Chapter IV

Study Profile
CHAPTER - IV

STUDY PROFILE

This chapter IV discusses the details of Handloom sector and profile of the study area. For the study purpose, eight districts namely Erode, Kanchipuram, Coimbatore, Virudhunagar, Karur, Ramanathapuram, Kanyakumari and Dindigul were chosen based on the handloom concentration in the areas. The profile of the handloom sector and these selected districts are presented.

4.1 Profile of Handloom Industry in India

Weaving is undertaken as a vocation in many of the Indian regions. Each region has its own particular style and fabrics used to manufacture traditional designs and motifs. Basic plain-weave fabric is found in many places, one can take note of a few places for their distinctive weave and weaving has its own distinctive character. Handlooms produce huge volume of material which cater mainly to the common people to wear as different types of dress with immense potential for ingenuity as well as export. Significant inroads have been made by machine made textiles. Yet the preference for traditional dress like sarees for ritual or every day use is one of the strongest reasons for the continued existence of a large proportion of the country’s handlooms.

The best-known Varanasi product is the brocade, kinkab. Half a pattern is worked by a combination of strings and healds manipulated
separately. This design was completed by reversing the order. Varanasi has a landmark of old tradition in weaving special styles for export to specific countries of west and Southeast Asia, which naturally adds the richness and variety of handloom products. These brocades are distinguished by apt poetic names like chand tara (moon and stars), dhup chhaon (sunshine - shade), mazch (Ripples of silver), mor gala (peacock’s neck), bulbul chasm (nightingale’s eyes). Gujarat developed its own style of kinkabs (brocades) woven with extra weft patterns. Surat as the chief port carried them far off: even to the Russian royalty. Kanbis or Patidars, Khatris and Mommin (particularly the women) are excellent in this weave.

There are dozens of designs in vogue with a rather complicated constellation of animals, fruits, stylized dance figures, peacocks, women waving fans, and lotuses in many shapes. Patola is a most colorful and ostentatious weave with its figured body, and the subtle merging of one shade into another. This technique is practised in a few parts of India with some variations, mostly producing saris, a few shawls, lungis, kerchiefs, etc. The most renowned among patolas is the one made in Pattan, Gujarat.
The yam used is always silk. Ikat is the equivalent of the Indian bandhana. When only one side of the warp or the weft is tied, it is a single ikat. But as described above when both are tied it is double ikat. This is now done on a very small scale in Pattan, which is said to be its home, and in Rajkot. The Pattan patola is the most picturesque particularly the wedding sari with dark green, white and yellow, against a ruby red background, and leaf and flower patterns; while the pallu features dancing girls and parrots or swans.

Orissa has a patola style of its own. The weaving is done in tussar silk and in single ikat. The designs usually are in floral patterns, with animals and certain traditional motifs like the fish and conch. The single ikat makes the designs suggestive rather than clearly delineated. The cotton ikats in Orissa are striking, with a firm accent on geometrical patterns in heavy weaves. Patolas are also woven in Pochampalli and Chirala in Andhra Pradesh, which originally did only large cotton kerchiefs called telia mmals. Pochampalli makes patola sarees in a large variety of geometrical designs. Chirala has bigger and more pronounced patterns in the same technique. Andhra Pradesh also weaves a great variety of cotton lungis with some ikat designs in the body or in the border. Named after the village Paithan in Maharashtra, is the Paithani saree. On a zari warp the weft is interlocked with different colors. In this technique complicated patterns are woven in bright colors: highly stylized flowers, swans, parrots, peacocks. The pallu is a fascinating piece of gold tissue on which are woven brightly colored rosettes and sometimes birds. Assam leads in non-mulberry
silk. Sericulture is an ancient vocation practised by a large number of cultivators in non-agricultural seasons. Assam has several varieties of silks: eri, which derives its name from the castor leaves on which the worm feeds. This silk has a yellowish tinge, is in rough as well as smooth varieties, and is used in winter for its warmth.

South India is famous for its heavy quality silks. At one time silk fabrics were sold here by the weight, so heavy were the weaves. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are notable areas for this type of silk. A village of Karnataka called Mokalmoru has a richly designed saree with all over motifs, each enclosed in a check. The border is done in ikat weave. The pallu is daintily decorated with birds, fishes, etc. In Tamil Nadu the pride of place goes to Kanchipuram, though Sirumugai in Coimbatore district and Kumbakonam in Tanjore district, Salem and Arani, also have very fine weaving with their own distinct motifs. Weaving is done in Kanchipuram by Salgars, a name derived from the Sanskrit salika for weaver. They claim descent from sage Markanda, the weaver of the gods. The throughw-shuttle loom in which the shuttle is throughwn by hand is used. For complicated designs a local type of jacquard is used, fashioned out of round lamp wicks as are used in room lamps and plaited twins and attached to the loom. Mechanical hooks and jacquard boxes are now being introduced. Kanchipuram has a special name for each of its many designs and colors. Very intricate designs are woven into the body in gold thread.
These are of human and animal figures, geometrical patterns, with temple towers along the borders. A distinctive characteristic of the Kanchipuram saree is the wide contrast borders. For this three shuttles are needed and while the weaver does the right side, his aid manages the left with separate shuttles. Here the border designs and colors are quite different from that of the body.

