the House of Lords that:

We must bear in mind that India has the raw material and cheap labour; and if we allow the manufacturers there to work their operatives 16 or 17 hours and put them under no restrictions, we are giving them a very unfair

advantage over the manufacturers of our own country, and we might be undersold, even in Manchester itself, by manufactured goods imported from the East.¹³⁵

In the same year, responding to the questions in the British Parliament and to the demands of bodies such as the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Lord Salisbury, the secretary of state to India, directed the government of Bombay to enquire into the working conditions of mills.¹³⁶ The first Bombay Factory Commission was established in 1875. Based on its recommendations, the first Indian Factories Act was formulated in 1881. This act did not attempt to regulate adult male or female factory labor. It only regulated the minimum age at which children could be employed (seven years old) and laid down that children between the ages of seven and twelve could not work for more than nine hours a day.¹³⁷ These meager restrictions provoked British capitalist interests to apply pressure on the government of India to create more stringent factory laws.¹³⁸ Consequently, in 1882, the Marquess of Hartington, the secretary of state for India, appointed Meade King, a factory inspector in England, to investigate the workings of factories in Bombay. King found the existing act inadequate and cited problems such as poor enforcement of existing rules, long working hours, and a lack of sanitary facilities in the factories.¹³⁹ Subsequently, the government of Bombay appointed another commission, in 1884, to explore the possibility of amendments to the 1881 act. This commission suggested further reductions in the working hours of women and children. However, these recommendations were not translated into immediate action.¹⁴⁰

The champions of the British cotton industry continued arguing for stringent regulations. In 1889, J. M. MacLean, a member of Parliament representing Lancashire, drew attention to the “remarkable growth in India in the manufacture of cotton twists and yarn” that threatened British cotton interests.¹⁴¹ He insisted that, “with the extraordinary hours of labour in Indian mills, the competition is not fair.”¹⁴² A year later, Samuel Smith of Flintshire, another member of Parliament, reiterated that the competition between Lancashire and Bombay was uneven. The men millhands worked about eighty hours per week, whereas British factory regulations allowed a workweek of only fifty-six and a half hours.¹⁴³ He demanded immediate restrictions on this “uninhibited” use of mill labor in Bombay.¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the International Labour Conference, held at Berlin in March 1890, accelerated the demand for

labor legislation in India.¹⁴⁵ In response to these external pressures, the Indian Factory Act of 1891 recommended a weekly holiday and a reduction in the hours of female and child laborers.¹⁴⁶

Rivalry with foreign mills informed the resistance of Indian millowners to labor regulations. An effective technique of competing against British and Japanese rivals was to limit the cost of production. Together with low wages, unregulated running of factories ensured the generation of surplus value. The millowners' strong economic and political positions in the city, combined with a superior organizational efficiency, enabled them to foster pro-employer labor regulations. Established in 1875, the Bombay Millowners' Association (BMOA) was instrumental in countering the campaigns of Lancashire and Manchester industrialists and Indian philanthropists for more stringent regulation of Bombay factories. The proclaimed goal of the BMOA was "to strenuously resist, whenever occasion demands, all undue interference in the cotton industry of this Presidency, and at the same time to make it a body potential in voice and formidable in resources for the general benefit of millowners."¹⁴⁷

The millowners' economic and organizational power enabled them to attain significant representation on various factory enquiry commissions and protect their interests in any proposed labor legislation. Out of eight members of the Bombay Factory Labour Commission of 1875, six represented the industrialists.¹⁴⁸ Sir Mungaldass Nathoonbhoy, a member of the Commission, professed that proposed labor regulations were "calculated to check an important and new industry while it is yet in its infancy—a state in which it needs delicate handling and of all such influences and encouragements as may lead to promote its steady and healthy growth."¹⁴⁹ He demanded that the colonial state should not intervene in the labor management of the mills. Nathoonbhoy reiterated that since mills in Bombay paid piece rates, workers themselves were against any restrictions on their labor time, for it would jeopardize their capacity to earn more.¹⁵⁰ Dinshaw Maneckji Petit and Morarji Goculdas, other leading Bombay millowners and members of the Commission of 1875, reinforced these views.¹⁵¹ Because of their strong representation, millowners were successful in avoiding any restrictions on male factory labor in the Factory Acts of 1881 and 1891.¹⁵² The provincial government of Bombay supported the millowners' views.

During colonial rule in India, the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized did not represent a simple binary. Rather, it was a complex web of relationships that involved disparate indigenous and

metropolitan political and economic interests. Similarly, colonial government was not merely a representative of British interests. The consolidation and perpetuation of colonial authority depended on its social engineering abilities and consequent support from its indigenous landed and commercial elites. In Bombay, the Indian business magnates had shared power with the British since the city's emergence as a commercial center in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Recognizing the businessmen's superior status in the city's economy, the government of Bombay assigned them key roles in administrative bodies. From 1834, Indian businessmen were selected as justices of peace.¹⁵³ By the 1870s, millowners were appointed to the Legislative Council of the Governor of Bombay.¹⁵⁴ In these roles, millowners exerted considerable influence in shaping government policies in Bombay. In the late nineteenth century, the industrialists mitigated the nascent anti-colonial sentiments in Bombay. Although many industrialists participated in various Indian reformist and early nationalist associations, they did not engaged in open criticism of the government.¹⁵⁵ The economic and political influence of millowners and the colonial policy of cultivating allies among Indians were decisive in shaping the pro-capitalist attitude of the colonial government.

