

THE SILK BORDER CARPET

A New Genre
in
Handloom Weaving of Tamil Nadu



Dr. C. MAHESWARAN

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FOREWORD

In the Handloom Industry of Tamilnadu, Bhavani is known as the 'Carpet Town of Tamilnadu'. A unique type of carpet hand woven in this town with silk yarn is used as wall hanging and or curtain cloth. This new genre of carpet is designated as the 'Silk Border Carpet'.

Dr. C. Maheswaran, Curator for Anthropology, Government Museum, Chennai has brought out a monograph on this Silk Border Carpet by the name "The Silk Border Carpet: A New Genre in Handloom Weaving of Tamilnadu".

The Department of Museums is indeed happy to bring out this monograph of Dr. C. Maheswaran as one of its publications of 2008-2009.

I hope that the students, scholars and general public will find this monograph a useful reference work.

Station : Chennai – 600 008,
Date : 29-6-2009.


(Dr. T.S. SRIDHAR, I.A.S.,)

PREFACE

While serving in the Western zone of Tamilnadu I had an opportunity to observe and study a unique craftfact of Handloom Industry of Tamilnadu known as the 'Silk Border Carpet'. This had triggered me to delve deep into studying this new genre in Handloom weaving of Tamilnadu in the appropriate field centre itself. And consequently, this research work has yielded ultimately a monograph entitled, "The Silk Border Carpet: A New Genre in Handloom Weaving of Tamilnadu".

I am happy to note that this monograph on the Silk Border Carpet is included as a publication of our Department of Museums.

I hope that this will be a useful work of reference for students, scholars and interested public.

Station : Chennai – 600 008,
Date : 25-6-2009

(C. MAHESWARAN)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the outset, I wish to record my great indebtedness to Dr.T.S.Sridhar, I.A.S., Principal Secretary & Commissioner of Museums, Government of Tamilnadu for having included this monograph as one the publications of our Department of Museums during 2008-2009.

My sincere thanks are due to Shri. B.R. Angamuthu, the Master Craftsman who sustains this new genre in handloom weaving despite the mounting pressures exerted over this on socio-cultural and economic dimensions. I wish to express my deep sense of gratitude to my other key informants who rendered me the requisite data towards this work.

My thanks are also due to M/s Pulavar Jumbai Palaniyappan, S. Palaniswamy of Government Museum, Erode and the Staff, Bhavantex of Bhavani and the Staff, Erotex of Erode who helped me to carry out the field works in and around Bhavani, the Carpet Town of Western Tamilnadu.

(C. MAHESWARAN)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introducing Crafts, Craftsmanship and Master Craftsmanship

The elevation of mankind from the gross animal existence is marked by its yearning for something beyond the satisfaction of mere bodily comforts and needs. This has led it to reveal natural expression in crafts. Thus, the crafts not only continued to hold the stage but also became almost the kingspin in the new edifice of culture. The growth of crafts in the human society is the sign of cultivation of sensitivity and it stands for human endeavour to bring elegance and grace into an otherwise coarse and drab existence of mankind. Handicrafts are valuable not merely as a beautiful heritage but we need to have an intimate relationship with them so as to enrich our life. The growth of crafts in society was the sign of the cultivation of sensitivity and stirring mellowing of humanism.

Craftsmanship has always been a basic activity in human society and it is considered more cohesive and permeating in human relationships. Therefore, it is an indigenous creation of the ordinary people to meet their direct human needs. Further, it has become an activity that involves the entire person, closely relating the mind and the material and more than manual dexterity in manipulating the tools. Hence, although the craftsmanship is hereditary and passed on from one generation to another with inheritance of skill, an automatic transfer of skill and excellence as such could not be assumed and or expected. Consequently, it is necessary to provide training and performance outside the limited family circle, if the craftsman intends to pass on his skill and continuation of the traditional crafts. Visionaries from time to time have tried to remind mankind not to lose its essence of life, the *rasa*, in the Indian cultural milieu which in modern parlance is referred to as 'quality'. It is this *rasa* or 'quality' that has impelled the indigenous people to gain mastery over their workmanship and produce super craftfacts. The joy of creating the synchronized concentration and infinite patience to bring their effort to perfection, resulting into bounty of beauty in their life styles. Traditional craftsmanship has meant a total operation involving emotions, mind, body and vibrant rhythm that such a coordination generates.

Master craftsmanship, the element of excellence in life relates to a physical function and a manual performance. And the fusion of 'concept', 'material used' and 'method employed' is the fundamental pre-condition, for quality, viz., the master craftsmanship. Consequently, the master craftsman has imbibed a deep sense of fulfillment when he looked on his own handiwork. Such a satisfaction comes from creating and giving tangible shape to a mental image. The tangible forms which he shaped were meaningful and lead him to transcending himself and getting transformed into a creator.

