CHAPTER - IV

Profile of the Study Area
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PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter discusses about the profile of the study area. Present study was carried out in the Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu. It is a one of the industrially backward district in the State. It has its own historical and traditional background. This chapter provides the necessary information to understand the geographical and socio-economic status of the study area.

Source: GISNIC, Chennai
4.2 Historical Background

Dindigul, which was under the sway of the famous Muslim monarch, Tippu Sultan, has a hoary past. The historical Rock Fort of this district was constructed by the famous Naik King, Muthukrishnappa Naicker. Dindigul district was separated from the composite Madurai district on 15.09.1985. It had the names of Dindigul Anna, Quaid-e-Milleth and Mannar Thirumalai.

4.3 Geographical Location

Dindigul district is located between 10°.05” and 10°.09” North latitude and 77°.30” and 78°.20” East longitude, and its Mean Sea Level is (+) 280.11 M. It is bound by Erode, Coimbatore, Karur and Trichy districts on the North, by Sivaganaga and Tiruchi districts on the East, by Madurai district on the South and by Theni, Coimbatore districts and Kerala State on the West. It is spread over an area of 62664 Sq.Km. It comprises three Revenue Divisions, eight Taluks and 14 Panchayat Unions/blocks. It has a network of inter-district roads connecting Coimbatore, Erode, Trichy, Karur, Madurai, Theni and Sivaganga districts.

Kodaikanal, a popular summer resort, located at an altitude of 2133 meters in the Western Ghats, is the “Princess of Hill Stations”. A notable feature of this hillock is the “Kurunji” flowers blooming once in 12 years. It is also famous for potato cultivation. Peranai and Sirumalai are the other two fine picnic spots of this district. There are four dams, viz, Palar, Porandalar, Varathamnathithi, Parapplar in Palani Taluk and Maruthanathi in Dindigul Taluk to augment irrigation facilities to agricultural fields in this district. This district is privileged to have one of the six celebrated hill abodes of Lord Muruga where the famous Dhandayuthapani Temple is situated on a hilly rock at a height of about 450 mts at Palani Hills.
4.4 Economical Background

Dindigul town has been associated with iron locks and iron safes of good quality and durability. It is famous for manufacturing strong and quality locks. Lather tanning is other industrial sector contributes more in the economical aspects of the district. This district is having a flourishing handloom industry at Chinnalapatti, which is located in NH7 Madurai - Dindigul 11 K.m away from Dindigul city. Art - Silk Sarees and Sungudi Sarees produced in Chinnalapatti are famous throughout India. More than 1000 families are engaged in the handloom process.

Dindigui city is an important wholesale and export market place in Tamil Nadu for onion and groundnut. Oddanchatram is a noted centre for vegetable market. It is also famous for the export of butter, manufactured in the nearby villages using cream separators. Batlagundu is an important market centre for Tomato. Pattiveeranpatti in Batlagundu Block is famous for cardamom and coffee curing enterprises. Nilakkottai town is famous for the growing and marketing of flowers and grapes.

4.5 Population

According to the 2011 census, its population is 21,61,367 (rural 13,53,808 urban 8,07,559). The density of population is 345 per sq.km. The population has grown 12.39 percent from 2001 to 2011. The occupational structure of the district shows that 61 per cent are engaged in primary activities, 29 per cent in secondary activities and the rest are in the service sector.
4.6 Agriculture

Red loam, lateritic soil, black soil and red sandy soil are the types of soil spread over the district. The geographical area of the district, according to village papers, is 626664 Square km of which the total cropped area is 261758 hectares and the area sown more than once is 8253 hectares. Paddy, Cholam, Cumbu, Ragi, Red gram, Block gram, Green Gram, Goundnut, Gingelly, Cotton and Sugarcane are the major crops cultivated in the district. Mulberry is was cultivated in an area of 285.09 ha. There are six Regulated Markets spread over six blocks of Dindigui District.

4.7 Irrigation

Totally 41 irrigation canals cover an area of 115.0 K.M all over the district. In addition 100698 wells, 2994 tube wells and eight reservoirs are used for irrigation purposes. The actual area irrigated under different sources is 112071 hectares.

