

EFFECTS OF MODERNISATION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT A CASE STUDY ON THANDAMPALAYAM

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ABSTRACT

The introduction to new technologies makes everyday life easy and comfortable. This process affects one by altering their everyday routine. Though these interventions are brought in to ease out few issues they degrade the foundations of basics life resources. This paper talks about such interventions and its effects on the weaving village Thandampalayam in Tamilnadu. To promote economy globally and interact in world trade, standardisations came in the frame of business. Many big establishments centralised goods and raw materials for the weaving sector. To increase cotton cultivation to supplement these big factories, hybrid and foreign seeds were introduced. The usage of synthetic dyes, powerlooms and many such non evolutionary changes put people in a crucial state that required quick adaptations. Those who couldn't lost their traditional race and got affected.

These quick changes to enhance quantity eventually brought in many other problems surrounding it. The singular focus did not consider the side effects which has resulted in pollution, depletion, migration and many issues that are primal to life. standardisations in the name of modernisations have only made us realise decentralisation Is the key to modern problems. This is just a loop of understanding. Individual factors are focus on this paper to realise that changes can be productive and adaptable if it gradually evolved without quick insertion of very advanced technologies.

KEYWORDS

Rural Occupation, Weaving Community, Exploitation, Rural Livelihood, Youth Awareness, Middlemen Concept, River Pollution, Self - Sustenance

INTRODUCTION

Thandampalayam is a small Village/hamlet in Satyamangalam Block in Erode District of Tamil Nadu State in India, which comes under Ikkarainegamam Panchayath. Thandampalayam was established as a cotton textile weaver's village as far back as 4-5 generations ago and at it's zenith was one of the popular stops for saree shopping in the festive season. Thandampalayam is a plain region with warm humid climate. This region has been endowed with red soil which is very suitable for the cotton growth. Thandampalayam has a population with 1322 men, 1370 women and 408 children with a literacy rate of 70 percent. The housing typologies and settlement pattern are seen to be aiding in the full process of the community occupation weaving. The Noyyal River is a small river in Western Tami Nadu, and a tributary of Kaveri River. It rises from the Vellingiri hills in the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu. The river used to bring water to almost 9 to 10 months. The areas adjacent to the river will receive water almost throughout the year and the water table will be at 40 to 50 ft.

WEAVING

The introduction of power looms had more impacts on the traditional weaving society. A power loom is a mechanized loom, and was one of the key developments in the industrialization of weaving during the early Industrial Revolution. It has led to heavy competitions as power looms were capable of producing te xtile there were very cheap, mass produced, varied designs and more importantly the feasibility of quicker production. Every job created in the power loom sector displaced 14 handloom weavers. According to Shivaraman Committee (1974), the setting up of one power loom employing a couple of



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workers rendered six handlooms idle and resulted in the displacement of two dozen handloom weavers. Also, the diversion of yarn meant for the handloom sector. And the hank yarn was not available due to the shift to corn yarn. This unemployment due to powerlooms led to migration of people. For the reasons like job insecurity, less income, power loom intervention and socio-cultural lag, people moved out of the village.

Women in Thandampalayam get to work in nearby textile and other factories for their income. Some people from Thandampalayam moved out to the cities from 1990's and left weaving and other hierarchal work rooted in the village. The migrated younger generation has no knowledge about the traditional occupation of the village and lost the socio-economic pattern found in the village. These competitions with power loom, less income has led the entry of middlemen in the market. But most of the profits were taken by the middlemen leaving the weavers in poverty.

RIVER NOYYAL

River Noyyal is in near proximity to the village; this was one of the most vibrant rivers providing source of water to the villages it passes through. Bathing, washing clothes, festivities happen in this river but later when textile industries faced a bloom after industrialisation, this became a major source of outlets for industries In Tirupur and Coimbatore to discharge their effluents, most of which is untreated.

According to locals in 1960's & 1970's, the river used to bring water to almost 9 to 10 months.

The areas adjacent to the river will receive water almost throughout the year and the water table will be at 40 to 50 ft. But since 2010, there is less water flow during the rainy season because of this the width of the river shrank to almost 30m in some areas.

The river is now too polluted that it not only has become useless but emit pollutants to the nearby underground water stream making it unusable and affect the biodiversity of the places it travels because of the chemical effluents from the industries. It has so much pollutant that its flow is stopped by Orathupalayam dam and is set to open only during heavy rains so as to dilute the concentration of the effluents. This created water scarcity in the late 1990's after the hoarding the dam. So, the farmers were either had polluted water or no water to irrigate their crops. This affected their livelihood and many shifted their occupation leaving agriculture. However, the village now has Lower Bhavani project for the water source to irrigate their fields, but agriculture is not resumed due to the break and the variables in profit over other occupation.

CROP CULTIVATION

Historically every weaving village or community had association with communities that produced raw materials. Thandampalayam is famous for one of it fabric named after its name which was made out of cotton. This village had both agriculture and weaving as primary occupation. People grew cotton and spined it to get thread. Eventually due to various social interventions, modernisation and industrialisation, agriculture got evaded. Those who continued to practise agriculture started using hybrid cotton varieties that is harmful, bringing genetic distress on the native species creating an ecological imbalance and affecting humans in many ways. The hybrid varieties of seeds were brought into picture for better yield, less water consumption, to control pest and many more. But this turned out to be expensive and unaffordable for people many times falling indebted.

