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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Revenue

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	<u>314</u>	Press	<u>Original</u>
B.P. No.		Mis.	
Dated	<u>14. 3.</u>	<u>1885</u>	<u>195</u>

Not to be folded or roughly handled.

14TH MARCH 1885, No. 314, REVENUE.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 25th February 1885, No. 631:—

Read—the following letter from J. F. PRICE, Esq., Collector of Chingleput, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 7th February 1885, No. 316:—

I have the honor to submit the report called for in the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Revenue Department, Mis. No. 2225, dated 10th March 1884, and to express my regret that it has been so long in hand. I, however, was away for six months on furlough, inquiries had to be made all over India, replies to these were not received in full until after I rejoined, and, as the Board are aware, I have, since I resumed charge, had my hands pretty full with matters connected with the breaching of the Red Hills tank and kindred disasters.

2. My first steps, on receiving the Proceedings under reply, were to apply to Dr. Bidie, the Curator of the Government Museum, for such information as he could give me regarding the places where muslins were manufactured, and to send to the Tahsildar of Ponnéri a series of questions directing him to forward the answers after careful local and personal inquiry. I thought this course one preferable to sending for and interrogating the weavers themselves, as my doing so might put into their minds apprehensions that I contemplated subjecting them to a special tax or something of the sort.

3. Acting under Dr. Bidie's suggestions, I then wrote to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Revenue and Agricultural Department, and asked for a list of all places in India where muslins were manufactured. On receipt of this, I addressed the head of each district or State mentioned, enclosing, at the same time, a copy of the questions put to the Tahsildar of Ponnéri, and requesting the favor of the same information as was sought from my Tahsildar. I also wrote separately to the Collectors of all districts in this Presidency in which I had reason to believe that muslins were manufactured.

4. The result is that muslins of any value are now manufactured in only three places in India. These are, Arani in this district, Chicacole in Ganjam and Dacca in the Bengal Presidency; from elsewhere the general reply has been that muslins are not manufactured at all. Here and there muslins of small size, low price and evidently inferior quality, are said to be turned out. The Deputy Commissioner of Bandara in his letter to me states: "The art of spinning fine thread, such as that noticed in Chanda before the settlement in 1863, has died out, and the finest yarns now used are all machine-made, and none of them are muslin numbers. The opening of the railway and introduction of Europe goods with the coincidence of the 1868-69 famine and a brisk demand for cotton from the Berars drew away most of the thread-spinners to the Berars." It is, I think, highly probable that the English yarns have spoiled the native cotton spinner's trade, that spinning the exquisitely fine thread, used for native muslins, has thus died out, and that this has led to the reply that no muslins are manufactured, received by me from so many of the places shown in the list furnished by the Secretary in the Agricultural Department of the Government of India as being those where muslins of superior quality were procurable.

5. I enclose, as regards Arani, Chicacole and Dacca, a statement showing the replies to the questions asked; this compares, as far as I have been able to do, cost and prices with profit thereon. It is, of course, exceedingly likely that the weavers have overstated cost and understated profits, but still it seems, looking at what is said, in three different places, very far apart from one another, that the weavers do not make

an exorbitant profit, and that they could hardly sell at prices lower than they do. It must be remembered that the profit set down has not to be divided, but is that of the master weaver alone. I do not feel myself in a position to criticise information coming from other people, but, as regards what is stated by my Tahsildar, the replies are very approximately the same as those which I obtained to questions asked by me personally, and at Arani itself long before the present inquiry originated. The items put down for bleaching seem rather extravagant, especially when compared with what is shown for Chicacole and Dacca muslins. I can hardly believe that the profit on a muslin priced at Rs. 50 is only 8 annas, or that the cost of weaving a Dacca muslin of the first class is Rs. 120 or thereabouts. The main comparison lies between the Arani and Dacca muslins; those made at Chicacole are smaller and cheaper and cannot be taken in the same class as the others. Making allowance for the difference in size between the two, the price of the thread, for the first sort of the former, is about 25 rupees more than that for the latter. The cost of manufacture is, however, much increased, in the case of the Dacca muslins, by the fact that it takes two men the apparently incredible period of *two years* to weave one muslin, and the final figures as to comparative cost are, it would seem to me, not very far apart.

6. If the statements as to profit are to be accepted, that on a first-class Arani muslin is 5 per cent. and that on the same class at Dacca 11 per cent.; but it is to be observed that in the latter case the master has to wait for two years, and really gets only $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum, whilst in the former he would obtain his return in something about three months. The profit on a first-class Chicacole muslin is nearly 5 per cent., so that there is no very great difference between all three. Granting it to be even double, it is not very much to make upon what is undoubtedly a special and very limited manufacture.

