

A Historical Analysis of Kashimbazar for Silk Industry in Eighteenth Century

Tarik Aziz

Department of History, University of Gour Banga

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 16 Mar 2020

Keywords

Kashimbazar, Nawab, Silk Industry, Murshidabad, Revolution.

*Corresponding Author

Email: tarikaziz6[at]gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Murshidabad is the second biggest conventional silk creating locale in West Bengal, which bears a brilliant tradition of delivering standout silk in India since seventeenth century. Kashimbazar was one of the significant centers of silk buy for the British silk shippers. The business went into extraordinary decay as the Industrial Revolution in West set in. In the post Independence time frame endeavors were made to restore this locally situated high quality industry in India to extend business and pay openings in the country economy. Different records of the historical backdrop of silk in India guarantee that silk weaving in Bengal existed from old occasions. Records show that the silk weavers of Murshidabad were working in eighteenth century when Nawab Murshid Quli Khan (1717-1727) moved the capital of the Dewanee of Bengal from Dhaka, presently in Bangladesh, to another capital he based on the east bank of the River Bhagirathi and named Murshidabad. Murshidabad is celebrated for its friendly saris made of fine mulberry silk with level, dark red or maroon boundaries made with three transports. The boundaries are bound with fine serrated plan in gold zari. Murshidabad silks are additionally well known for hand-printed plans and different materials which are likewise printed with wooden squares. In this investigation we are attempting to know the brilliant period of Silk industry at Kashimbazar and the cost of silk, and disparaged by Nawab's rule on this industry and furthermore the rancher's condition.

Murshidabad is named after Murshid Quli Khan, Dewan of Bengal in the eighteenth Century. The Murshidabad city, which loans its name to the area, was the seat of force of the Nawabs of Bangla. The city was diminished to half of its significance as the depository and the regulatory base camp of Bengal was moved to Calcutta. Be that as it may, during seventeenth century, Murshidabad was a notable center point for silk materials. English specialists had revealed in 1621 that gigantic amounts of silk could be gotten from this district. Murshidabad continued succeeding till the second 50% of the seventeenth century and in the long run turned into the Eastern Mughal Province, Subah Bangla. During 1660s Murshidabad turned into a 'pargana' (settle) and its officials had locale over the European Factories at Kassimbazar.

The dirt of Murshidabad was helpful for the development of mulberry plants. It was grayish or rosy, blended in with lime and oxide of iron and beds of nodular limestone. The dirt of the spot was additionally rich which caused the silk ranchers to develop mulberry consistently. Murshidabad likewise had the benefit of having an ordering view on the boats loaded down with products of Indian and unfamiliar vendors playing between the south and North-West of the districts of the area. The European merchants carried on broad speculations through waterway borne exchange and the silk centers of Murshidabad brought the European organizations and the Government of the nations more like each other. The issues which have been related to this deep rooted distinctive industry during the most recent twenty years in Murshidabad region is enormous quantities of departure of silk producers from this area. This legitimately raises the questions against predictable pay and business age by this area. In the event that the silk producers including weavers could get steady pay from this area, they would have rather adhere to this homegrown family unit

industry and extend their business. This reduces to our center examination addresses that the variables liable for influencing pay of the distinctive silk area of Murshidabad region should be resolved.