The government was careful not to portray itself as an agent of British textile manufacturing interests. In 1875, Lord Salisbury, the secretary of state for India, cautioned the British supporters of Indian factory legislation that any strict rules might raise the suspicion of Indian industrialists and turn them hostile. He reasoned that "there might be some persons who see the thing in the light we see it; but generally this proposal to limit the hours of factory labour is looked upon as a great conspiracy for the purpose of promoting the interests of Manchester manufacturers."¹⁵⁶ Following this logic, the Commission of 1875 declared that "any Imperial Act that may be passed should not interfere more than is absolutely necessary with the working of factories for these must be considered as highly important, both politically and financially, and of great benefit to the country generally, and they require encouragement of every description."¹⁵⁷ The subsequent Commission of 1884 discouraged the singling out of Bombay mills for labor regulations, as it might give "rise to jealousy and dissatisfaction."¹⁵⁸ Thus, the hesitant, limited early Factory Acts evinced the pro-employer perspective of the government. Although government in India appointed factory commissions in response to the demands in Britain, it refrained from enacting strict

measures that might severely endanger the economic interests of Indian employers.

As mentioned previously, by the late 1880s, workers themselves were gradually beginning to resist the oppressive, unregulated working conditions. In 1884, laborers of Coorla Mill struck work to protest against the late payment of wages and the demand to clean machines during holidays.¹⁵⁹ There were scattered reports of sporadic strikes in the 1890s, suggesting a shift from simple petitioning to strikes.¹⁶⁰ The most common cause for stopping work was wages. In 1893, workers protested the attempt of several mills to reduce wages to compensate for a lower demand for yarn and a consequent fall in prices.¹⁶¹ A year later, workers of one mill briefly struck work to protest against forfeiture and the non-payment of wages.¹⁶² These few oppositional gestures remained limited because of the lack of leadership and labor unions.

Founded in 1884, the Bombay Millhands' Association is often regarded as the first effort to organize workers. Despite its role in organizing millworkers' meetings in 1884 and 1890, the limited organizational abilities and resources of this association kept it from challenging the dominant, pro-employer perspectives on labor. The factory inspector's report of 1892 documented that the association lacked a roll of membership, funding, and clear organizational guidelines.¹⁶³ The report characterized N. M. Lokhande, the self-proclaimed president of the association, as a "voluntary adviser and a philanthropic promoter of labour legislation."¹⁶⁴ Apparently, he was not seen as a union leader who sought to organize labor into a formidable counterforce.

In the absence of organized unions with articulate leaders, workers resorted to everyday forms of resistance to circumvent their grueling work schedule. No documentation of workers' everyday subversive behavior exists. Such actions can be glimpsed in the complaints made to the early factory commissions about the "natural" tendency of laborers to loiter and "waste away time in smoking and resting."¹⁶⁵ The employers often used workers' habit of taking short breaks as an excuse to avoid implementing mandatory rest time and shorter working hours.¹⁶⁶ In his evidence to the Factory Commission of 1884, N. N. Wadia, the manager of Petit Mills, insisted that, unlike the disciplined workers of the mills in England, "operatives in Bombay take full liberty to go out, to take their meals, to smoke, to do anything." He asserted that millworkers' habit of procrastinating while working rendered long hours necessary. This claim became more pronounced when the Factory Labour Commission

of 1908 proposed a restriction on the hours of adult male laborers. Mill employers lamented how workers' tendency to take "intervals without permission, smoking, idling reduce the actual working hours to a great extent."¹⁶⁷

These employer complaints were possibly exaggerated to counter mandatory restrictions on working days. Simultaneously, such references indicated that in the absence of legislative restrictions, the alleged "idling" was one of the available ways to evade an excruciating work schedule. A late nineteenth-century document related that "sometimes seeing that the manager or over-looker is away, he [the worker] skulks off to his friend for a chat. When the manager returns to the department, the arrival is immediately made known among the men by certain signs or gestures."¹⁶⁸ Another report insisted that workers took short breaks to avoid the possible physical injuries and fatigue resulting from continuous work.¹⁶⁹ In his note of dissent to the Indian Factory Labour Commission (IFLC) of 1908, Dr. Nair reaffirmed that when the mill laborer is put to work "for a longer period than he can endure, he has to adapt himself to the work in such a way that he can get through the work with the least possible injury to himself."¹⁷⁰ Thus, the short breaks or much lamented "idleness" reduced the intensity of work and acted as a safeguard against back-breaking labor. However, these covert safeguards against an oppressive work schedule were insufficient to ensure workers' well-being.

Unfortunately, only a few Indian reformers and philanthropists in Bombay supported the initiatives to regulate work schedules in the mills. Born in Bombay in 1831, Sorabji Shapoorji Bengali, a Parsi journalist and philanthropist and a member of the Legislative Council of Bombay, was among the few who sought improved conditions for workers. In 1878, he drafted a bill for the Bombay Legislative Council that proposed to limit the working hours of men, women, and children in Bombay's textile mills to eleven, ten, and nine, respectively. Although he was unable to generate sufficient support to introduce his bill, Bengali continued to argue for pro-labor legislation.¹⁷¹ As a member of the Factory Commissions of 1884 and 1890, he argued for a weekly holiday and for reduced working hours.¹⁷² Through his newspaper *Rast Goftar*, he publicized the abject working conditions of millhands.¹⁷³