1.2 Indian Art and Craft Traditions

The vast diversity of India – in cultural and geographical levels–has enabled the possible emergence of a variety of arts and crafts, with varying degree, techniques and motifs to flourish on this fertile land. The patterns that the traditional arts and crafts in India were to take appeared already mature and firmly established on vernacular forms of the artisan world. Interestingly enough, the items produced by the artists and craftsmen form an integral part of the socio-religious order of traditional and contemporary tribal and folk life. Hence, it would not be out of context to refer that the Sanskrit word *shilpa* refers to designate all forms of creative expression including art works, crafts, architectures and their related skills. And the relevance of Indian craftsmanship lies in its living traditions. Two significance characteristics of a craft are that aesthetic's functions are integrated and ornamentation & decoration are not divorced from utility. Accordingly, crafts in this country grew and flourished because what was produced was used in every day life and the craftefacts so crafted were functional.

As rightly pointed out by Ananda Coomaraswamy (as quoted in Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, 1980 : 41) “ ‘Art in India’ and ‘Art in Modern World’ mean two very different perspectives. In India, it is the statement of an ethnic experience and serves the purpose of life, like a daily bread. Indian art has always been produced to a demand. The kind of idealism, which would glorify the artist who pressurizes a personal ideal of beauty and strives to express himself and suffers or perishes for lack of patronage would appear to Indian thought ridicule or pitiable”. In the olden days, Indian art was unconscious and now-a-days it is trying to become conscious. And this may be the reason for the pitiable condition of the Indian Art.

1.3 Handloom Weaving and the Indian Carpet Industry

On the whole galaxy of cultural heritage, a rich cultural heritage of our nation that we the Indians are yet to appreciate fully is its rich and continuous textile tradition. Within such a textile tradition many ancient designs and weaves continue as living traditions. Hence, India has been known as a land of arts and crafts altogether craftsmanship.

Weaving is as old a craft as any other ancient one in India. Therefore, all the varieties in weaving, raw materials, numerous techniques, the very wide range in enhancing the surface with ornamentation have been there from the remotest times. And the weavers seemed to have grasped the principles of perspective as applied to the range of colour by the mere accuracy of their eye to fill in the shades without the use of any instruments and simultaneously move their hands on the loom with mathematical precision. Further, the individual weavers also seem to have developed their own science of colour blending in order to form a kind of harmony through regular or diffused or composite reflections. Put it in other words, the craftsman's eye seems to swing between delicate under tones and strong over tones as from the youthful to the mature while a tonal balance is maintained.

India has an age old tradition of floor coverings, especially cotton for climatic reasons. Consequently, the carpets form the distinguished class amongst the Indian weave. Although introduced as a foreign craft today the Indian carpet has become essentially a native tradition of this country. The motifs incorporated here have naturally the indigenous significance, like the circles as the eternity, the running water as the rhythm of life, the swastika as the guiding light, the meandering line as the continuity of life, the tree as the bounty. Thus, the Indian carpet is said to be an emblem of life without end and its pattern the visible world of change. And the Indian carpet weavers being extraordinarily gifted, can produce today any designs.

1.4 New Genre as a Positive Contribution

What we seek today is not a repletion of the old pattern but a new genre as a positive contribution to strengthen the quality of current life, so as to withstand the flow of alien craftefacts due to economic liberalization and globalization. And here comes the 'silk border carpet', an innovative genre of handloom weaving from Bhavani, the Carpet Town of Tamilnadu.

II. THE SILK BORDER CARPET AMONG THE BHAVANI CARPETS

2.1 Introducing the Silk Border Carpet

Research & documentation — as bases for sensitive design, production and marketing — begin with an understanding of the craft community, its traditional practices, markets & materials, price or cost interactions, tools & work place. The carpets of Bhavani, popularly known as *bhavaani jamukkaalam* form a carpet variety woven traditionally only in handlooms in and around Bhavani, the carpet town situated 16 kms from Erode, in the Erode- Mettur road in Tamilnadu. Bhavani carpets are woven in pit looms (*kuzhi thari*) with throw shuttle (*eri naadaa*) by using coarser yarn of below 1/17 s NF grey yarn (*kaarikkan ele*) for warp (*paavu*) having colour cross border (*kurukku vanna patta*) effect on both top and bottom sides of the fabric.

Contrary to the ordinary carpet (*saadhaa jamukkaalam*) of Bhavani cited above, in the new genre of handloom woven carpet, namely, the 'silk border carpet' (*pattu baardar jamukkaalam*) 2/6 S, 2/10 S, 2/17 S of twisted grey yarn is issued for weft. Generally, it has contrast colour cross border effect by using red, green, blue, orange, white and golden yellow dyed yarns of silk in weft for its ends. Basically, plain weave is adopted for weaving this craftifact with floral decorative designs. Professional dyeing people of Bhavani were known as *saaya pandaaram* (Lit. dyers of pandaaram caste group). Originally, black & red, the twin primitive colours alone were in use. While black colour was obtained from a typical soil acquired from Bhavani, red colour was extracted from gall nut (*kadukkaay*). Later, blue colour derived from indigo plant (*avuri chedi*) was added in use. However, at present, the carpet weavers of Bhavani are found to employ all sorts of artificial dyes obtained chiefly from inorganic materials. The *saaya thotti* (Lit. dye trough) were constructed previously as pits in the ground. At present, big sized barrels are used as dye troughs.