Kasimbazar, the extraordinary market town whose roads never saw the light of the sun, so filled as it was with glorious structures was in an especially worthwhile situation to appreciate the benefices of trade. From one viewpoint it lay at the focal point of the silk-developing zone of Bengal. On the other, it lay at the focal point of what was referred to in the eighteenth century as the triangle or the island framed by the three waterways of the Bhagirathi, the Padma, and the Jalangi. Bengal is eminent for its arrangement of riverine courses, maybe unmatched somewhere else on the planet, and Kasimbazar appreciated the utilization of quite possibly the broadest riverine organizations of the territory. Last, however maybe generally significant, Kasimbazar was arranged a couple of miles from the new capital of Bengal in the eighteenth century, Murshidabad, and hence had the option to appreciate the advantages of vicinity to a capital city, admittance to the Royal Mint, office in dealings with the Court, etc. Kasimbazar isn't referenced in any verifiable record before the seventeenth century. Its ascent in history was because of the conjuncture of certain serendipitous occasions. Kasimbazar filled the hole that was brought about by the root of the western piece of Bengal; the decrease of Satgaon in the sixteenth century, the decay of Hugli in the seventeenth century, and the up til now non-development of Calcutta as the main port in the eighteenth century. Kasimbazar was subsequently in a situation to rule the trade of Bengal. It was frequented by Kashmiri, Gujrati, Persian, Armenian, and Turkish shippers who lived there.

The products put resources into at Kasimbazar went under the headings of Raw Silk, Silk Piece Goods, and

Gurrahs and Doosutties, the last two typically thought to be together. These were the things most popular, particularly by the Europeans. Apparently the best nature of Kasimbazar silk was not all that mainstream at the EEIC's deals and really got a cost 30% lower than coarser evaluations in London. Evidently, the completion should have been never really best nature of Kasimbazar silk in English workshops made this costly sort uncompetitive, and the primary interest was along these lines for the center and more coarse scope of silk. The dealers frequenting the silk markets of Kasimbazar, with their pecking order of subagents that they sent into the inside to gather silk for the purchasers of the fare market, were hence in an incredibly worthwhile situation to exploit the expanded exchange that started in the 1680's, and which just ceased to exist in the 1740's. While exchange was acceptable there indicate people endeavoring monopolistic practices. (Nandy, 1981, pp.30-31)

As exchange silk kept on being continued, the excessive costs instructed by specific articles toward the finish of the seventeenth century descended, an almighty financial house set up itself in the region and loan fees tumbled from a normal of 15% to a genuinely consistent 9% all through the eighteenth century, and as volume of European exchange developed, endeavors by the organization workers to purchase merchandise from the dealers in return for prepared cash and a section installment in European products stopped. In the eighteenth century, business at Kasimbazar came to be led based on a development paid to the vendor, who attempted to supply the necessary merchandise at a specified time. The establishments of the dadni framework were in this way laid. (Chaudhury, 1986, pp.138-39)

As ahead of schedule as in 1685, the venture arrangements of the English East India Company's processing plant in Kasimbazar notice the family names of shippers who framed a clique of the main silk traders focusing on the dadni or agreement arrangement of acquirement at Kasimbazar. This class went on until the dadni framework offered route to the office framework for the acquirement of silk in 1754. Different individuals from the groups of Cotma, Dutt, Biswass, Surma, Chowdree, Sircar, Coppree, Tagore, and Ghosh happen every year in the rundowns until the 1750's. Of these, the Surmas, Biswasses, Dutta, Chowdrees, Ghoshes, Copprees, and Sircars have been followed to the rundown of 1685. Until 1754, when the dadni framework was nullified for the office framework, vendors with these family names overwhelmed the English venture out of the 186 or so shippers named in the English Investment Lists at Kasimbazar. We don't have a clue whether these agreement or dadni vendors exchanged for their own. What is sure is that in spite of the fact that they are alluded to in the English registers as "our shippers" they were dealers to the French, Dutch, and Ostend organizations also, a position these vendors used for their potential benefit while anticipating greater costs with the English. That these shippers exchanged any place a benefit was to be found is shown by the English organization's boycotts as respected exchange with the Danes, the Swedes, and the Portuguese just as denials on exchanging with dealers from upper India.

The situation of Diwan or Broker to an organization was a significant one, and the different European organizations before long embraced the act of keeping these presents on a trade family which had impressive esteem in the neighborhood

local area. The English utilized the group of Cotma and the Chaudrys kept on being utilized in the assistance of the French Company. The diwans and the vendors the organizations managed had made their fortunes in the silk exchange and they had worked in the item. For ages these men had been destined to this business; an assignment of these dealers in 1744 told the English at Kasimbazar that we may do however we wanted they were certain no shippers could contract less expensive than themselves, who had been reared up in the silk business from their youth, yet that they couldn't give us their work without some benefit. The milieu of the dadni shippers at Kasimbazar was Hindu and of both Bengali nationality and of non Bengali-induction. They had a place generally with the exchanging and distinctive ranks and had linkages with the calling of usury just as with that of income assortment.

The Indian vendor once in a while represents himself. Without private journals and family account books we have, generally, no response except for to depend on the conferences and the venture arrangements of the unfamiliar trade organizations which notice names. Wellsprings of this sort are not the awesome they cursorily notice those Indian shippers with whom the organizations had exchanges. Consequently, information on the exercises of Indian traders, for example, we can accumulate from the organization a record is of an impressionistic nature and, as it were, used. These shippers were not, clearly, essential makers. For ages they had gone about as procurators of silk from removed towns where silk was created. It was this capacity they performed now for the European exchanging organizations. Going about as specialists between the purchasers and the weavers, dadni shippers embraced to outfit learn amount of determined assortments of materials the organizations requested for the year's venture return for a specific sum progressed on the complete cost by the organization. It was a critical element of the Bengal exchanging framework that prepared merchandise in huge amounts were infrequently accessible as in Surat, and the costs must be fixed ahead of time in the wake of contemplating tests acquired by the dadni vendors. This meant that Bengal's exchanging framework had not become as incorporated to the European economy as that of Surat.

Subsequent to conceding to and getting a development on the complete value, the dadni vendor conveyed the cash to different pykars (under shippers) who thusly circulated this to the weavers dissipated everywhere on the open country. In the wake of getting the cash the weavers began work. The products must be conveyed to the distribution centers of the organization's kuthi at a specified season and the vendors were then paid the rest of to them. Any crumbling in quality from the example indicated brought about the cost of the completed item being brought down, or if nothing else trying to do as such, by the organization concerned. This is clearly the system followed by the English Company at Kasimbazar, and we have no motivation to accept that the Dutch and the French left from this training. The pace of advance was regularly fixed at 80% however accessibility of assets and upset political conditions implied that the English at Kasimbazar frequently left from this standard. The speculation records for crude silk from 1733 to 1750 show that by and by the pace of advance changed somewhere in the range of 75% and 85 percent. In 1738, nonetheless, just 59% was progressed for the crude silk of the November bund. By 1752 the pace of advance had

dwindled to a base, because of the vendor's monetary challenges and the dread of the English that they probably won't have the option to reimburse the sum on the off chance that they fizzled in the speculation. The pace of advance relied truly upon issues of convenience, for example, the measure of money close by, requests of the traders, late interest in the season, etc is shown by the way that occasionally, as in 1740, the totals progressed on the November bund and Commercially assortments ascended as high as 94% and 95% individually.

Crude silk and silk piece products were clearly the most beneficial things since the best number of vendors contracted for these two assortments. There are sure signs on the pace of benefit of these dadni shippers in their dealings with the English organization as set down in the Kasimbazar counsels. On July 25, 1737, the Consultations alluded to the English Company's overall letter of February 9, 1736, in which it said,

...among the merchants entered upon the Consultations of 25th July, we observe one man Sookmoy Seat had a much larger proportion of fine goods than any other, all the Cossajura Mullmulls and the Cossajura Dooreas being provided by him. These are the fine sorts which you have often represented are profitable articles to the Merchants so that in order to induce them to contract for the full quantity of Gurrahs, Rommalls, Photaes and other coarse goods upon reasonable terms, all fine species should be divided among them. You may call to your mind upon recollection that it was a very large part of the charge against the late broker that his relations and Favourites had all the fine goods to themselves, and our Investment was said to suffer greatly through the Discouragements the other Merchants laboured under thereby.

On April 23, 1745, the Consultations fortified the point that the coarse merchandise, for example, gurrahs were less productive to the shippers. This drove the dealers to go about as agents, not exclusively toward the East India Companies yet in addition to people who carried on private exchange. Since the volume of private exchange Bengal from the 1730's was a nearby opponent to that of true organization exchange the benefits of the dadni traders, and their job as private banyans to singular organization workers ought not be disparaged. By 1733 the Directors in London had understood that this situation had come to remain and concluded, as indicated by the Consultations of September 13, 1733, that the organization should carry on private exchange at Kasimbazar in a joint stock with an end goal to check the pattern of rising costs such countless purchasers had occasioned. This joint stock was to come into activity at Kasimbazar from January 1, 1734. Private

exchange accordingly on the grounds that official and the Biswass and the Gotma families were named as private specialists to Company workers.

The Cotmas were obviously the most-supported private specialists of Barker, the Chief of the Kasimbazar industrial facility in the 1730's, for as ahead of schedule as 1733 Bally Cotma and Huttoo Cotma were his banyans. Others were Oody Cooshall, Rogonaut Biswass, and Coosalchund. These specific names propose that a portion of the dealers associated with exchanges with the English organization were in a worthwhile situation among the other Kasimbazar shippers; this is borne out by a portion of the cited comments of the English in the Consultations. Additionally, while the pace of income agreed to every dealer was the equivalent, the complete profit were clearly not generally the equivalent, likewise noted in the Consultations. Accordingly sharp disparities were enlisted inside the classification of these vendors in managing different products and in the volume of exchange of the individual shippers, offering ascend to the cadre prior alluded to. The Company dealers had another job other than their part as providers to the organizations. They were purchasers of European merchandise from the industrial facility kuthis (stockroom), from the offer of which the organizations wished to enhance their assets in Bengal. These merchandise were then sold by the vendors in the inside. Guns were in incredible interest, yet European fabric was likewise sold, primarily broadcloth and woolens. Again the conspicuous purchasers appear to be the Cotmas, Biswass, Dutts, Surmas, and a couple of other driving traders.

To finish up I might want to state that, the expanded exchanging movement that had begun in Kasimbazar in the 1680's and proceeded into the 1740's had, in a time of about sixty years, totally prevailing with regards to disjoining the dadni dealers from their conventional control of providing silk to purchasers. The explanations behind this uprooting can be found in the delicate financial base on which the dadni dealers constructed their exercises. The expanded exchange toward the finish of the seventeenth century had brought about a considerable lot of the vendors exaggerating their hand, and brought into light the troubles of working inside a solitary item focused fare economy. To this should be added the issue of overstretching the credit organization: most shippers relied upon local area credit, so that in the event that one individual from the local area fell he had the impact of pulling down the entire local area building with him. So, the reliance of the vendors on a solitary ware just as the reliance of the currency market on the business possibilities of this one product and additionally one primarily subject to climatic conditions implied a restricted region of movement for this dealer.

References

1. Mohammada, A. (1981). *Factory Correspondence and Other Bengali Documents*. London: I.O.L.R.
2. Giorgio, B. (1990). *Trade and Politics in the Indian Ocean*. Delhi: Manohar.
3. Chaudhuri, K. N. (1978). *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. Chaudhuri, S. (1975). *Trade and Commercial Organization in Bengal, 1650-1720*. Calcutta: Firma KL.
5. Das Gupta, A. (1967). *Malabar in Asian Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6. Hamilton, W. (1828). *East India Gazetteer*, 2 vols. 2nd ed. London.
7. Mohsin, Khan M. (1973). *A. Bengal District in Transition: Murshidabad, 1765-1793*. Dacca: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
8. Naqvi, Hameeda K. (1968). *Urban Centres and Industries in Upper India, 1556-1803*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.

9. Nandy, S. C. (1981). "Palasi Judher age maphasvaler bangali resa byabasai", Aitihasik, Jan.-Mar, pp.72- 103.
10. Subrahmanyam, S. (1990). *Improvising Empire, Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal 1500-1700*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.