Another notable Indian supporter of welfare measures was N. M. Lokhande, a former supervisor and assistant manager in a cotton mill.¹⁷⁴ From 1880, Lokhande published an Anglo-Marathi weekly, *Din Bandhu*,

which consistently argued for ameliorating millworkers' conditions.¹⁷⁵ This weekly severely criticized the violations of Factory Acts in Bombay, characterizing the existing laws as "simply a sham" and claiming that the proprietors of factories openly violated its provisions.¹⁷⁶ As a witness to the Factory Commission of 1884, Lokhande argued for a scrupulous implementation of existing factory regulations and for the introduction of uniform working hours with adequate rest.¹⁷⁷ Significant among his later achievements was the formation of the Bombay Millhands' Association in 1884. This association organized public meetings of textile workers to demand labor regulations. As its president, Lokhande submitted resolutions passed in the public meetings of millworkers to the Factory Commission of 1891.¹⁷⁸ It is unclear why these two men were supportive of labor regulations. Humanitarian concerns and, in Lokhande's case, firsthand knowledge of millworkers' conditions might have motivated them to champion legislative reforms. Unfortunately their efforts had little impact because of the hostile attitudes of nationalists and the local press to factory reforms.

During the late nineteenth century, nationalist leaders largely ignored the hardships of workers, and prominent local nationalist newspapers actively opposed any attempts to regulate factory work. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, some late nineteenth-century Indian nationalists were deeply concerned with the adverse impact of colonization on India's economy. The industrial revolution in England had significantly impacted the colonial economy of India, transforming India into a market for finished British goods and a producer of raw materials.¹⁷⁹ The British Raj used the revenues generated in India to finance Home Charges (the cost of maintaining the India Office in London) and colonial administrative and military structures in India. Also, the Raj spent revenues to purchase Indian items meant for export to Britain. Like other parts of the empire, British capital investments in India in sectors such as railways went back to Britain as profits. This unilateral transfer of resources to Britain stimulated severe criticism among Indian nationalists.

The nationalists were anxious that the imperial economic policies would impoverish India, making it a "backward" agricultural economy. After a meticulous analysis of colonial trade and commerce in the nineteenth century, Dadabhai Naoroji of Bombay, a founder member of the Indian National Congress (INC) and a member of the British House of Commons from 1895 to 1898, argued that the consistent "drain of

colonial trade surpluses to Britain and the exigencies of the state expenditure made India the drudge for the benefit of England.”¹⁸⁰ Emphasizing the negative aspects of colonial rule, Romesh Chunder Dutt, another prominent INC member and an economic historian, argued that the drain of potential capital to Britain hampered India’s industrial growth.¹⁸¹ Dutt lamented that “the loss of indigenous industries was not replaced by any new industry; and millions of weavers sank to the level of agricultural labourers, and increased the pressure on soil.”¹⁸²

M. G. Ranade, the foremost moderate INC leader in the Bombay Presidency, echoed these views. He insisted that the poverty of India emanated from its colonized status that turned it “into a plantation, growing raw produce to be shipped by British agents in British ships to be worked into fabric by British skill and capital and to be re-exported to the Dependency [India] by British merchants.”¹⁸³ Ranade criticized this predominantly agricultural economy that generated “no employment for local skill and capital.”¹⁸⁴ Others agreed with his assertions that “the phenomenal poverty [of India] came from our growing dependence on the single and precarious resources of agriculture.”¹⁸⁵ Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a prominent nationalist leader from the Bombay Presidency who represented the extremist group within the INC, asserted that overdependence on agriculture contributes to situations where “one bad harvest is sufficient to cause millions to die of starvation.”¹⁸⁶ Dutt declared that “agriculture, the only industry in India should be relieved,”¹⁸⁷ while Naoroji insisted that industries must expand and the “produce of the country *must* increase.”¹⁸⁸

The economic nationalists of this period were not specifically interested in reviving the traditional, artisanal industries of India. Rather, they idealized large-scale industrialization, modeled after the industrial development in Western Europe and America, as a panacea for India’s chronic poverty.¹⁸⁹ Ranade was convinced that no artisanal industries could match modern factory-based production. The remedy to poverty lay in “the organization of Industry and Capital on the Joint Stock principle for collective and large undertakings.”¹⁹⁰ He deemed the cotton mills of Bombay to be a primary example of modern industrial enterprise that provided employment to hundreds of thousands of Indians.¹⁹¹ Discussing “textile self sufficiency,” Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a leading nationalist moderate of Bombay and the political guru of Mahatma Gandhi, declared that handlooms were inadequate since “the main part of the work will have to be done by machinery.”¹⁹² Even Tilak,

Gokhale's more extreme colleague, urged that "we must become capitalist and enterprisers . . . a nation of traders, machine-makers, and shop keepers."¹⁹³

This emphasis on modern industrial growth seemingly reflected the acceptance of Western supremacy in the material domain. Examining the strategies of the late nineteenth-century anti-colonial nationalists, Partha Chatterjee has proposed that the early leadership fiercely resisted colonial interventions into the private sphere of family, home, and religious culture, the markers of cultural identity.¹⁹⁴ Simultaneously, in the material or public domain, the nationalists acknowledged the superiority of their Western rulers. They promoted careful study and replication of Western material progress. The idealization of the Western model of industrial progress was one example of a derivative discourse that impelled colonial nationalism to "choose its forms from the gallery of 'models' offered by European and American nation-states."¹⁹⁵ While Chatterjee's framework convincingly explains the insistence on the Western model of industrial growth, it underwrites the opposition to imperial policies inherent in the nationalist promotion of Western economic modernity. Bombay, with its expanding cotton mills, exemplified industrial progress. Nationalists commended these developments. Yet this emulation of the Western model of growth stimulated jealous protective gestures and criticisms against unfair colonial economic policies of the British; the material domain did not simply represent subordination, imitation, and admiration.