Unlike the traditional varieties of Bhavani carpets, the silk border carpet is treated as a new genre of handloom weaving, as it got emerged in the carpet industry of Bhavani during 1983, by an innovative technique introduced by master craftsmen hailing in and around Bhavani.

2.2 Origin of the Silk Border Carpet Industry

The origin of the silk border carpet is traced back to the *pattu nool nesavu* (Lit. silk yarn weaving) by the people of *jaedar* community, popularly know as *pattu noolkaarar* (Lit. people of silk yarn) in and around Bhavani. This extraneous silk weaving community originally from Sowrashtra is used to weave cotton textiles (both dhothi and saree), by incorporating silk yarn for weft so as to sprawl various motifs in silk.

This was later taken up as a cue by the carpet weavers of Bhavani in weaving handloom carpets. Thus, an innovative technique of weaving hand woven carpets in total silk got introduced in the carpet industry of Bhavani.

At present, the *Jaedar* caste group is found to inhabit only in and around Andhiyur, a nearby sub-urban domicile. It is reported that they were cursed to leave Bhavani by the Kongu Vanniyar, the local weaving community as the former were able to control and command over by their magical powers the deity of the latter. And it is presumed that such animosity might have crept in between these communities due to the professional competition as well.

The people of Kongu Pandaaram community who were once engaged as dyers, viz., *saaya pandaaram* have shifted their profession and taken up this new genre of handloom weaving of silk border carpets. Thus, at present, a majority of Kongu Vanniyars and a majority of Kongu Pandaarams are now found to be engaged in this silk border carpet weaving. Interestingly, the proprietorship of the silk border carpet industry remains in the hands of Kongu Kaikaolars, the traditional weaving community of Tamilnadu.

2.3 B.R. Angamuthu : A Pioneer Master Craftsman in the Industry

Art, craft and design were integrated as one inseparable concept in the minds of both maker and user, in a single world *kala*. The Indian craftsmen are therefore artists, designers and technicians as a single multi-faceted personality.

Thiru. B.R. Angamuthu, a member of the Bhavantex (The Bhavani Textile Cooperative Manufacturing and Marketing Society) who hails from Bhavani is one of the Pioneer Master Craftsman in the weaving industry of silk border carpet. He has engaged in this new technique of handloom weaving in the carpet industry, having realized that he could survive in the industry only if he could taken up such innovative techniques. At present, this 65 year old master craftsman wants to inculcate this new genre of craft to see that it is sustained for posterity. Even his own sons are not eager to learn and indulge this craft. However, a few young weavers have come forward in imbibing this craft. But, he laments that his pupils M/ s Jeeva, Selvam, Krishnan, Periyasamy could produce only simple designs with floral and zoomorphic motifs, unlike his ability to make fullfledged portraits in the carpets.

The master craftsman's skilful fingers create eternal and earthly figures alike from Bannari Amman, Lakshmi, Saraswathi, Ardhanaareeshwara, Ganesha, Muruga, Venkatachalapathi to Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indhira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Kamaraj, Annadurai, M.G. Ramachandran. His clientele include the devotees who wish to offer *thirai cheelai* ("curain cloth") for the door of the sanctum sanctorum and the political personalities who want to offer *uruva padam* ("portrait") of their beloved leaders usually place orders steadily. And his craftefacts adorn the shrines of Bannari Amman (of Bannari), Ardhanareeshwara (of Thiruchengode), Muruga (of Palani, Thiruthani and Vadapalani).

Shri. B.R. Angamuthu is the recipient of the 'Best Craftsman Award' instituted by the Upasana Arts and Crafts Trust, Chennai for the year 1996-97.

2.4 Methods employed in weaving the Silk Border Carpet

Studies reveal that first an outline of the requisite image is drawn on a graph sheet¹. Then *paavu* ("warp") was arranged so as to copy the drawn image on it. With the help of a specially designed *kuzhi thari* ("pit loom") weaving is started alternating the yarn of *pattu* ("silk") slowly up and down by *kai kaorvai* ("maneuvering with hands").

Such weaving of the silk border carpet cannot be carried out swiftly with yarn in the throw shuttle. When weaved assiduously a sprawling picture get emerged along with the carpet. And its details would eventually get magnified in the background of the carpet. The image getting evolved in the pit loom cannot be viewed and monitored from top angle as in ordinary carpet weaving. As the weaving patterns could be discernible inwardly, they are viewed by placing a reflecting mirror over the pedal of the pit loom and necessary corrections, if any are made then and there.² Ultimately, the hand woven craftefact on completion was provided with an ornate border silk yarn, fetching it the name, the 'silk border carpet'. Such a rendering of a unique silk border has earned an exclusive position to this new genre of carpet weaving among the different genres of carpet industry. Interestingly, the typological classification of this silk border carpet is made only on the basis of the border involved into *moonu baardar* ("triple border"), *rendu border* ("double border") and *oru border* ("single border")³; the other motifs get mentioned either as a distinct category or as a combination of categories, viz., *veththalekkodi baardar* ("betel vine border"), *raek saadha baardar* ("filigree ordinary border") or *kappu sihappil pala kalar kammal kodi maambinju baardar* ("Multi colour border of ear stud creeper with budding mango in dark red colour"), *raek anaas baardar* ("filigree pineapple border").

This new genre of *kai kaorvai* ("maneuvering with hands") carpet is unique in the sense that such craftefacts cannot be made by the 'jacquard method' wherein carpets are weaved generally.⁴

2.5 Technical Specifications adhered in the Silk Border Carpet

The following technical specifications are adhered in weaving the silk border carpet:

<i>paavu nool ennikke</i> (warp count)	: Coarser twisted yarn below 2 / 20
<i>oode nool ennikke</i> (weft count)	: Single yarn equivalent to 10 s and below
<i>achchu</i> (reed)	: 20 s and below (i.e., one warp yarn in a dent)
PPI	: 63 - 70 of 2 ply (and if 3 ply with PPI)
<i>alavu</i> (size)	: 34" x 72", 40" x 73", 46" x 84"
<i>ede</i> (<i>oru sadhura adikku</i>) (weight [per sq. ft.])	: 50 gms - 55 gms

2.6 Significance of the Silk Border Carpet

"Aesthetics results where the 'theme', the 'expression' and the 'content' are in harmony", observes Tmt. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay. This statement is proved true in the case of the silk border carpet wherein the theme, the expression and the content are in harmony, earning aesthetics to this new genre of craftefact.

The silk border carpet is most exquisite with incredibly refined weave and in a wealth of beautiful shapes and designs. In fact, this genre of handloom weave vibrates with life, as though the craftsman has infused some of his own self into his creation. A work of craft had to have a dual purpose: outwardly for utility, inwardly for delight. The silk border carpet, thus, fit into this basic expectation very well. In an effort to reduce the exorbitant rate and further to compete in the market comparatively cheaper yarn of art silk is substituted in the place of pure silk yarn, as and when required.

The cost of a pure silk border carpet ranges from Rs. 1,500 /- to Rs. 10,000/ - and it is stated that the price of this craftefact is fixed usually not on the basis of the demand from the buyer but on the number of days spent on weaving the carpet and the cost of the silk yarn incorporated on it by the craftsman. The task involved in this handloom weaving is so taxing both physically and mentally that for an hour's work the craftsman needs another hour's rest. Thus, for weaving a silk border carpet of the size 24" x 30"⁵ the craftsman is in need of at least a week.

It is heartening to note that the silk border carpet has been registered under the 'Geographical Indication Act' by the Controller General of Patent Design Trade Mark Geographical Indication Act, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India on the 14th December 2004.

2.7 Special Features attested in the Silk Border Carpet

The following special features are attested in the silk border carpet:

- i. It is woven in handloom of specially devised *kuzhi thari* ("pit loom") by employing *eri naada* ("throw shuttle").
- ii. *kurukku vanna patta* ("cross colour bar") effect in contrasting colours is given on both the sides.
- iii. Only the *kaarikkan ele* ("grey yarn") is being used for the warp; and
- iv. Jacquard and dobby accessories are not being used for creating the designs and the images; rather they are maneuvered only with hands by '*kaorvai*' or '*kai kaorvai*' method.

III. THE LANGUAGE OF THE SILK BORDER CARPET

3.0 General

Fine occupational vocabularies pertaining to the craftefact, under study, namely, the 'silk border carpet' and its relevant industry constitute a unique language of its own. To understand the nuances of both the craftefact, concerned and its industry, one has to familiarize himself / herself with this linguistic verbal repertoire *in toto*.

The language of the silk border carpet⁶ is presented below in appropriate domains, viz., (i) 'parts of a silk border carpet', (ii) 'types of borders', (iii) 'tools used', (iv) 'methods employed', (v) 'colours incorporated', (vi) 'motifs presented' for understanding it completely and appreciate it in and out.