4.2. Profile of the Study Area

Tamil Nadu is a land with ancient history, rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and progressive outlook. Tamil is the official language of the State and is the mother of other Dravidian languages. Tamil literature and grammar are related to the period before 500 BC. Thirukkural, the masterpiece of Tamil literature with the highest and purest expressions of human thought, dates back to this early period. Tamil Nadu is known for its large number of temples. Many of them are huge with towering structures called Gopurams. Intricate rock carvings, festivals, classical music and dance highlight the cultural heritage and make Tamil Nadu the cultural capital of the country.

Tamil Nadu State (formerly known as Madras State) is located in the south eastern side of Indian peninsula with Kanyakumari as the southernmost tip of the land. This tip is the meeting point of Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. Tamil Nadu has a long eastern coastline dotted with enchanting beaches with Bay of Bengal in the east. Marina in Chennai is one of the longest beaches in the world. Arabian
Sea and the states of Kerala and Karnataka form the boundary in the west. Tamil Nadu is one of the most industrialized states in India with a high Human Development index. Chennai (formerly known as Madras), the capital city of Tamil Nadu, is the gateway of South India with an international airport, sea ports and good rail and road network connectivity. Coimbatore, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli, Salem and Tirunelveli are some of the other major towns in the state. The state has large number of good educational institutions and is one of the leaders in the field of Science and Technology and particularly in Information Technology.
The present has choose eight district from Tamil Nadu for the study purpose according to the handloom concentration namely Erode, Kanchipuram, Coimbatore, Virudhunagar, Karur, Ramanathapuram, Kanyakumari, and Dindigul.

The following table 4.1 presents the selected districts and their handloom profile.

**Table 4.1**

**Profile of the Study Area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Cooperative Looms</th>
<th>Private Looms</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>65846</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Kanchipuram</td>
<td>33053</td>
<td>27500</td>
<td>61133</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
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<td>14850</td>
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<td>Virudhunagar</td>
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<td>10380</td>
<td>20648</td>
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<td>5900</td>
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<td>Dindigul</td>
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<td>232044</td>
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4.2.1. **Erode District**

Erode District lies on the extreme north of Tamil Nadu. It is bounded mostly by Karnataka State and also River Cauvery covers pretty long distance. To the east lies a Namakkal and Karur districts. Dindigul district is its immediate neighbour to the South and on the west; it has Coimbatore and Nilgirs District, as its boundaries. Thus Erode District is essentially a land-locked area having no sea-coast of its own. The district has a long undulating plain gently sloping towards the river Cauvery in the south-east. The three major tributaries of river Cauvery viz. Bhavani, Noyyal and Amaravathy drain the long stretch of mountains in the north. A part of the eastern boundary of the District is formed by river Cauvery, entering the district from Salem and flowing in southern direction. With more than 228,750 hectares of land under dense forest, Erode has extensive forest area. The district is rich in fauna. As per revenue land records, the total geographical area of the district is 572,264 hectares.

Though noted for trade and industry, the district is by no means backward in the field of agriculture. In the Industrial map of Tamil Nadu, Erode district has a place of unique importance with 40.32 percent of population depending on non-agricultural sector. Industries and trade naturally occupy a place of prominence in the economy of the district. Industries that flourished in early days in the area were handloom weaving, carpet manufacturing, cart manufacturing, oil-pressing, brass vessel manufacturing etc. Though these industries flourished well in the early
days, the advent of modem times changed the fate of some of these well established ancient industries. The cotton textile industry in Coimbatore and handloom industry in Erode district have encouraged the growth of various ancillary industries to meet the needs of the textile mills. Chennimalai, Erode, Gobichettipalayam etc., are important centres where cotton weaving is carried on a large scale. There are also important dying works in Erode, Chennimalai and Bhavani. A number of factories engaged in cotton fabric printing are functioning in Erode.

In Erode District totally 40803 handlooms are under cooperative looms and 24845 private looms are available. All the major varieties produced in the district and Sales Promotional Division under Integrated Handloom Development Programme was implemented in the year 2008-09 worth of Rs. 164/- lakhs.