Nationalists were vociferous in their opposition to the discriminatory excise duties, and they lamented the lack of state protection for the growing Indian textile industry. Naoroji pointed out that the colonial government's decision to lower excise duties on cotton goods imported from Britain to India was an attempt to "nip in the bud" the textile factories of Bombay.¹⁹⁶ Dutt claimed that the decision to abolish import duties on British cotton goods in 1882 indicated that "the growth of looms and factories in Bombay aroused jealousy [in Britain]."¹⁹⁷ Since the colonial state continued to tax cotton goods produced in Indian mills, entrepreneurs in India encountered unfair competition from Lancashire within Indian markets. Dutt deplored that "the infant mill industry of Bombay, instead of receiving help and encouragement was repressed by an excise duty unknown in any other part of the civilized world."¹⁹⁸ Later nationalist leaders of the Bombay Presidency, such as Tilak and Gokhale, rebuked the colonial government for not protecting

the infant textile industry of India and for not creating a “protective wall” of import duties on competing foreign goods.¹⁹⁹ Not surprisingly, these leaders maintained silence about the exploitative working conditions and harsh living atmosphere of textile laborers in Bombay. They remained indifferent to the attempts to restrict the excruciating work schedule in the mills and disregarded the millowners’ abuse of human capital.

While many prominent nationalist figures were silent on these issues, local leaders, most prominently Dr. K. N. Bahadurji, boldly undermined any restrictions on Indian mill labor. In 1891, Bahadurji engaged in a heated discussion with Holt S. Hallett, an engineer with the GOI in the late nineteenth century and an ardent proponent of British economic interests. In a paper read at the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography held in London in 1891, Hallett described the situation of mill labor in Bombay.²⁰⁰ Citing the findings of previous factory commissions, he related: “to work mill hands 14 hours a day during the hottest time of the year with only one or two necessary intervals is a disgrace for Indian manufacturers, and calls loudly for redress by government legislation.”²⁰¹ Hallett went on to deplore the “enervating atmosphere in the mills laden with cotton dust, fluff and disease” and the “inhuman extraction of labour” prevalent in the mills of Bombay. The Bombay Millowners’ Association had deputed Bahadurji to represent the perspective of millowners at the Congress. Bahadurji vehemently contradicted Hallett’s grim depiction of mill labor in Bombay and claimed that:

There are no very strict restrictions. The Indian operative, who is paid by piece work, is allowed to come in half-an-hour after time of starting work. . . . There is no rule or way of seeing him constantly at his post during the working hours of the mill. He is a perfectly free agent in that regard. He feels himself at liberty to take his meals between the hours of seven and twelve, to stretch his legs occasionally, to loiter in the compound, or perhaps have his shave and shampoo under little sheds in the mill compound wherever he pleases.²⁰²

He insisted that circumstances were not abusive in Bombay mills, where workers were informally allowed to take short breaks. The application of English factory laws in India would reduce this flexibility of work schedule for both Indian millowners and operatives.²⁰³

The flourishing Indian press mirrored the attitudes of nationalist leaders about regulation of labor. It downplayed the misery of workers and ridiculed any proposed legislation that would restrict the unimpeded use of labor in the mills. The rivalry between British and Indian cotton manufacturers influenced newspaper journalists. The *Jam-e-Jamshed*, an Anglo-Gujarati daily, viewed the Factory Commission of 1875 as a Manchester plot. It asserted that millworkers of Bombay were better placed than those in any other country, and that their hours were not longer than those of an average agricultural laborer.²⁰⁴ Commenting on the later Factory Commission of 1884, the *Indian Spectator*, a leading English-language and Marathi-owned newspaper, argued that “in the present condition of the various growing industries in the city it is essential that no needless official interference should be encouraged by further legislative enactment.”²⁰⁵

Local press consistently interpreted factory enquiries as conspiratorial tools to undermine Indian mills. Linking the earlier campaigns to abolish import duties on cotton with the advocacy of labor regulation, the *Bombay Samachar*, a Marathi newspaper, elaborated:

Through a selfish desire to crush the Indian cotton industry the cotton manufacturers of Lancashire put pressure upon the authorities in England to abolish the cotton import duties. Failing to secure their selfish object by this measure [not being able to totally crush the Indian industry merely by imposing discriminatory cotton duties], a fanciful complaint was brought by the Manchester cotton dealers that the Indian mill-hands had been overworked, and pressure was brought to bear upon the Indian government to appoint a Factory Commission to enquire into the condition of these workmen.²⁰⁶

The paper reemphasized that the efforts to curtail working hours in Bombay mills were a direct outcome of the “jealousy of the selfish British cotton manufacturers who command such powerful influence that the English Ministry trembles before them.”²⁰⁷

The *Bombay Samachar* also claimed that, contrary to the claims of British cotton manufacturers, “the mill-hands in Bombay were not overworked.”²⁰⁸ Extending this view, *Mahratta*, an English-language daily edited by Tilak, dismissed Lancashire’s concern for workers’ health and claimed that “the Indian millowners would be the first to detect any decline in the working capacity of the labourers they employ.”²⁰⁹ One

paper asserted that legislative restrictions hurt workers' own interests. Ignoring millworkers' petitions to reduce working hours, the papers argued that the "restrictions on working will curtail the income of poor mill labourers. Thus there is all likelihood that the selfish sympathy of Lancashire for Indian mill-hands will make them poorer than before and quite wretched."²¹⁰ The *Indu Prakash*, an Anglo-Marathi daily, insisted that restrictions on female mill labor meant "that bread is taken out of the mouth of so many factory women."²¹¹ One paper even emphasized that, far from being miserable, Indian factory workers were leading a contented life. The *Native Opinion* declared that "there is no doubt that the mill-hands of Bengal and Bombay are better off than those of England, not because they enjoy higher pay, but because their habits are simpler and their wants fewer, and their diet cheap."²¹² These defensive arguments underscored the unwavering commitment of economic nationalism to protect a budding Indian enterprise. Simultaneously, this enthusiasm for economic self-reliance eschewed the exploitation of labor in Bombay's mills.

CONCLUSION

The growth of cotton mills in the late nineteenth century and the consequent creation of an urban working class were the basis for modern industrialism in colonial Bombay. The industry and its labor stimulated conflicting responses from various sections of colonial society. India's subordinate status in the imperial economic system, especially its positioning as a de-industrialized, captive market for British factory goods, dramatically shaped these reactions. Eager to retain their monopoly over the Indian market, cotton manufacturers in Britain relentlessly promoted the enactment of factory regulations in India that might restrict the ability of Indian rivals to exploit human capital. Although the colonial state in India appointed factory enquiry commissions and enacted some regulations, it provided ample space to Indian capitalists, its collaborators in maintaining the Raj, to manipulate the meager legislative restrictions.

The rivalry between the colony and the metropole stimulated defensive positions from the local press and nationalist leaders. As passionate supporters of Western industrial modernity, Indian economic nationalists of the late nineteenth century disregarded the harsh impact of unregulated factory life and dismal living conditions on millworkers. Their voluminous studies and the commentaries of local press failed to mention

the lack of basic facilities such as sanitary housing. Consequently, the discourse about worker well-being remained limited to some rudimentary factory laws, and even these limited legislative actions were constructed as imperialist conspiracies against Indian industries. Thus, in the late nineteenth century, anti-colonial nationalists compromised the well-being of industrial workers in service of their abstract perceptions about an economically strong nation. They aligned with the interests of Indian capital, a feature that would continue to characterize anti-colonial nationalism in the later, mass-based nationalist phase.

NOTES

1. K. N. Bahadurji, "Indian Factory Workers," a paper read at the Congress of Hygiene and Demography, in *IFLC 1908*, Vols. I and II (London: William Hutchinson, 1891), 10–11. In 1884, Bahadurji had become the first Indian to obtain a Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of London. He was later a faculty member at the Grant Medical College of Bombay and a member of the Indian National Congress.
2. *Report of the Commissioner Appointed by the Governor of Bombay in Council to Enquire into The Conditions of the Operatives in the Bombay Factories and the Necessity or otherwise for the Passing of a Factory Act* (henceforth *Factory Commission of 1875*) (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1875), 2.
3. Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1901); R. C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, Vols. I and II (London: Kegan Paul, 1904).
4. Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to Nationalist Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 209–41.
5. British cotton mills began to produce textile goods in 1676. To promote the nascent industry, in 1721 the British state prohibited the import of cotton goods from India. At the same time, the export of British cotton goods into India increased as India absorbed more than one-quarter of the total textile imports from Britain. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. IV (London: Trubner, 1881), 553–57.
6. Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1969), 327–54.
7. D. H. Buchanan, *The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), 206; Claude Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics, 1931–39: The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 8.

8. Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise*, 206.
9. In colonial documents and travel accounts, Bombay City was frequently described as the *Urbs Prima in Indis*. Lord George Harris, the governor of Bombay from 1890 to 1895, recounted that this title underscored the city's commercial, industrial, and architectural advances, as well as its location on the Arabian Sea, which facilitated Bombay's connection with the world and made it the "front door of India." Lord Harris, "Bombay," in William Sheowring, ed., *The British Empire Series*, Vol. I, *India, Ceylon, Straits Settlement, British North Borneo, Hong-Kong* (London: Kegan Paul, Trunch, Trubner, 1899), 48.
10. S. M. Edwardes, *The Rise of Bombay: A Retrospect* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1902), 89–90; *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. VIII, *Berhampore to Bombay* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 404.
11. Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 89; Amar Farooqui, "Urban Development in a Colonial Situation: Early Nineteenth Century Bombay," *Economic and Political Weekly* (henceforth *EPW*), Vol. 31, No. 40 (5 October 1996): 2747; J. C. Masselos, "Changing Definitions of Bombay: City State to Capital City," in Indu Banga, ed., *Ports and Their Hinterlands in India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1992), 273–316.
12. S. M. Edwardes, *Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island* (henceforth *City Gazetteer*), Vol. III (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1909), 403.
13. W. W. Hunter, ed., *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. III (London: Trubner, 1885), 75; Meera Kosambi, "Commerce, Conquest and the Colonial City: Role of Locational Factors in the Rise of Bombay," *EPW*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (5 January 1985): 33–34.
14. *Ibid.*, 34.
15. *Ibid.*, 35.
16. Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 221–22; Amar Farooqui, "Urban Development," 2746–59, Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India: A Study of Bombay Cotton Mills, 1854–1947* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 11.
17. Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 243–44; Kosambi, "Commerce, Conquest and the Colonial City," 34.
18. Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 110–19.
19. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. VIII, 407.
20. Walter R. Cassels, *Cotton: An Account of Its Culture in the Bombay Presidency* (Bombay: Education Society Press, 1862), 6–8; *General Report on the Administration of the Bombay (Presidency) for the Year 1873–74* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1875), 279–81.
21. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. III, 76.
22. The first railway in India was inaugurated between Bombay and Thana in 1853. By the mid-1860s, one line had been extended eastward over

- Bhor Ghat toward the central India cotton-growing fields, and another line was opened to Ahmedabad and the cotton areas of Gujarat. Cassels, *Cotton: An Account of Its Culture in the Bombay Presidency*, 297–326; Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 262–63.
23. Farooqui, “Urban Development,” 2748–49.
 24. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. IV (London: Trubner & Co., 1881), 554; Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 23.
 25. For the development of shipbuilding, see Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 153–54. The expansion of trade in the 1830s encouraged the establishment of banks that would pool the trading community’s capital resources. The Bank of Bombay was founded in 1840, followed by Bank of Western India in 1842 and the Commercial Bank of India in 1845. By 1850, there were four such banks in the city. Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 156, 275.
 26. W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Empire: Its People, History and Products* (London: W. H. Allen, 1893), 687; Kosambi, “Commerce, Conquest and the Colonial City,” 35; Morris, *Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force*, 20.
 27. Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 110–19; Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840–1885* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 2.
 28. Ibid.
 29. Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 144–45. For details of these communities, especially the experience, excellence, and dominance of Parsis in shipbuilding, banking, and brokerage prior to the advent of the British in western India, see Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001), 37–64.
 30. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II (London: Trubner & Co., 1881), 214; Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 162–64, 236–37. According to a rough estimate, Dadabhai Pestonji Wadia, owner of one of the biggest Parsi trading firms in the 1840s, had bought property worth Rs. 50 lakh in Bombay. He had acquired approximately one-quarter of the island and received about Rs. 2 lakh per annum as rent returns. Other leading Indian traders and bankers made similar investments. Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, 12.
 31. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. III, *The Indian Empire, Economic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 195; Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 200.
 32. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, III:196.

33. *Indian Industrial Commission*, Vol. I, *Report* (Calcutta: Government Central Press, 1918), 72; *Proceedings of the General Department of the Government of Bombay*, Maharashtra State Archives (henceforth MSA), File No. 574, 1920, m58; S. D. Mehta, *The Cotton Mills of India, 1854-1954* (Bombay: The Textile Association of India, 1954), 13.
34. Indian Industrial Commission, *Report*, Vol. I, 72; Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 200-201.
35. Hunter, *The Indian Empire*, 482-83; Chandavarkar, *Origins of Industrial Capitalism*, 246-47.
36. Mehta, *The Cotton Mills of India*, 47-48.
37. Indian Industrial Commission, *Report*, Vol. I, 73.
38. S. M. Rutnagur, *Bombay Industries: The Cotton Mills, A Review of the Progress of the Textile Industry in Bombay from 1850 to 1926 and the Present Constitution, Management and Financial Position of Spinning and Weaving Factories* (Bombay: The Textile Journal Limited, 1927), 14, 22.
39. Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 202.
40. Rutnagur, *Bombay Industries: The Cotton Mills*, 152.
41. *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. X, *Bombay (Town and Island)*, Part IV, *History* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1901), 140; Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 98-100.
42. *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. X, Part IV, 140, 146; *City Gazetteer*, Vol. I, 163-65.
43. *Indian Textile Journal* (henceforth *ITJ*), Vol. XXIV, No. 285, 1914, 317; *City Gazetteer*, 207; Gill Yamin, "The Character and Origins of Labour Migration from Ratnagiri District, 1840-1920," *South Asia Research*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1989): 33-53.
44. *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. XI, *Bombay Town and Island*, Part V, *Report* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1901), 17.
45. *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. X, Part IV, 140.
46. *ITJ*, XXIV/285, 1914, 318; Morris, *Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 217.
47. *Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission, 1908* (henceforth *IFLC 1908*), Vol. I, 18; *City Gazetteer*, Vol. I, 209-10.
48. *IFLC 1908*, Vol. I, 18-19. Vol. II, 122; Chandavarkar, *Origins of Industrial Capitalism*, 124-67.
49. Morris, *Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 44.
50. *Report and Proceedings of the Commission appointed to Consider the Working of Factories in the Bombay Presidency, 1884* (henceforth *Factory Commission of 1884*) (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1885), 142.
51. Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 329-30.
52. Chandavarkar, *Origins of Industrial Capitalism*, 278-79; Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 205.