3.1 Parts of a Silk Border Carpet

kurukku vanna patta "(contrasting) cross colour bar"

baardar "border"

senttar puttaa "centre putta"

padam "motif"

kunjam "frill"

3.2 Types of Border ⁷

3.2.1 Based on Number of Borders represented⁸

oru baardar "single border"

rendu baardar "double border"

moonu baardar "triple border"

1. oru baardar "single border"

(a) kalar thaamare kelaavar-oru baardar

"colour lotus claver - single border"

(b) dabul ele kodi - oru baardar

"double leaf creeper - single border"

(c) sooryagaandhi- oru baardar

"sun flower-single border"

(d) kodi raojaa thuththi - oru baardar

"creeper rose (&) thuththi- single border"

(e) simma kodi - oru baardar

"lion creeper - single border"

(f) raek saadhaa - oru baardar

"filigree ordinary - single border"

(g) pavun ele anaas - oru baardar

"golden leaf pineapple -single border"

(h) veththale kodi - oru baardar

"betel vine - single border"

(i) thraachche kodi - oru baardar

"grape vine -single border"

(j) sakkara kodi - oru baardar

"sweet potato vine - single border"

2. rendu baardar 'double border'

(a) raek anaas - rendu baardar

"filigree pineapple – double border"

(b) kammal kodi – rendu baardar

"ear stud creeper – double border"

3. moonu baardar – 'triple border'

(a) thaamare – moonu baardar

"lotus – triple border"

(b) onre kannu – moonu baardar

"one & half eye – triple border"

(c) ele thaamare kodi – moonu baardar

"leaf lotus creeper – triple border"

(d) daalar kodi – moonu baardar

“dollar creeper – triple border”

(e) simma kodi are kammal - moonu baardar

“lion creeper half ear stud - triple border”

(f) kodi thaamare kodi maambinju – moonu baardar

“creeper lotus creeper budding mango – triple border”

(g) ele raojaa – moonu baardar

“leaf rose – triple border”

(h) pala kalar kammal kodi maambinju – moonu baardar

“multi-colour ear stud creeper budding mango – triple colour”

3.2.2 Based on Creepers represented

veththale kodi	“betel vine”
thraachche kodi	“grape vine”
sakkare kodi	“sweet potato vine”
ele thaamare kodi	“leaf lotus creeper”
kammal kodi	“ear stud creeper”
simma kodi	“lion creeper”
daalar kodi	“dollar creeper”

3.2.3 Based on Number of Motifs represented

1. oru padam “single motif”

2. pala padam “multiple motifs”

1. oru padam “single motif”

(a) thaamare “lotus”

(b) sooryagaandhi “sun flower”

(c) velakku “lamp”

(d) onre kannu “one & half eye”

(e) raek saadha “filigree ordinary”

2. pala padam “multiple motifs”

(a) ele raojaa “leaf rose”

(b) kalar thaamare kelaavar “colour lotus claver”

(c) kodi raojaa thuththippoo “creeper rose thuththi flower”

(d) raek anaas “filigree pineapple”

(e) pavun ele anaas “golden leaf pineapple”

(f) ele thaamare kodi “leaf lotus creeper”

(g) simma kodi are kammal “lion creeper half ear stud”

(h) kodi thaamare kodi maambinju “creeper lotus creeper budding mango”

(i) pala kalar kammal kodi maambinju “multi-colour ear stud creeper budding mango”

3.3 Tools used

i. ele “yarn”

(1) kaarikkan ele “grey yarn”

(2) pattu ele “silk yarn”

(3) naar pattu ele “art silk yarn”

(4) ele sandhu “yarn gap”

(5) ele kanakku “yarn count”

(6) paavu “warp”

(7) oode “weft”

(8) paavu nool ennikke “warp yarn count”

(9) oode nool ennikke “weft yarn count”

(10) achchu “reed”

(11) alavu “size”

(12) ede “weight”

ii. thaar “spindle”

- iii. paohini "cone"
- iv. eri naadaa "throw shuttle"
- v. raatte "spinning wheel"
- vi. kuzhi thari "pit loom"
- vii. vare padam "graph sheet bearing sketch"
- viii. thadukku "model weave design"

3.4 Methods employed

- (i) kaorve/kai kaorve more "method of maneuvering with hands"
- (ii) eri naadaa more "method of employing throw shuttle"
- (iii) kuzhi thari more "method of employing pit loom"

3.5 Colours incorporated

karuppu	"black"
velle	"white"
sihappu	"red"
bloo	"blue"
manjal	"yellow"
kappu kalar	"dark colour"
pala kalar	"multi-colour"
ketti saayam	"fast colour"

3.6 Motifs presented

padam	"motif"
anna patchi	"swan"
mayil	"peacock"
kili	"parakeet"
yaane	"elephant"

yaali	"yali"
jwaala	"cowherd"
kodi	"creeper"
anaas	"pineapple"
sooryagaandhi	"sun flower"
thaamare	"lotus"
raojaa	"rose"
thuththippoo	"thuththi flower"
klaavar	"claver"
sadhuram	"square"
onre kannu	"one & half eye"

IV. PROBLEMS FACED IN THE INDUSTRY OF THE SILK BORDER CARPET

4.1 Problems faced in the Industry under Study

To retain and preserve whatever craft we still have need encouragement and support both at individual level and combined level. Bearing this fact in mind, in this present work, the various problems faced in the industry of the silk border carpet have been identified from the field through direct participation-observation, interviewing with the key informants, surveying the current status of sales in the marketing. They are enlisted below for assessing the viability of the industry of the silk border carpet and suggesting steps to sustain its viability and fostering further its development:

- (i) The fabrication of the silk border carpet is a time consuming work.
- (ii) The weavers involved in weaving silk border carpet become tiresome both physically and mentally.
- (iii) The remuneration to the weaver is not commensurate with the time, labour and energy spent in the process of fashioning a final product viz., silk border carpet.
- (iv) Contrary to the normal expectations, commercialization has led to paucity in creativity in the silk border carpet industry. For instance, with a sheer motive of profit, the proprietors of the private textile units insist the craftsmen to weave with yarns of fading colours effecting heavy causality to the quality.
- (v) The cooperative society too, in a competitive spirit with such textile units, encourages manufacture of cheaper products of silk border carpet utilizing fading colours and poor quality yarns. However, among the weavers of the silk border carpet it is considered a sacrilege to use poor quality dyes and yarns.
- (vi) The weavers engaged in silk border carpet industry tend to loose their normal eye sight as they constantly work in closer proximity, monitoring the emergence of the motifs, the designs and altogether the craftefact.
- (vii) There is no constant demand exists for the silk border carpets in the industry, unlike the existence of a steady demand for the ordinary Bhavani carpets.

Due to the aforesaid reasons, very often a shift in the profession from weaving of silk border carpet to weaving of ordinary carpet is perceptible among the weavers in and around Bhavani.

4.2 Suggestions proposed

The ideal environment for the craftsperson is one in which they can create and sell with ease. To achieve this ideal environment in the industry of the silk border carpet the following suggestions are proposed:

- (i) For the survival of crafts and craftsperson there must be a conscious effort to revive and market the products. And hence, the agencies such as the cooperative marketing society, under the State Department of Handlooms may initiate steps to create and sustain a constant demand for the silk border carpet.
- (ii) The cost of the silk border carpet may be fixed by the State Government itself now and then, based on the raise in the cost of the silk yarn, dyes, etc.
- (iii) The remuneration for the weaving of the silk border carpet may be fixed in a relatively higher level than for weaving ordinary carpet, so as to encourage and sustain the interests of the weavers involved in the former industry.
- (iv) Quality control agency may be established by the State Government itself to monitor the quality of the silk border carpet, and
- (v) The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India may take steps to supply the raw materials such as qualitative yarns, dyes, tools in subsidy, so as to free the weavers and master craftsmen in the industry from the clutches of the proprietors of the handloom units, textile units and co-operative marketing societies.

V. CONCLUSION

The silk border carpet which emerged as a new genre of handloom weaving in Tamilnadu is, at present, experiencing suffocation in the carpet industry of Bhavani due to various socio-economic pressures. Although it is designated as a variety of carpet in the industry it thrives as a curtain cloth, portraying the portraits of gods & goddesses and political personalities. Thus, it adorns either the entrance of the sanctum sanctorum of famous shrines at Thirumala (Andhra Pradesh), Palani, Thiruchengode, Chennimalai, Bhannari, Vadapalani (Tamilnadu) or the waiting halls of the respective political leaders.

If we want to see that it sustains and flourishes then we have to sustain and foster its industry, by and large. The recognition given to this craftifact during 2004, through the Geographical Indication Act by the genuine efforts of the Controller General of Patent Design Trade Mark Geographical Indication Act, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India is one such attempt in sustaining the industry of the silk border carpet.

The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India may perhaps render all possible helps in sustaining and fostering this industry by sanction of generous subsidy for procuring raw materials such as quality silk yarn, dyes and for purchasing of requisite tools and accessories. Further, the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India may adopt the master craftsmen, concerned so that the relevant industry may sustain and flourish with longevity.

The Crafts Museum, New Delhi may initiate steps to popularize this craftifact and its industry by organizing demonstration-cum-training programme of silk border carpet handloom weaving to interested weavers throughout the Nation. The craftifacts produced through these programmes may be marketed to the art connoisseurs through the museo-shop of the Crafts Museum as well.

The All India Handicrafts and Handlooms Board whose official directive is to concentrate on crafts having export potential and which has the national mandate for craft regeneration welfare of craft community can concentrate on the promotional, retail and export activities of the industry of silk border carpet.

Further, students and teachers of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad may be advised to study the problems faced by the industry of the silk border carpet and try to solve them by suggesting apt remedial measures.