4.8 Banking and Fair Price Shops

There are 106 Nationalised Banks, 32 Scheduled Banks and 38 Co-operative Banks providing banking services to the whole district. 135 Full time and 633 Part time Fair Price Shops are available in the district to provide civil supplies.
4.9 Education

This district has two Universities namely Gandhigram Rural Institute-Deemed University at Gandhigram and Mother Theresa University for Women at Kodaikanal. Apart from the above there are 53 Professional Education Institutes also available to cater the Educational needs of the people.

Table. 4.1: Education Status of Dindigul District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.NO.</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>No. of Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences College (Govt.)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences College (Private)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Engineering Colleges (Govt.)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Engineering Colleges (Private)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Metric Higher Secondary Schools</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Higher Secondary Schools</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>1467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://dindigul.nic.in/

4.10 Land Use aid Cropping Pattern

The study area, majority of the parts are covered by rural area and majority (63 per cent) of the people live in rural area. Agriculture is the one of the main occupation available for the people in Dindigul district. The distribution of land is

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based on land use and the land cover include built-up land, agricultural land, forest, waste land, water bodies, mining areas and grazing land. Built-up lands are found in and around Dindigul, Palani, Kodaikanal, Vedasandur and Natham Towns, Waste lands are largely available in the south-western and the eastern parts and some pockets in the northern part of the district. Grazing lands are found in a few locations in the south-western part of the district. The rest of the area come under agricultural land.

The total geographical area of the district is 5,08,016 hectares and net cultivable area is 2,74,707 hectares. Dry farming is predominant in the district and the important wet land tracts are located in the Shanmuganathithi and the Kodaganar basins. Paddy is the principal crop (37 per cent), followed by oil seeds (23 per cent) and fruits and vegetables (24 per cent). Sirumalai and Virupatchi Hills are known for a special variety of plantains. Fruits like orange, lime; mango and grape are the specialities of Dindigui, Nilakottai and Palani Taluks. In the plains region, the important crops are paddy, cholam, cumbu, millets, oil seeds, cotton, sugarcane, onion etc. In the Kodaikanal and the Sirumalai Hills, the major crops are coffee, citrus fruits etc.

4.11 Forests

Area under forest is found in the south-western and the eastern parts and also small pockets are in the southern and the north-eastern parts of the district. Total forest in the district has been divided into two forest divisions namely Dindigui and Kodaikanal. Dindigui division covers the entire forest in the district,
except Kodaikanal division, and has eight ranges. Both the Dindigul and Kodaikanal divisions have reserve forests as well as reserve lands. Dindigul division covering the eastern part of Gujiliamparai and Vadadamurai Blocks, the north-eastern part of Vedasandur Block, Sirumalai Hills and the hilly area of Natham Block, the northern slopes of the Palani Hills have reserved forests. Three pockets of reserve lands are available in the Sirumalai Hills, the eastern Lower Palani Hills and the north central slope of Palani Hills. In Kodaikanal forest division, reserve forest covers the major area and reserve lands occupy a small area of the total.

4.12 Irrigation

Well is the predominant source of irrigation in Dindigul district. The important irrigation schemes are Palar, Porandalar, Kodaganar and Manjalar. In the plains, dry farming is practiced with the exception of Shanmuganadhi and Kodaganar river basins.

4.13 Rainfall

The annual rainfall is about 1214.50 mm (excluding Kodaikanal), which is more than double the normal rainfall of the state (normal rainfall 500 mm.). As for seasonal distribution, the full benefit of the South-West monsoon could not be harvested because of the Western Ghats forming a barrier. The North-East monsoon is the principal monsoon. The remaining two seasons, namely winter and summer are insignificant. Floods have occurred occasionally. Dindigul and Vedasandur Taluks are the driest parts.
4.14 Industry

Some of the fast developing industrial activities of recent origin are lime-kiln, brick-kiln, spinning and paper mills. Other traditional but important industries are leather tanning, lock making, brassware industry, tobacco and cigar making, jewellery work, dyeing, art silk weaving and etc. Next to farming, a sizable population depends on industries. Dindigul is an important industrial centre.