53. Morris, *Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force*, 117; Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 423.
54. *Factory Commission of 1875*, 2.
55. *Factory Commission of 1884*, 4–5.
56. *Annual Report of the Bombay Millowners' Association* (henceforth BMOA) (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1899), 11.
57. *IFLC 1908*, Vol. I, 7.
58. Evidence of Mr. James Helm, manager of the Bombay United Mills, *Factory Commission of 1875*, 1; J. C. Kydd, *A History of Factory Legislation in India* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1920), 65.
59. Women workers gradually replaced child labor in the mills because the wages paid to the adult female laborers did not exceed those paid to the children. Since there were fewer restrictions on female labor, using women instead of children was much more economical. *Annual Report of the Factory Inspector for the Town and Island of Bombay for the Year 1899* (Bombay: Central Government Press, 1900), 4.
60. *Factory Commission of 1875*, 20.
61. Rajani Kanta Das, *Factory Legislation in India*, 59.
62. *Factory Commission of 1884*, 101, 104. In the early 1870s, only about 5 percent of textile millworkers lived in and around the cotton mill areas located primarily in the northern parts of the city. In the absence of adequate communication systems, most of them had to walk several miles to their workplace. However, with growing population pressure in central Bombay and increasing rents, millworkers gradually moved to the northern area of the city. It was only by the early 1900s that more than 80 percent started living only a few minutes' walking distance from their workplace. *Factory Commission of 1884*, 196; Evidence of Dr. V. P. Chavan, *IFLC 1908*, Vol. II, 123; Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 312.
63. *Factory Commission of 1884*, 8, 58, 65.
64. *Ibid.*, 105, 144.
65. *Report of the Factory Commission of 1890*, 11.
66. *Factory Commission of 1875*, 2.
67. *Factory Commission of 1884*, 8.
68. Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 315.
69. Kydd, *Factory Legislation in India*, 51.
70. Buchanan, *Capitalist Enterprise in India*, 310.
71. Evidence of Dinshaw M. Petit, *Factory Commission of 1884*, 107.
72. Evidence of J. H. Mody, *Factory Commission of 1884*, 97.
73. Evidence of Genoo Babaji and Narayan Surkoji, *ibid.*, 100, 104.
74. *Ibid.*, 139; Kydd, *Factory Legislation in India*, 36–37.
75. Kydd, *Factory Legislation in India*, 59.
76. *Evidence Recorded by and Written Statements Submitted to the Textile Factories Labour Committee, 1907* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1907), 37.

77. *Times Of India*, 25 September 1905, 4; *IFLC*, 1908, Vol. I, 103.
78. *BMOA*, 1905, vii–xv.
79. *Ibid.*, 8.
80. Das, *Factory Legislation in India*, 132–33.
81. *Factory Commission of 1884*, 20.
82. *BMOA*, 1875, 56.
83. *ITJ*, Vol. III, No. 36, 1893, 245.
84. Evidence of Tamooljee Dhunjeebhoy, manager, Alliance Mill, *Factory Commission of 1875*, 8; Evidence of Balloo Atmajee and Ladoo Marthnin, millworkers, *Factory Commission of 1890*, 30–31.
85. Evidence of Balloo Atmajee, laborer in Petit Mill, *Factory Commission of 1890*, 30.
86. “Mill Workers’ Petition,” *Factory Commission of India*, 1890, 91–92.
87. Evidence of James H. Dunkerly, a mill manager, *Factory Commission of 1884*, 55.
88. “Mill Workers’ Petition,” *Factory Commission of 1890*, 92.
89. *Factory Commission of 1875*, 2.
90. Evidence of Dr. Joseph Anderson, *Factory Commission of 1875*, 51.
91. Evidence of Dr. Thomas Weir, *Factory Commission of 1875*, 8.
92. Evidence of Temooljee Dhunjeebhoy, manager of Alliance Spinning and Weaving Mill, *Factory Commission of 1875*, 48.
93. Evidence of Dr. Joseph Anderson, *Factory Commission of 1875*, 55.
94. Evidence of Dr. Thomas Weir, *Factory Commission of 1875*, 11.
95. T. J. Hewlett, “Sanitary Conditions of the Mills, Factories and Workshops in the City of Bombay,” *Factory Commission of 1884*, 196.
96. *Ibid.*, 198.
97. *Ibid.*
98. *Ibid.*
99. *Ibid.*, 201.
100. *Ibid.*, 206.
101. *Ibid.*, 1–5.
102. *Proceedings of the General Department of the Government of Bombay*, MSA, File No. 574, I, 1920, m231.
103. *Annual Factory Report for the Year 1911*, 2; *Annual Factory Report for the Year 1913*, 4; *Annual Factory Report for the Year 1921*, 4.
104. “Note on the Ventilation of Cotton Factories,” *Proceedings of the General Department of the Government of Bombay*, MSA, File No. 574, I, 1920, m307–309; *Proceedings of the Department of Industries and Labour*, MSA File No. 8424, III, 1931, 4.
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107. Evidence of John Hammett, manager, New Great Eastern Mill, *Factory Commission of 1884*, 62.
108. Ibid., 197.
109. Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Government and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890–1920* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 32–34; Ira Klein, “Urban Development and Death: Bombay City, 1870–1914,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (1986): 725–54.
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111. *Census of the City and Island of Bombay, 1881* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1883), 23.
112. Edwardes, *Rise of Bombay*, 295.
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116. *City Gazetteer*, Vol. III, 210.
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118. *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. XI, *Bombay*, Part V, 111.
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121. Ibid., 11.
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123. Evidence of Dr. J. A. Turner, *IFLC 1908*, Vol. II, 43.
124. Evidence of Dr. V. P. Chavan, *IFLC 1908*, Vol. II, 123.
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131. Das, *Factory Legislation in India*, 7.
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133. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 390–91.
134. *Great Britain: Parliamentary Debates, 1875*, 209–11.
135. Ibid., 211.
136. Ibid., 214.
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141. *Great Britain: Parliamentary Debates*, 1889, 666.
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143. *Great Britain: Parliamentary Debates*, 1890, 1116.
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147. *BMOA*, 1881, i.
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153. D. E. Wacha, *Rise and Growth of the Bombay Municipal Government* (Madras: G. A. Natesan and Company, 1912), 5–7.
154. Dobbin, *Urban Leadership*, 159–61.
155. Ibid., 188–89, 194.
156. *Great Britain: Parliamentary Debates*, 1875, 213.
157. Quoted in Kydd, *Factory Legislation in India*, 9–10.
158. *Factory Commission of 1884*, 3.
159. Appendix B, *Factory Commission of 1884*, 8.
160. *ITJ*, Vol. IV, No. 42, March 1894, 149.
161. *ITJ*, Vol. III, No. 36, October 1893, 245.
162. *ITJ*, Vol. IV, No. 42, March 1894, 149.
163. *Annual Factory Report of 1892*, 15.
164. Ibid.
165. Evidence of K. N. Seervai, former Acting Factory Inspector of Factories, *Factory Commission of 1884*, 44, 48; Evidence of James H. Dunkerly, former manager of various mills, *Factory Commission of 1884*, 54.
166. Evidence of John Hammett, manager, New Great Eastern Mill, *Factory Commission of 1884*, 66.
167. Evidence of Sassoon David of Sassoon Mills; Evidences of Nowrosji Screwalla, manager of Coorla Mill, C. Dorabji, manager of Petit Mills, and J. G. Hammett, manager of Great Eastern Mill, *IFLC 1908*, Vol. II, 76, 78, 95, 99.
168. *ITJ*, Vol. I, No. 4, 1891, 59.
169. *ITJ*, Vol. III, No. 10, October 1893, 5.
170. *IFLC 1908*, Vol. I, 83–84.
171. Das, *Factory Legislation in India*, 16–17.
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173. *Bombay Presidency Native Newspaper Report* (henceforth *BPNNR*), 15 November 1884, 16; *Factory Commission of 1884*, 8–9.
174. B. Siva Rao, *The Industrial Worker in India* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1939), 17.
175. *Factory Commission of 1884*, 111.
176. *BPNNR*, 13 July 1895, 13.
177. *Factory Commission of 1884*, 111–14.
178. Kydd, *Factory Legislation in India*, 36–37, 59.
179. Rajani Palme Dutt, *India Today* (1940) (London: Victor Gollancz, 1940), 116–24.
180. Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, 1093.
181. Dutt, *Economic History of India*, 210–21.
182. *Ibid.*, 345.
183. James Kellock, *Mahadev Govind Ranade: Patriot and Social Servant* (Calcutta: Association Press, 1926), 126.
184. M. G. Ranade, “Present State of Indian Manufactures and Outlook of the Same, Paper Presented at the Industrial Conference, Poona, 1893,” in Bipan Chandra, ed., *Ranade’s Economic Writings* (New Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1990), 412.
185. Ranade, “Inaugural Address at the First Industrial Conference, Poona 1890,” *Economic Writings*, 277.
186. *BPNNR*, 24 December 1891, 5.
187. Dutt, *Economic History of India*, 612.
188. Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, 50.
189. In one of his essays, Ranade advocated the creation of a modern banking and credit system, the essentials of industrialization, by demonstrating its positive impact in various countries of Western Europe. Ranade, “Reorganization of Real Credit in India,” *Economic Writings*, 304–21.
190. Ranade, “Inaugural Address,” *Economic Writings*, 278.
191. Ranade, “Present State of Indian Manufactures,” *Economic Writings*, 416.
192. D. G. Karve and D. V. Ambekar, eds., *Speeches and Writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, Vol. II (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967), 230.
193. Quoted in Chandra, *Economic Nationalism*, 66–67.
194. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.
195. *Ibid.*, 9.
196. Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule*, 54. From the 1860s onward, cotton manufacturers in Britain urged the British Parliament and the colonial government of India (GOI) to lower duties on their goods imported into India. The objective of this campaign was to prevent Indian mills from getting any protection against British competition. By 1871, import duties on cotton goods were reduced from 10

to 5 percent while it was abolished altogether in 1882. Import duties remained suspended between 1882 and 1894. Although the advocates of British cotton manufacturers opposed it, a deficit of over two million pounds sterling forced the GOI to re-impose an import duty of 5 percent on goods imported from Britain into India. As a conciliatory move, from 1896 the GOI increased taxes on Indian cotton products. Dutt, *Economic History of India*, 401–16, 537–44, *Great Britain Parliamentary Debates*, 1871, 888–91.

197. The Cotton Duties Import Act of 1896 imposed an excise duty on all cotton goods, even the coarse Indian cloth, which was no competition for the textile products of Manchester. This decision “threw a burden on Indian mills.” Dutt, *Economic History of India*, viii, 543.
198. *Ibid.*, ix, 402.
199. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak, His Writings and Speeches*, with an appreciation by Babu Aurobindo Ghose (Madras: The Cambridge Press, 1918), 53; Gokhale, *Speeches and Writings*, 226.
200. Holt S. Hallett, “Indian Factory Legislation,” *Transactions of the Seventh International Congress of Hygiene and Demography*, Vol. VIII (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1892), 219–31.
201. *Ibid.*, 224.
202. Bahadurji, “Indian Factory Workers,” 2.
203. *Ibid.*, 43–44.
204. *BPNNR*, 27 March 1875, 3.
205. *BPNNR*, 9 August 1884, 6.
206. *BPNNR*, 21 February 1891, 6.
207. *BPNNR*, 28 February 1891, 5.
208. *Ibid.*
209. *BPNNR*, 9 August 1884, 7.
210. *BPNNR*, 7 March, 1891, 7.
211. *BPNNR*, 11 April, 1891, 6.
212. *BPNNR*, 17 May 1890, 23.

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