Resolution—dated 25th February 1885, No. 631.

Submitted to Government.

2. The manufacture of the finer descriptions of muslin is apparently confined to three places in India—Arani in Chingleput district, Dacca in Bengal and Chicacole in the Ganjam district—but any comparison of cost which it may be feasible to institute is confined to the muslins of the two former places of manufacture, the produce of the Chicacole looms being comparatively of coarser quality.

3. From the detailed statement appended to the Collector's letter, it appears that the cost of Arani muslin varies from Rs. 50 to Rs. 200 per piece of $48' \times 4' 6''$, while the cost of that woven at Dacca runs from Rs. 150 to Rs. 275 per piece of $60' \times 3'$. Considering the extraordinary fineness of the best descriptions of Dacca muslin, the Board do not consider the price exorbitant, though it is very possible that the cost price of the second class and coarser muslins of Dacca may have been exaggerated owing to over-estimation of the time required to weave them. Granting that the production of 10 yards of the fairy-like texture which will pass through a ring may represent a year's labor of two weavers, the same cannot be said of the coarser qualities; and hence the calculation of cost is vitiated by the inaccuracy of the chief factor therein "labor."

4. The Arani estimate is much more reasonable, and there is no reason to doubt its approximate correctness, nor for hesitation to accept the Collector's view that the profits are moderate, about 5 per cent.

5. The weavers are a conservative class, but there is no reason to suppose them indifferent to their own interests, and they are the best judges of what prices to fix on their own manufactures.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) C. F. MACCARTIE,
Acting Sub-Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
with a statement in original to be returned.
Copy to the Collector of Chingleput.

ORDER—dated 14th March 1885, No. 314, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded. It is observed that the absence of any means of comparing the texture of the finest Dacca muslin with the finest Arani renders it impossible to compare the value of two descriptions with their prices. It does not, however, seem likely that any further inquiries will prove of advantage.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) H. E. STOKES,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue, with original statement returned.
„ the Director of Revenue Settlement and Agriculture.
„ the Superintendent, Government Central Museum.
„ the Committee for the London Exhibition of 1886.

Exd. W. H. French.

90 Copies.

Original
 Govt. of 1885 Madras.
 REVENUE.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 14th March 1885, No. 314.

MARCH.

Arani Muslin.

Board's Proceedings submitting report as to how the prices demanded for -- compare with those of Dacca and other hand-made muslin, recorded, with remarks.



REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

No. 1291

From B. of Revenue. 25 Feb. 85. 631.
 Dated March 3. 1885.

FOR ORDERS.

In the government order [7. Nov. 83. 1373] receiving the report upon the Agricultural Exhibition of Feb'y 83. the government remarked upon the importance of fostering such indigenous manufactures as Arani muslins, and subsequently in G.O. 22nd Feb 84. 258. the Col^r of Chingleput was directed to make enquiries how the prices demanded by the Arani weavers compared with those of Dacca & other hand-made muslins. The 3rd now forward the Col^r's reply.

It appears that the hand manufacture of muslins of fine texture is now confined to places in India, Arani, Dacca, Chittagong - The muslins made at the last locality cannot compare for fineness with those made in Dacca or Chittagong.

FOR ORDERS.

The prices are as follows.
Chingelput muslin, per piece
 of 48 ft. by 47 1/2 in. from
 £50 for six" sort to £200 for
 first sort.

Dacca muslin per piece
 60 ft. x 37 1/2 in. £150 to £275

The clearest sort Dacca muslin
 is then far considerably clearer
 than Arani muslin. The
 returns given are probably
 unreliable, judging by the amount
 of labor given as required to
 make Dacca muslin compared
 with that required to make Arani
 muslin. Two months being apparently
 required to make the same amount of
 muslin at Arani as one year
 at Dacca.

The general deduction made
 is that Arani muslin makers
 do not make more than 5-10%
 profit on their work.

It does not seem necessary
 to move than "record" to papers
 communicating them to Mr. Wilson
 and the Committee for the Exhibition 1886.

Order No. 314 of 14.3.85.
 Recorded. It is observed that the
 absence of any means of comparing
 the texture of the finest Dacca
 muslin with the finest Arani, renders
 it impossible to compare the value
 of two descriptions with their
 prices. It does not however seem
 likely that any further enquiries
 will prove of advantage.

Very different in
 many different ways
 from the other two
 kinds of muslin.

Very much more than
 the other two.

28.3.17.85

To Mr. Board of General
 25.3.17.85
 1. Committee for the Exhibition 1886.