A number of spinning mills are coming up in Vedasandur and Vadamadurai Blocks, besides a few paper mills in Swaminathapuram. A mini steel industry has been established. Tobacco and cigar, metal, dyes, iron, cotton spinning and weaving are the other promising industries. The district thrives with handloom industry in Dindigui and Chinnalapatti, In addition, Khadi industry (spinning, weaving, and dyeing) has been promoted by Gandhigram in a big way. An industrial estate is available at Dindigul for the benefit of small scale industries.

4.15 Infrastructure Facilities

Dindigul and Palani are the two important educational centres with arts and science colleges, professional colleges and polytechnics. It has two universities namely Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram and Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal. There are 1351 schools functioning in the district. The district has nine hospitals, 31 primary health centres and 307 sub-centres. Agricultural produce are marketed in six permanent and six regulated markets, along with seven unregulated markets and seven shanties. With regard to
veterinary facilities, four hospitals, 27 dispensaries, 11 key village sub-centres and one poultry extension centre are providing services to the livestock population. The district has a good road net-work, well connected with other parts of the State. National Highway No. 7 and 47 run through the district. Surfaced road length is 3071 km while unsurfaced length is 3071.37 km. Metre gauge railway line connects the district with Coimbatore and Madurai while broad gauge links with Karur, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Chennai.

4.16 Block and Village Profiles

Dindigul district divided into 14 blocks for administrative purposes and among them five blocks are developed and remaining nine blocks are backward blocks in the district (District Industries Centre).
Table 4.2: Availability of Infrastructure in the District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Availability in the District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Industrial Estates</td>
<td>SIDCO – 2 (Dindigul and Batlagundu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SIPCOT – 1 (Nilakkottai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Power Supply</td>
<td>Availing power supply from Tuticorin and Neyveli thermal power stations and Periyar, Aliyar hydel power houses of the neighboring districts through state and central grid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4.    | Transport-Road RailwaysAir Water | YES BACKWARD
Adequate. All the Villages connected by road
Metre and Broad gauge available. Gauge conversion is on.
Nil. Nearest airports at Madurai and Trichy
Nil. Nearest Major ports at Tuticorin & Chennai |
| 5.    | Finance - Bank TIIC          | Almost all Public sector and Private sector banks are available in this district
List of banks. (www.diedgl.in/banks.html)                                                   |
|       |                               | TIIC at Dindigul caters to the district.                                                     |
| 6.    | Technical Education           | Adequate technical institutions are available                                                |
4.16.1 Block Profile

The study area compressed totally 14 blocks in the districts. District industries centre data revealed that five blocks are developed and remaining nine blocks are backward blocks in the district. For the study purpose 50 per cent of the blocks were selected (totally 7 blocks - 3 developed and 4 backward). They are Athoor, Batlagundu, Dindigul, Natham, Nilakottai, Reddiarchatram and Shanarpatti.

Map 4.2: Dindigul District Map
## Table - 4.3: Status of Blocks in Dindigul District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Block name</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Athoor</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Batlagundu</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dindigui</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kodaikanal</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Palani</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gujiliam parai</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Natham</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nilakottai</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oddanchatram</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reddiar chatram</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shanarpatti</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thoppam patti</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Vadamadurai</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Vedasandur</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *District Industries Centre, Dindigul*
Table 4.4: Sampling Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dindigul</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Athoor</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Batlagundu</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nilakottai</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Natham</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reddiar chatram</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shanarpatti</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>790</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.16.2 Dindigul Block

4.16.2.1: Location

Dindigul block is situated in the middle of Palani, Batlagundu and Natham blocks. It consists of 18 revenue villages, two panchayats, viz. Thadicombu and Agaram and 169 hamlets. It comes under Dindigul district and has a jurisdiction of about 10 kilometers in each direction. The famous rock fort constructed by the Mysore King Tippusultan during the pre-independent period stands as historical movement. The name Dindigul indicates the rock fort. The block is surrounded by Sirumalai hills in the eastern side and is known for Sirumalai banana and other herbal products. There are number of leather tanneries which provide employment opportunities to nearly 2000 workers and it also fetch foreign exchanges. Foreigners are attracted by its quality and fond of leather tanned in Dindigul.
Another attraction of this block is Arulmigu Soundaraja Perumal temple situated in Tadicombu village for its historical importance. The culverts, stones, writings, sculpture in this temple are historically important and a number of archeological studies have been carried out here. Agriculture plays a minimum role in providing employment opportunities. The industries and business centers in Dindigui town and suburbs provide major employment opportunities to the people.

4.16.2.2: Geographical Area

The total geographical area of the Dindigui block is 3053.53 sq.km. There are two types of soil namely black and red.

4.16.2.3: Topography and Climate

This block is surrounded by Sirumalai hills in the eastern side. The block consists of both plain and hill station (Sirumalai Pudur)

4.16.2.4: Occupation

Like other parts of Tamil Nadu state, most of the people of Dindigui block depend upon agriculture, though some industries, manufacturing units, mills provide job opportunities to the public. Major crops cultivated in this block are paddy, banana, coconut, sugarcane and cotton. The soil type is black and red.

Total number of population engaged in own cultivation are 10074 (Male 6893: Female 3181). Agricultural labourers are 23650 (Male 11910: Female 11650). Apart from these the population engaged in manufacturing and processing work is around 1751 (Male 1120: Female 631). In addition to this 17010 (Male 12200: Female 4910) of them are involved in other works.
4.16.2,5: Industries

In Dindigul block, a number of spinning, ginning mills and leather processing units provide plenty of employment opportunities to the people as well as helping the Government by way of fetching foreign exchange. Another important industry in the block is steel fabricating industry and also a number of chamber brick industries in the Dindigul block.

4.16.2.6: Welfare Programmes

The block officials implemented several development programmes for the benefit of the villagers. Both individuals and community development programmes have been implemented under self-sufficiency scheme. Link roads, small bridges, graveyards and school buildings have been constructed. Under the poverty eradication programmes, loans have been distributed to landless for purchase domestic animals. Training and loans are also provided to Artisans to increase their economic status. Houses have been constructed and hand over it to the village poor under the group housing scheme. The Gandhigram Rural Institute has also undertaken several development programmes in its service to the villages of Dindigul block.

4.16.3: Batlagundu Block

4.16.3.1: Location

Batlagundu is the block as well as taluk in Dindigul district. In north, it has Athoor block, East Nilakottai block, South Usilampatti block and in West Periyakulam Block. This block is established in 12.04.1961. The total
geographical area is 190.2 sq.km. It consists of 15 revenue villages, 3 town panchayat (namely Batlagundu, Sevumkampatty and Pattiveeranpatti) and 17 village panchayats with 84 hamlets. The farmers of Batlagundu and nearby villagers cultivate betel leaves in larger area. Because of betel leaves production these area was called as “Vetrilaikundu” then it called as Batlagundu. Pattiveeranpatti is famous centre for drying up of coffee seeds cultivated in Kodaikanal and Thandikudi hills, from there the dried coffee seeds are exported to other states. Batlagundu has historical importance, because Tiyagi Subramaniya Siva, the freedom fighter was born in Batlagundu and Thiru. P. V. Rajam Iyer, famous for his historical drama “Kamalambal” also was born and lived here.

4.16.3.2: Geographical Area

The total geographical area is 190.232 Kms. Agriculture is the main occupation, small scale and cottage industries are not emerged in this block. Manjalaru, Vaigai and Maruthanathi river run through this block and irrigate the nearby villages which helps to cultivate crops such as betel leaves, banana and paddy the most irrigated crops, and vegetables are cultivated in plains. Coffee and Pepper are cultivated in hills and exported to other states. The total population of this block is 96346 as per 1991 census.

4.16.3.3: Topography and Climate

Batlagundu is the gateway of Kodai hills. At Batlagundu there is a bus stand where more than 200 buses are coming and going. It is the linkage of Madurai with Kodaikanal. At Viralipatti village, the rain gauge station is located
and maintained by public works department. During the financial year 1999-2000 in October 1999 there was a heavy rainfall of 476.4 mm and there was no rainfall in June 1999. Regarding temperature during the month of March and April, the temperature is maximum and the minimum temperature exists during December and January months.

4.16.3.4: Population and Literacy

According to 2001 census the total population of this block was 1,04,402 (nearly one lakh) among them 53,347 were males and 51,055 were females. 79% the population are living in rural area and the remaining 21% are living in urban area. The density of population per sq.km is 507.

4.16.3.5: Occupation

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people in this block. The main occupation may be divided into four categories, namely cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industry and manufacturing and processing service. The population engaged in agriculture, agricultural labourers and household industries and other works is higher in rural areas especially men folk. The total non-workers population is 46,725 (Male 19,356, Female 27,369).

4.16.3.6: Market

Market is the centre for buying and selling commodities. In this block, there is a daily market at Batlagundu for transaction of vegetables. For other commodities they are having 15 village shanties, for cereals setting of pulses and of animals.
Regarding industries and factories concerned, in Batlagundu area, there are one manufacturing unit of agricultural implements at Batlagundu, one Sarvodaya Charkva unit at old Batlagundu, and one SIPCOT unit i.e Industrial unit. There are one soap unit at Kunnuvarayankottai ran by private, a coir factory at Pattiveeranpatti, and a pesticides unit at Sevugampatti providing employment opportunities for the people of the Batlagundu block.

Modern technology introduced implements to the farmers to make their work easy. The traditional plough was changed into iron plough but majority of the farmers are using the traditional one and most of the farmers are engaging tractors for ploughing their lands on rental basis. 106 private tractors were utilized by the farmers. For irrigation the crops, 3328 electric power and 1098 oil engines were used and there were 5 sugarcane crushers run by power.

**4.16.3.8: Welfare Programmes**

Rural development programmes are implemented for the uplift of rural poor from their poverty line. Programmes such as construction of group houses, loan for milk animals, goats, sheep and self employment selam. Such as construction of community hall are being implemented in this block.

**4.16.4: Athoor Block**

**4.16.4.1: Location**

Dindigul district consists of 14 blocks. Athoor is situated 16 kms on south-western side of Dindigul, the District head quarters. Athoor block is bound by the
Reddiyarchatram block in the north, Dindigul block in the East, Nilakottai and Batlagundu block in the south and Kodaikanal block in the West. This block consists of 21 revenue villages and three town panchayats, (namely, Chinnalapatti, Ayyampalayam and Sithayankottai) and 186 hamlets. The population of this block is 146139 (2001 census) and total area of this block is 26639.63 hectares. Most of the people of this block depend on agriculture. Paddy, coconut, and pepper crops are mainly cultivated and the soil type is black and red. The Gandhigram Rural University, the Lakshmi College of Teacher Education, Kasthuriba Hospital and the Institute of Rural Health and Family Welfare (trust) are situated in this block.

Chinnalapatti is famous for hand-loom and cotton sarees which are produced and sold throughout the country and even exported to foreign countries like Malaysia, Singapore and South Africa. Iron works are also undertaken in Chinnalapatti. The Kamarajar dam situated in Athoor village is the main source of drinking water supply for villages in Athoor block and Dindigui Municipality.

4.16.4.2: Geographical Area

The block has a geographical area of 26639.63 hectares (266.40 sq.km)

4.16.4.3: Topography and Climate

The topography of this block consists of hills, valleys and plains with high water resources. It consists of both plains and hill station. In plain the maximum and minimum temperature ranges from 36.5 to 17.4 (temperature in Celsius) and in the hill station the maximum and minimum temperature ranges from 24.6 to 8.5. Like other block it gets rain from the four main seasons viz. South-west monsoon season, North-east monsoon season, winter and summer.
4.16.4.4: Population and Literacy

The population of all the villages in the block is 1,46,139. Of this, male population is 72916 and the female population is 73223. The density of population per sq.kin is 510. The density of the population is very high in the villages namely Athoor, Sithayankottai, Chinnalapatti, N. Panjampatti and Ayyampalayam.

4.16.4.5: Occupation

The major occupation is agriculture. In the plains, the farmers cultivate paddy, Cholam, millets, pulses, oil seeds, banana, cotton, sugarcane and vegetables. In hills, coffee, pepper, cardamom and coconut are cultivated. The number of people engaged in own cultivation is 10174 (Male 7196, Female 2978) landless labourers are 34004 (Male 17220, Female 16784). In addition to this 731 persons were involved in household industry and processing (spinning, iron works). Besides that 19519 (14719 Male, 4800 Female) of them are involved in works such as transport and coolly work.

4.16.4.6: Market

Most of the rural people prefer weekly shadies where they sell their agricultural goods and in return they purchase the necessary household goods. There are three famous weekly shandies at Sempatti, Ayyampalayam and Chinalapatti. Also daily market is available at Chinnalapatti and Ayyampalayam for the needs of the people.
Gandhigram Trust played a vital role in establishing cottage and small scale industries, producing soap items, oils, furniture, cloth materials, handicrafts, cosmetics and marketing the products through show rooms. Chinnalapatti is famous for its handloom and cotton sarees which are being exported to other countries. Iron works (furnitures) mills (power-loom) and siddha ayurvedic unit of Gandhigram Trust provide employment to the villagers. There are 16 handloom societies registered under co-operatives. Private individual owners possess handlooms and iron industry which are producing and marketing the products by themselves. This provides a good quantum of employment opportunity especially to rural woman folk.

4.16.4.8: Welfare Programmes

The block implemented several programmes for the upliftment of the people. The schemes are like providing loan facilities for milch animal, goats, sheeps, training to the youths for self employment, construction of group houses, schools, community centers and public toilets for the welfare of the people.

4.16.5: Nilakottai Block

4.16.5.1: Location

Nilakottai block is situated 24 Kms on the southern side of Dindigul. It is surrounded by Athoor block in North, Usilampatti block in south, Batlagundu block in West and Vadipatti in East. Agriculture and its allied activities are the main occupations of the people. This block is grade four and consists of 23
panchayats, and two town panchayats. The population of this block is 1,46,332 with the total area of 259.78 sq.kms. There are 28 revenue villages and 156 hamlets in this block. It has an Arts and Science Government College for Women. There are 135 pre-primary schools, 5 high schools and 4 higher secondary schools.

This block has the historical background having a palace and a stone castle constructed by the king “Koolappa Nayakker”, 200 years back. The railway station at Kodai Road allows the tourist to visit Kodaikanal. There is a tourist centre called Anaipatti on the river side (south) of Vaigai with the ‘Sri Hanuman’ Temple. This place is also famous for doing ritual ceremonies. The main source of drinking water i.e Vaigai river having Peranai and Mavoor dam provides sufficient drinking water supply not only this block but also to neighbouring blocks. There are of paper mills, and soap factories and a number of small scale industries in this block providing employment opportunities to the rural people. Jasmine is the major cash crop cultivated by the farmers fetching a lot of income.

4.16.5.2: Geographical Area

The major employment source is from agriculture. The total geographical area of this block is 259.78 sq. kms, out of which total cropped area is 14646 hectares and land put to non-agricultural uses is 3697 hectares. Forest covers 1842 hectares in this block.

4.16.5.3: Topography and Climate

Nilakottai block consists of plains and river bed areas. The river Vaigai is irrigating and fertilizing the lands of Vilampatti, Mattapparai and Ramarajapuram.
There are two dams constructed at Anaipatti and Mavoor mostly for irrigation purpose. Like other block, this blocks also gets normal monsoon of Tamil Nadu. Jasmine flower and grapes are famous and suitable for its climatic conditions.

4.16.5.4: Population and Literacy

The total population of all the villages in the block is 1,31,630 of which male population is 66803 and the female population is 64827. The density of population per sq.km is 527 and is very high in the villages namely Oruthattu, Silukuvarpatti, Ethilodu and Jambuthraikottai. The scheduled caste population constitutes 31610 males and 28063 females. Scheduled tribe population is 759 males and 696 females respectively.

4.16.5.5: Occupation

The major occupation is agriculture, paddy, cholam, cumbu and ragi cultivating in irrigated area. Red gram, black gram, green gram and cowpea are cultivated in the dry lands by the farmers. The total number of cultivators are 16790 (12416 males and 4374 females). The total number of agricultural labours are 29568 (15260 males and 14308 females).

4.16.5.6: Market

In Nilakottai, there is a daily market facilitating the farmers to sell off their products of vegetables and flowers. It avoids the role of middleman in selling their products. Besides this, there are two weekly shandies located at Nilakottai and Ammayanaickenoor.
4.16.5.7: Industries

Industries like spinning mills, village and cottage industries like paper unit, coir unit and soap unit are established in this block with and without the financial help of the Government. Both in rural and urban areas the enterprises were established and they provide employment opportunities to the local people. In agriculture, for ploughing traditional and iron ploughs, and tractors are used by the farmers. For water irrigation, both oil engine and electric power motors are used.

4.16.5.8: Welfare programmes

A number of development and welfare programs have been implemented in this block. These programmes help especially rural poor to improve their stand of living in the society.

4.16.6 Natham Block

4.16.6.1: Location

Natham is a single block in Natham taluk. It links Dindigul district with Madurai and Trichy district. It has Trichy districts in North, Madurai district in east as well as south and Shanarpatti block of Dindigul district in west as the boundaries of the block. The total geographical area is 65271 hectares; out of which 27380 hectares are forest area and 22752 hectares are the cropped area. Karanthamalai is a hill situated in this block where perennial streams are flowing and giving birth to the river called Thirumanimutharu.
This block has many hills and is famous for rain fed crops cultivation. Many varieties of mango and coconut, tamarind crops, groundnut, pulse, cotton, paddy and millets are cultivated in villages of this block. There is no industry but is there a possibility to establish coir, fruit jam and juice industries using mango pulp, tamarind and coconut as raw materials. Agriculture is main occupation in this block and Natham Mariyamman kovil and Kovilpatti Hailasanathar temple are famous and the whole block celebrates these temple festivals.

4.16.6.2: Geographical area

The total geographical area is 5108 sq.km. This block has 26 revenue villages, 22 village panchayats with a town panchayat and 159 hamlets. The total population as per 2001 census was 1,34,208, of which 60259 were males and the remaining 58963 were females. Nearly half of the geographical are covered by thick forests, barren and uncultivable land.

4.16.6.3: Topography and Climate

Karanthamalai hills surround this block. There are no canals and dams to store water for drinking and irrigating the lands. The river Thirumanimutharu and perennial streams originate from this hill. The block received highest rain fall of 313.4mm during October 1999. Forest department is working effectively in sustaining the natural resources. The area under irrigation is less than one third of the dry lands. The people mostly depend on agriculture and its allied activities.
4.16.6.4: Population and Literacy

The population of this block is 1,34,208, with a break up of 67422 are males and 66786 females. Majority of the people live in rural area and only one fifth live in urban areas. The number of females per 1000 males is 978. The average size of household is five, majority of the revenue villages have a population range between 3000 and 5001 persons. The density of the population per sq.km is 238.

4.16.6.5: Occupation

Agriculture is the main occupation in this block. The main work may be divided into four categories, namely cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industry and manufacturing processing and servicing. In the first category, the quantum of cultivators are decreased but the quantum of female cultivators are increased in rural area compared to 1981 census. In agricultural labourers cafesoty there is an increase rate in rural area and in urban area it is reversed. In the third category, there is a increase rate both in rural and urban. In the urban, area there was increase in 1991 compared to 1981 census. After the year, 1981 the people engaged in household industry and other works are increased to some extent.

4.16.6.6: Industries

In Natham block, there is no mills or small scale and cottage industry to give regular employment to the people. But, there is a feasibility to start jam, juice and coir industry using to locally available materials like mango, coconut and tamarind. Traditional agricultural implements are affected by the modern
technology. From green revolution modern machineries are used to get more yield from the crops. To plough, there are private tractors are engaged in ploughing the lands in the rent basis. In irrigating the crops 2646 electric power engines and 1083 oil engines are used to lift the water from well/tube wells.

4.16.6.7: Welfare Programmes

Rural development programmes such as providing loan facilities for milch animals, goats and sheep, construction of group houses, training to the youths for the self-employment, construction of schools, community centre and public toilet for the welfare of the people are being implemented in this block.

4.16.6.8: Market

Most of the rural people prefer to come to weekly shandies to sell their products and in return they purchase the necessary household goods. In the shandies, villagers use to get all type of goods from broom to luxury items. In natham block, there are six weekly shandies at Natham, Senthurai, Sirugudi, Kovilur, Poothampatty and Alagapuri.

4.16.7: Reddiyarchatram Block

4.6.7.1: Location

The Reddiyarchatram block is surrounded by Dindigul, Athoor, Kodaikanal, Oddanchatram and Vedasandur blocks. It belongs to Dindigul Taluk of Dindigul district. This block consists of 23 revenue villages, 24 village panchayats and the two town panchayats. The total population of the block is 106440 of which 53774 males and 52666 females as per 1991 census. The two
revenue villages namely Adalur and Pandrimalai of this block, located at about 3000 feet height from the sea level, is having about 2260 hectares of coffee plantation area. The occupation of people is agriculture and plantation. It is industrially backward area compared to Dindigul block of the district. The farmers of this block depend on Dindigul and Oddanchatram towns for marketing their agri products. Arulmigu Sri Gopinathaswamy temple, Arulmigu Raja Kaliyanman temple and Arulmigu Kathir Narasinga perumal temple are very popular temples, which are worshipped by the people belonging not only to this district but by the people of also other districts of Tamil Nadu.

46.7.2: Geographical Area

The total geographical area of the block is 279.25 sq.km. There are two type of soil named black and red.

4.6.73: Topography and Climate

The topography of this block includes both plains and hills stations like Adalur and Pandrimalai. These places are about 3000 feet from the sea level and suitable for coffee plantation. Oddanchatram market is famous for vegetables both buying and selling. Farmers forum is very active having office with internet facility and it broadcasts the day to day prices of agricultural products especially vegetables.
46.7.4: **Population** and Literacy

Population is the main indicator to get development programmes from the Government. In the block, the total numbers of hamlets are 138, having the total population of 112910 (1991). Of this, the male population is 56612 and the female population is 56298. All are living in rural areas. Even if there are two town panchayats, this block has no census urban.

4.6.7.5: Occupation

The term “occupation” played a predominant role to get income and facilities not only to individual home but also the whole nation. So, a best taluk should have both agricultural and allied activities and industrial goods for their taluk use and it is necessary for self reliant. Agriculture is the main occupation in this block. It is the native based occupation. Both male and female cultivators engage in agri-cultivation. Regarding agricultural laborers compared to the former census in 1991 there was a decrease both in male and female side which shows that they shifted to other works. Besides agriculture and its allied activities, household industry manufacturing and processing, serving and repairs center were in existence in rural areas. In other workers, there was a steady growth rate especially on the female side from 1961 census to 1991 census.

4.6.7.6: Market

In this block, at three places namely Kannivadi, Reddiyarchatram and Dharmathupatti, weekly market functions for buying and selling of agricultural commodities, goat, sheeps, hens and cocks.
Agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises are established with an idea to give employment opportunity to the villages and to stand self reliant in producing food for their use.

Welfare Programmes

This block has implemented several programmes for the upliftment of the people. Through IRDP programme, 370 beneficiaries were benefited and subsidy was given to 230 beneficiaries. In TRYSEM programme 88 youths were trained and 112 group houses were built at a cost of 34.21 lakhs. Besides this, Government has constructed school buildings, community centres and public toilets for the welfare of the people.

Sanarpatty Block

Location

Sanarpatty block is situated in between Dindigul and Natham blocks. The block head quarters is Shanarpatty. It is situated 18 Kms away from the eastern side of Dindigul, the district head quarters. Shanarpatty block has Natham block in east direction, Vadamadurai block in north direction, Dindigul block in west direction and Madurai district in south direction. This block is connected with state high ways road to Dindigul. It comprises of 30 revenue villages and 21 village panchayats with 164 hamlets. There is no town panchayats and townships.
According to 2001 population census, total population of this block was 112910. Most of the people of this block depend upon Agriculture and allied activities. Most of the women are engaged in separateing the seeds from tamarind fruits work. Paddy, jo war, cumbu, Ragi pulses, tamarind, mango and vegetables are mainly cultivated. Thirumalaikeni Murugan Temple is situated in the north direction. It is a developing tourist center. The total geographical area of this block is 41408.5 hectares (256.41 Sq.Km). The soil types are black and red.

The block has extensive hilly and rocky areas with undulating plains. This block has a number of isolated peaks namely Sirumalai, