

HISTORY

the great greatgrandson of Khushalchand. Lalbhai was born around the time when the first textile factory in the city went into production. The first manufacturing company of the Lalbhai family, Saraspur Manufacturing Company, was established in 1897. It started with producing cotton yarn. When the Swadeshi Movement intensified, the second company, Raipur Mills, was established in 1905. Due to the untimely death of Lalbhai Dalpatbhai, the reins of his businesses were handed over to his young sons, including 17-year-old Kasturbhai Lalbhai. Kasturbhai started the first large-scale textile mill under the name of Asoka Mills in 1920 with a capital of Rs. 12 la-

khs at a time when the largest mills in the region were built with not more than Rs. 5 lakhs.

The year 1930-31 saw the second resurgence of the Swadeshi Movement coinciding with the great depression. While other entrepreneurs reacted to the situation differently, Kasturbhai saw this as the decade of prosperity and growth and established the flagship Arvind Ltd. in 1931 with an authorized capital of Rs. 25.25 lakhs. Kasturbhai also floated mills for families of his three sisters under the name of Aruna Mills in 1928, Nutan Mills in 1931, and Ahmedabad New Cotton Mills in 1938.

With this expansion, Kasturbhai

occupied the position of the biggest textile magnate in the country. Few groups could claim to have made such great strides during one of the worst periods in India's industrial history. After a continuously successful period of four decades in the pre-Independence era, the group entered other fields such as dyes, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, etc. The first diversification started in 1939 with Anil Starch Ltd. Atul Products Ltd. was established in 1952 for manufacturing textile-related chemicals and dyestuff.

Atul formed joint ventures with Ciba-Geigy called Cibatul, with American Cynamid called Cynamid of India and with ICI of the UK called Atic Industries. As time pro-