There are indigenous cotton seeds like Karunganni cotton which was lost in the race of hybridisation but is traced back and given light. This cotton being native, is pest resistive cutting down the costs of all pesticides. This is also drought resistive making it perfect for current condition. But people still continue



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to use hybrid varieties due to social and economic stigma associated with it, lack of knowledge and fear of failure.

To avoid all hustle, some landowners in thandampalayam, planted Eucalyptus trees to provide its leaf for balm factories nearby. This is of low maintenance in comparison to cotton and thus many planted for easy return. But the water consumption of these trees is too high that the ground water level of the village has gone down exponentially over few years of plantation. To avoid water scarcity, an alternative cropping was chosen which indirectly is consuming much water making the village prone to water deficiency in the future.

DYEING

Cotton and dyes are the two vital raw materials for weaving. Before textile dyes were made from such natural sources as plants and animal excretions. Some of these, such as the glandular mucus of snails, were difficult to obtain and outrageously expensive. But these days chemically processed synthetic dyes comes from China, and gets processed in Surat. These then travels to Tirupur Which is a major cotton distribution and textile hub in South India. In 1941 there was only 2 dyeing units in Tirupur but by 1991 there were 866 of such units Consuming 90 million litres of water every day and releasing 87 million litres of effluents make the soil acidic and unfit for traditional crops. The Farmers around 1990's faced substantial loss in crops due to contamination of the Noyyal river. So in the recent years they started planting eucalyptus trees for paper production factories nearby. The non-native crop needs less maintenance and gives sure profit, but deplete underground water resource.

MANAGEMENT AND RAW MATERIALS

In general, the whole supply chain, from raw materials to customers, incorporates the involvement of middlemen. In Tamilnadu, Cooperative Societies serve as a bridge between weavers and consumers. Cooptex supplies raw materials to regional handloom societies, from which weavers obtain the material and sell the finished items at a predetermined price. These final items are subsequently sold in the market or exported by Cooptex. The earnings the weavers receive from the societies are negligible in comparison to the amount of energy they use on each product. Moreover, unnecessary political engagement impacts the buying and selling process, leaving the weaver with none.

The map here depicts the current journey of Thandampalayam weavers in obtaining their raw materials and ways of marketing. Cotton and dyes are the two vital raw materials for weaving. The cotton is imported from Taiwan, states in north India and other countries to Maharashtra where it gets processed and distributed to other places. While chemically processed synthetic dyes come from China, and get processed in Surat. These then travel to Tirupur Which is a major cotton distribution and textile hub in South India. The compression of cotton takes place to ease the transportation which consumes a lot of energy and resources. Then the cotton is spined into threads and gets dyed in the dyeing units and move to the cooperative societies in Thandampalayam from where the weavers collect the yarns, weave it and give back the finished product, which is centralised in Cooptex and marketed further.

This system is so tedious where the raw materials travel a 10000 kms approximately. The consumption of fuel and other resources is excessive, leaving a huge carbon footprint in the environment. Exploitation of river Noyyal is an exemplary example. The irony here is that India is one of the major cotton producers yet we import from other countries. This is because of centralising all processes in a few pockets which is evidently a failure structural system. Additionally, the Involvement of various middle men increases the unnecessary extravagance the consumers have to pay.



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The high cost and absence of trend are the 2 main reasons behind the decline of handloom cloths. The Elimination of middlemen could help in reducing the cost of hand-woven products. This will require alternatives to connect the weavers and consumers. Strategic application of tourism where the consumers directly approach the weavers in various ways and social media marketing where weavers connect directly to consumers. It is a two-way system. Lack of trend can be resolved by incorporating the fashion brands in the production process. Few activists like Uzamma of Malkha and Anantoo from Tulu who tried to create a system to eliminate the middlemen and revive traditional hand loomed clothes. Some non-governmental organisations train weavers and laymen how to promote their products in response to trends.

In the instance of Thandampalayam, a self-sufficient system capable of reducing the 10000 km of journey to less than a 3-kilometre span could be developed. It would scale down carbon emissions and resource depletion.

CONCLUSION

Traditionally, a rural system has always been a self-sufficient, sustainable loop in India, where the raw materials are sourced from the locals. When Britishers intruded into India, they were allured by the flamboyant Indian weaving techniques and abundance of cotton production. The actions of Britishers and the industrial revolution left the country with dependency on other nations and excessive resources for weaving, breaking the loop of self-sufficiency. The rustic rural areas started to formalise and struck into the industry-based loop where the dependency on industrialised materials became inevitable. This unsustainable practise makes the traditional weavers and artisans suffer for their economic sustenance and ostensibly deprives the environment.

In a country like India, where agriculture is the main source of income and the majority of the population lives in villages, rural sociology is extremely important.

Rural economies, which contribute significantly to the nation's overall economic development, should regain their self-sufficiency.

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