

## CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

*From Urban and Regional Development Perspective*

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**Abstract.** Understanding spatial patterns of settlements, in terms of distribution of land-uses and their functional interdependency is an important aspect in Planning for Urban and Regional Development. As per traditional Metropolitan Regional Planning Theories, cities do not exist and grow in isolation. Within a given geographical region, urban and rural settlements form into a functional hierarchy and depend on each other for sharing of resources and infrastructure. The economic dynamics play a significant role in formation of settlement patterns and development of networks. This paper attempts to understand the growth of historical settlements from urban-regional planning perspective by studying the development of the handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh.

The State of Andhra Pradesh is famous for its cotton and silk Handloom Industries. Interestingly, different fabrics are known by names of towns where they are woven, such as Pochampalli, Dharmavaram, Gadwal, Mangalagiri etc., each of them having a distinct style. A study of these towns and hinterland clearly shows that their spatial patterns and architecture had evolved based on the requirements of the handloom industries - the flow of raw materials, manufacturing processes, distribution of workers, traders etc. In the last two decades due to globalization and changing development priorities, as is the case with many-a-cultural industry, the handloom industry too has seen heavy out-migration of skilled crafts persons into other job-sectors and bigger cities. There is an urgent need to take steps for preserving these places' Heritage and Cultural Identity.

### 1. Living Heritage Cities – Understanding the dynamics of Cultural Industries in Inner Cities from micro to macro

Most of the modern metropolitan cities in the world have a rich glorious history. Study of their spatial patterns and morphology indicates that they have evolved spatially over the centuries. While some of the modern cities are built away from their historical origins and past ruins, others are built around the grand monuments and historical buildings.

It was observed that, in most of the modern cities in India, the historical core of the modern cities ('the inner cities' in urban planning terminology) is an amalgam of the grand monuments of the past and layers of 'infill' development formed due to people settling down and building around the monuments. The socio-economic profile of these inner cities is often consists of lower middle to poorer classes – a resultant of many years of neglect and physical decay.

While the old parts of new cities may not be of interest to land developers and real estate dealers, it cannot be denied that the people living in the old cities have kept alive the grand cities of the past from dying. These areas are dynamic because of the hustle-bustle of the common people living amidst the monuments of the past. These living heritage cities should be preserved for their past monuments and so should be the 'culture' of the people who have settled down in the recent past, both tangible and intangible.

Study of the present landuse structure of inner cities in India has shown that the landuse pattern 'mixed' consisting of residential, commercial and industrial along with supporting physical and social infrastructure provided by the governments in the last one or two centuries. It is observed that the people living in

the historical areas are involved in production and sale of traditional crafts and goods. These areas are characterized by high densities of population with thousands of people working from home or near-by work areas producing articles / goods sold in local markets and even exported. The houses / working sheds of these skilled workers are built /modified to accommodate the tools / activities related to the particular art / craft, making an architectural character unique. Most of these crafts and goods fall into the 'informal' / non-tax paying economy. The people involved in stage of the manufacturing / transport/marketing, flow of material /goods / money, the linkages and interactions - the entire process is complex and is referred to as the 'unorganised sector' in development terminology.

A brief survey was conducted during 2006-2007 – a peep into the working of some of the traditional crafts and goods produced and sold in the historic Charminar area in the city of Hyderabad – the fifth largest metropolitan city in India.. It was found that the production, transport and sale of these traditional crafts and goods involves processes and methods very similar to any other industrial production, only that the scales are different and transactions are unbilled. It was observed that heritage city of Hyderabad is living and bubbly because of these numerous household industries and micro /small enterprises producing traditional crafts – the cultural industries. These cultural industries are as much in need for conservation as much as the grand architectural heritage. These cultural industries are dying due to the meager payments involved thus resulting in out-migration by the younger generation. Once skilled person /family leaves the profession, the houses / worksheds also go for change and modification – a reason to worry and need for attention.

## 2. Historical Settlements and Spatio-economic linkages

Cultural Industries is a generic term covering all the goods/arts/crafts etc whether traditional or modern. While some of them have flourishing markets, some of them are barely surviving and a few others are extinct or about to die. It is to be noted that each one of the goods/arts/crafts is unique in value and is complex in its production, transport or sale. If a brief study of a randomly chosen crafts / goods in one of the historical cities in India has indicated that the operation of cultural industries within cities (intra-urban) are similar to other industries having unique spatio-economic dynamics, can the same phenomenon applied to an

inter-settlement, urban-regional scale? And is there any relevance of such analysis for understanding evolution of human settlements in a region for planning for its conservation?

## 3. Urban –Regional Planning Theory

Capital cities, administrative towns, religious places and trade centres – Every urban centre has its own unique character – originating with a single key function they often grow to become metropolitan cities having many or all characteristics. When cities grow in population and size, they attract higher infrastructure and investment which in turn pull more people and activities. And for people settled in cities, transport networks and social infrastructure is developed for safe and comfortable cities. Cities all through history were seats of political and economic power and they remain to be the engines of growth for development, even today.

While people from far and near migrate to cities looking for work opportunities for economic growth, it is the rural hinterland that grows food and feeds the people in the cities. The products that are sold in the commercial markets in cities are manufactured in the outskirts and the raw materials, yet again come from agricultural lands, forests, mining etc. Metropolitan Regional Planning theory is developed with the understanding of the inter-dependence of urban-rural settlements and reiterates the need for equitable distribution of wealth and resources over a region aiming at balanced regional development.

## 4.Understanding Urban-Regional Linkages For Conservation Of Historic Settlements And Cultural Industries – A Case Of Handloom Industries In Andhra Pradesh, India

The State of Andhra Pradesh is famous for its cotton and silk Handloom Industries and it is the second largest industry As is the case with any industry, it is a chain process where there is flow of raw / manufactured goods and money at every stage involving farmers, workers, workshop/industrial owners before it reaches the market for the end-user to buy in the form of clothes and textiles.

Interestingly, in most places in India, different handlooms are known by names of towns where they are woven. Kanchi, Benares, Mysore, Chenderi, Kota, Chettinaad are a few examples in the country while Andhra Pradesh is famous for its Pochampalli, Dharmavaram, Gadwal, Mangalagiri etc., each of them



*Pictures of Traditional Indian Saree, the art of weaving, the handloom machinery and building architecture*

having a distinct style. A study of these towns and hinterland clearly shows that their spatial patterns and architecture had evolved over two or three centuries based on the requirements of the handloom industries – and in the region, the industry played a dominating part in dynamics of economics in terms of workers, workshops, trade of raw material and goods, infrastructure and flow of money.

Traditionally, these places have had many families who have taken up weaving as their livelihood, worked from home building their houses accommodating the handlooms machinery. Investing their money, they would purchase the cotton / silk thread in the market and employed workers from the same place or from the villages around the town in the region. The finished fabric was either sold in Weavers' Cooperative Societies or to traders or in the open market. In the last two decades due to globalization and

changing development priorities, as is the case with many-a-cultural industry, the handloom industry too has seen heavy out-migration of skilled crafts persons into other job-sectors and bigger cities. The traditional families are giving up their art and craft due to the steep rise in the costs of the raw material, which is again due to fluctuations in the agriculture markets. The small and medium size economic structure of the handloom industries is also a major cause as it has no substantial investment from outside for its growth and development. The weavers are the foundation for the survival of the handloom industries.

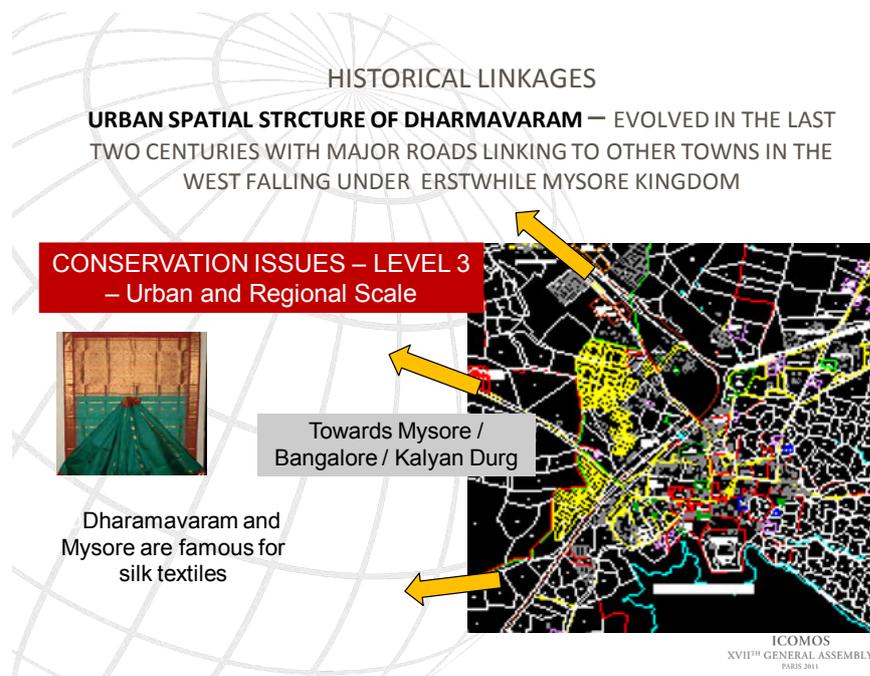
The handloom industry is falling apart in all its stages, with the possibility that the skill, the art and culture of weaving may go extinct very soon, taking along with it the architecture and characteristic features of settlements and their patterns. It is just an ironical situation that while the market of the end-products is

on the up-surge and it is a flourishing trade in the market. It is time resources are pumped into the handloom industry to save the art and craft of weaving from extinction and thus conserve the architectural heritage, the settlement patterns and the regional cultural identities.

**5. Conclusions:**

**Scale 1 – Cultural Industries, Intangible Heritage**

- Cultural Industries often fall under the unorganised sector and household / micro / small and medium scale of enterprises.
- Cultural Industries producing traditional goods and crafts have history of their own.
- Out migration of population of having skills (traditional workers and families) into newer jobs and occupations for economic reasons will lead to extinction of intangible culture.
- Cultural Industries should be brought into development framework - as one of income generation activities.



The Case of Dharmavaram in Anathapur District of Andhra Pradesh State. The Dharmavaram Town has weaver workshops where workers from other villages commute for work. It is also a trade centre for sale of raw thread brought from the adjoining State of Karnataka and also for the sale of finished silk textiles and sarees. Anathapur District was historically under the Vijayanagara & Mysore State, but now falls in the Karnataka State. Formulation of plans for conservation of heritage in Dharmavaram and other handloom towns should look into the intangible heritage of the art of weaving as well as the historical spatial urban-rural-regional linkages.

**Scale 2 – Built Cultural Heritage**

- Places, Cities and Towns which have had a history of cultural industries, would have unique traditional buildings and architecture evolved for the residential and working needs.
- Out-migration of skilled crafts persons would lead to changes /modifications of the built cultural heritage in those places.

**Scale 3 – Urban -Regional Scale : Intra urban and inter settlement**

- Economics and Spatial Functioning of Cultural Industries is similar to that of any other manufacturing/processing units having.
- Movement of people between home and work, for education, recreation etc (road networks, airports, railways ).
- Industries- Flow of raw materials, manufacturing and processing to finished products.
- Trade and Commerce – Sale and purchase of goods and commodities – wholesale, retail markets.
- The URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING PHENOMENON – of Landuse distribution and spatial linkages, economic and functional dependence – both within settlements and between settlements falling within a region - has been observed to have existed during the past too.
- There is a need to consider the historical regional linkages when planning for conservation of historical settlements.