FOOT NOTES

- ¹ Use of such graph sheet is observed only in the case of weaving **uruva padam** ("portrait"); And for weaving other types of silk border carpet the points are identified on **mana kanakku** ("mental calculation") by the artisans as mere **ele sandhu** ("gap in yarns"), without the aids of any graph sheet.
- ² The actual design sprawling in the exterior which is seen directly cannot give any assurance that the expected design is emerging in exactitude. Hence, a through monitoring by placing reflecting mirror becomes the desideratum. However, it is reported that the experienced craftsmen seldom commit mistakes.
- ³ Obviously, the **moonu baardar** variety is priced higher than the **rendu baardar** variety; And thus it goes without saying the **oru baardar** variety is sold relatively cheaper than the other two varieties cited above.
- ⁴ Often the craftsmen engaged in weaving the silk border carpet spend their precious energy in making the outsiders to realize that such meticulous workmanship is not carried out by jacquard method but only through **kaorvai/kai kaorvai** method. However, such confusion arising in the mind of the onlooker itself stands as an indirect testimony to the skills of the master weavers in the industry of silk border carpet.
- ⁵ The silk border carpet is weaved in handlooms usually in the lengths of 8',10',12',14', upto the maximum of 16'.
- ⁶ The weaving of the silk border carpet is referred in the industry often shortly and popularly as 'border weaving'.
- ⁷ Although 20 types of border are listed out by the informants during the field works the cooperative society, concerned is observed to reiterate only 9 types in the market (For details Cf. **Appendix II and III**).
- ⁸ While referring "single" and "double" borders the popular terms **oththe** and **rette** respectively are avoided probably on the line of the term **moonu** which designates both "three" and "triple", in the speech.
- ⁹ Interestingly, instead of the term **neelam** "blue", the English equivalent term **bloo** "blue" is used by the weavers.

- ¹⁰ Although they use the native term **vanna(m)** “colour” while designating the contrasting colour cross bar (, viz, **kurukku vanna patta**) they prefer to use the English borrowed word **kalar** “colour” in the domains of colour terminology.
- ¹¹ This is the elliptical form of the term **anaasi/annaasi** “pineapple”.
- ¹² The remuneration for weaving one sq.ft. of the silk border carpet is Rs.18/- only. Contrary to this, for weaving ordinary carpet wherein simple weaving is involved fetches Rs. 10.80, quite easily.

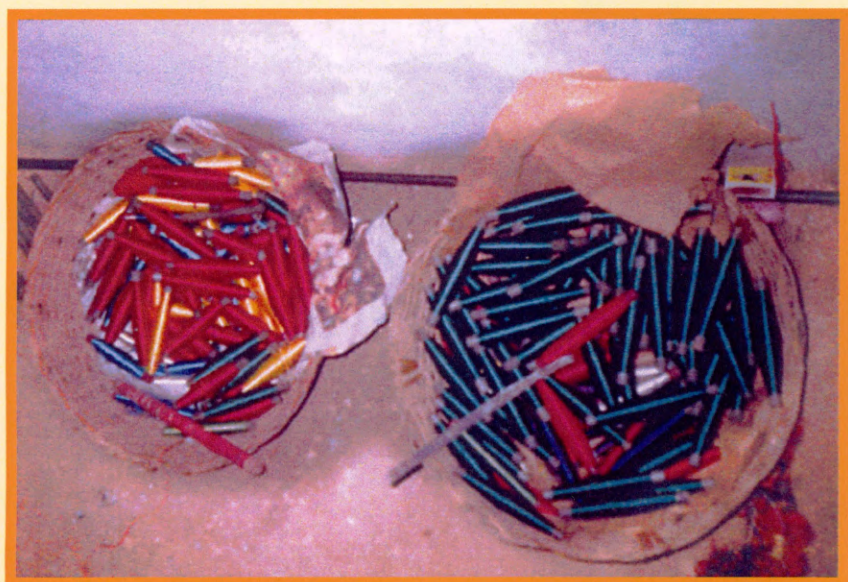
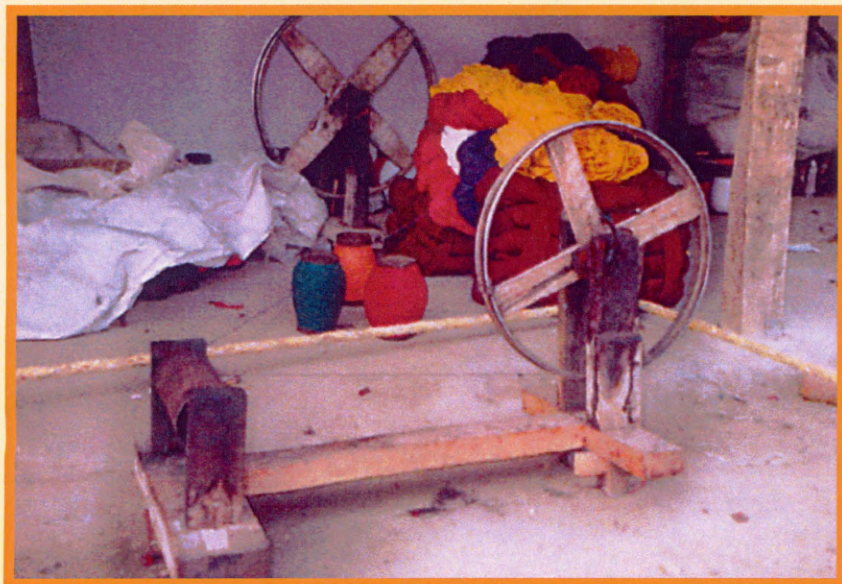
APPENDIX - I

SELECT PHOTOGRAPHS

OF

THE SILK BORDER CARPET INDUSTRY

TOOLS OF THE SILK BORDER CARPET INDUstry



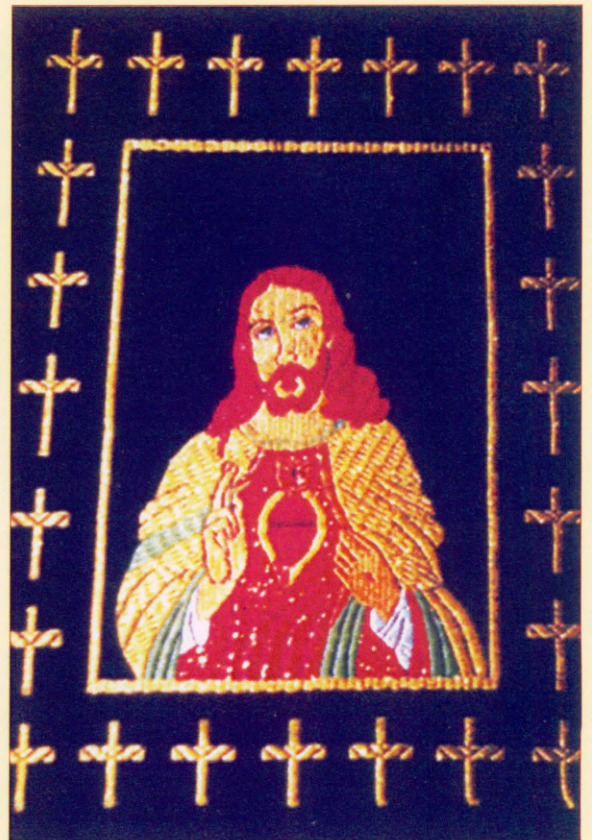
CRAFTSPERSONS AT WORK



FINISHED PRODUCTS



FINISHED PRODUCTS



REITERATED BORDERS IN THE SILK BORDER CARPET INDUSTRY



REITERATED BORDERS IN THE SILK BORDER CARPET INDUSTRY



REITERATED BORDERS IN THE SILK BORDER CARPET INDUSTRY



APPENDIX - II

LIST OF BORDERS ATTESTED IN THE SILK BORDER CARPET INDUSTRY

1. kalar thaamare kelaavar	- oru baardar
2. dabul ele kodi	- oru baardar
3. sooryagaandhi	- oru baardar
4. kodi raojaa thuththippoo	- oru baardar
5. simma kodi	- oru baardar
6. raek saadhaa	- oru baardar
7. pavun ele anaas	- oru baardar
8. veththale kodi	- oru baardar
9. thraachche kodi	- oru baardar
10. sakkare kodi	- oru baardar
11. raek anaas	- rendu baardar
12. kammal kodi	- rendu baardar
13. thaamare	- moonu baardar
14. onre kannu	- moonu baardar
15. ele thaamare kodi	- moonu baardar
16. daalar kodi	- moonu baardar
17. simma kodi are kammal	- moonu baardar
18. kodi thaamare kodi maambinju	- moonu baardar
19. ele raoja	- moonu baardar
20. pala kalar kammal kodi maambinju	- moonu baardar

APPENDIX - III

REITERATED BORDERS ATTESTED IN THE SILK BORDER CARPET INDUSTRY

- 1. sihappil ele raojaa kelaavar - moonu baardar**
- 2. bloovil thaamare kelaavar maambinju - moonu baardar**
- 3. kappu sihappil pala kalar - kammal kodi maambinju - irupuramum - rendu baardar**
- 4. bloovil ele thaamare kodi maambinju - iru puramum - rendu baardar**
- 5. pachcheyil kalar thaamare kelaavar - rendu baardar**
- 6. aaranjil raek anaas - rendu baardar**
- 7. pachcheyil kodi raojaa thuththippoo - rendu baardar**
- 8. manjalil dabul ele anaas - rendu baardar**
- 9. aaranjil simma kodi - oru baardar**

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