4.2.2. Kancheepuram District

Kancheepuram district is situated on the northern East Coast of Tamil Nadu and is adjacent by Bay of Bengal and Chennai city and is bounded in the west by Vellore and Thiruvannamalai districts, in the north by Thiruvallur district and Chennai district, in the south by Villuppuram district in the east by Bay of Bengal. The district has a total geographical area of 4393.37 Sq. Km and coastline of 57 Km. Kancheepuram, the temple town is the district headquarters. The population of the district is 30.38 lakh among them 66.38 percent are literate. Main occupation of the district is
agriculture and totally 47 percent of the population is engaged in the agriculture process. Palar is the main river for the district.

In Kancheepuram District totally 33053 handlooms come under cooperative looms and 27500 private looms are available. Silk sarees, lungies and cotton sarees are the major produce in the district. Sales Promotional Division under Integrated Handloom Development Programme was implemented in the year 2008-09 worth of Rs. 61/- lakhs.

4.2.3. Coimbatore District

Originally Coimbatore district formed part of the Kongu country, the history of which dates back to the Sangam age. It is found that in early days the area was inhabited by tribes, the most predominant among them being the Kosars from whose name only the name KosamPathur got enrolled later take to became the present Coimbatore. From Rashtrakutas the region fell into the hands of the Cholas who were in prominence at the time of Raja Raja Chola. On the decline of Cholas the Kongu territory was occupied by the Chalukyas and then by the Pandyas and the hoysalas. Due to internal strife in the Pandyan kingdom the Muslim rulers from Delhi happened to interfere. The third largest city of the state, Coimbatore, is one of the most industrialized cities in Tamil Nadu, known as the textile capital of South India or the Manchester of the South, the city is situated on the banks of the river Noyyal, Coimbatore existed even prior to the 2nd or 3rd century AD being ruled by Karikalan, the first of the early Cholas.
There are more than 25,000 small, medium, large sale industries and textile mill. Coimbatore is also famous for the manufacture of motor pump sets and varied engineering goods. The development of Hydro electricity from the Pykara Falls in the 1930 led to a cotton boom in Coimbatore. Coimbatore serves as an entry and exit point to neighboring Kerala and the ever popular hill station of Udhagamandalam (Ooty). It is the disembarking point for those who want to take the Mountain train that runs from Mettupalayam, just 35 kms from Coimbatore. There are also regular bus services from Coimbatore to Ooty.

In Coimbatore District totally 10203 handlooms come under cooperative looms and 10380 private looms are available. Cotton sarees and Kora cotton sarees are the major varieties produced in the district. Sales Promotional Division under Integrated Handloom Development Programme was implemented in the year 2008-09 worth of Rs. 63/- lakhs.

4.2.4. Virudhunagar District

Virudhunagar is a municipality in Virudhunagar District of Tamil Nadu. In the beginning of 20th century AD, Virudhupatti was one among the six important places of Ramanathapuram District. Due to the rapid growth in the field of Trade and Education, it was renamed as 'Virudhunagar' on 29 October 1923. The term 'Virudhu' means 'Award' in Tamil. Virudhunagar is very famous for business. Virudhunagar does not produce anything but exports everything. Virudhunagar district is comprised of Archaean Chamockite, Unclassified genesis and Pleistocene
Laterite. The district is drained by Arjuna river, Vaippar river, Kowsika river and Gundar.

Major minerals present in the district are Limestone and Limekankar. Minor minerals Multi-coloured Granite, Charnockite, Unclassified geneissic rocks, Pleistocene Laterite, Sand and Brick earth are available in the district. Total population is 17,51,548 of them 11,52,516 persons are literates and population density of the district is 413 per kilometers. The district exports cardamom, crackers, chillies, oils and match boxes.

In Virudhunagar District totally 10203 handlooms come under cooperative looms and 10380 private looms are available. Cotton variety sarees, polyester sarees, towels and lungies are the major varieties produced in the district. Sales Promotional Division under Integrated Handloom Development Programme was implemented in the year 2008-09 worth of Rs. 47/- lakhs.

4.2.5. Karur District

One of the ancient cities in Tamil Nadu, Karur was ruled by the Cheras, Cholas, the Naickers, and the British successively. There is proof that Karur may have been the centre for old jewele-making and gem cutting (with the gold imported mainly from Rome), as seen from various excavations. According to the Hindu mythology, Brahma began the work of creation here, which is referred to as the "place of the sacred cow." Karur has a very long history and has been sung by various sangam poets. In
history, it has been the battleground of various Tamil Kings like Chera, Chola, Pandya and Pallavas because of strategic importance. The district has a very rich and varied cultural heritage.

Karur District is very famous for its Bus Body building industry. In and around Karur, there are several small and large industries catering to the need within Tamil Nadu as also outside the state. About 90% of south Indian bus bodies are being built here. The total business is estimated to be around Rs.250 crore per annum. On the international textile map, Karur has become synonymous with handloom “made-ups” as Tirupur in the hosiery product. The handloom products being exported have been broadly classified under three heads - Kitchen, bathroughom and bedroom furnishing items. Some of the handloom made-ups exported from Karur are Bedspreads, Towels, Floor rugs, Tea towels, Napkins, Aprons, Kitchen towels, Pot holders Plate mats, Bath Mats, Tea mats, Curtains, Pillow, Quill covers, Shower curtains etc., The products are exported to Europe, U.S.A., Japan, Canada, Australia, Singapore, South Korea, South Africa and the Scandinavian countries among others.

In Karur District totally 8980 handlooms are under cooperative looms and 5900 private looms are available. Bed covers and pillow cover are the major varieties produced in the district. Sales Promotional Division under Integrated Handloom Development Programme was implemented in the year 2008-09 worth of Rs. 21/- lakhs.
4.2.6. Ramanathapuram District

Ramanathapuram district Surrounded by Pudukottai District on north Sivaganga and Virudhunagar districts, on the northwest and west, Thoothukudi district and Gulf of Mannar on the south and Bay of Bengal and Palk Strait on the east. The District is situated in the south east corner of Tamil Nadu. It is highly Drought Prone and most backward area as it is lacking in industrial front. The district has 2 rivers viz Vaigai and Gundar, but they are not perennial. The maximum temperature of 37.80°C and the minimum temperature of 22.30° pertain. Through the in the district average rainfall is 827 mm per annum, most of the rain fall spreads within a span of 45 days. Most of the precipitation is received by North east monsoon.

In Ramanathapuram District totally 4971 handlooms come under cooperative looms and 9750 private looms are available. Art silk sarees and cotton sarees are the major varieties produced in the district. Sales Promotional' Division under Integrated Handloom Development Programme was implemented in the year 2008-09 worth of Rs. 54/- lakhs.

4.2.7. Kanyakumari District

Kanyakumari is the southernmost district of Tamil Nadu, The District is bound by Tirunelveli District on the North and the east. The South Eastern boundary is the Gulf of Mannar. On the South and the South West, the boundaries are the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. On the West and North West it is bound by Kerala. The people are the human
resource of the District. Their culture, religion, aptitude, habits, beliefs, talents etc have a bearing on how the district presents itself to others. Tamil and Malayalam are the main languages of this district. Hindus and Christians form a sizeable percentage of the population of the district and there are a number of Muslims dominated belts in the district. The caste system in the Society has weakened to a great extent especially after independence because of growth of education and improvements in transport and communication. Some of the communities in the district are Nadars, Nanjil Nadu Vellalars, Paravas, Mukthavas, Vilakki Thalanayar, Kammalar or Asari, Nairs, Chackarevars, Kerala Mudalis etc. Rice is the staple food of the rich and poor alike in the district. Some among the poorer section also use tapioca. Beverages like tea and coffee are widely spread even in to the rural area of the district.

In Kanyakumari District totally 7289 handlooms are under cooperative looms and 4820 private looms are functioning in the district. Dhoti, Terry Towels, Kerala Munt are the major cotton varieties produced in the district. Sales Promotional Division under Integrated Handloom Development Programme was implemented in the year 2008-09 worth of Rs. 40/- lakhs.

4.2.8. Dindigul District

Dindigul district was carved out of the composite Madurai District on 15.9.1985. Dindigul, which was under the rule of the famous Muslim Monarch, Tippusultan, has a glorious past. The historical Rock Fort of this
district was constructed by the famous Naik King Muthukrishnappa Naicker. This district is bound by Erode, Coimbatore, Karur and Trichy districts on the North, by Sivaganga and Tiruchi District on the East, by Madurai district on the South and by Theni and Coimbatore Districts and Kerala State on the West. It is spread over an area of 6266.64 Sq. Km. The population of the district is 19,23,014 and density of the district is 306 per kilometer.

Totally 4925 handlooms are under cooperative looms and 3550 private looms are functioning in Dindigul District. Cotton variety sarees, Kora cotton sarees, Art silk sarees are the major varieties produced in the district. Sales Promotional Division under Integrated Handloom Development Programme was implemented in the year 2008-09 worth of Rs. 29/- lakhs.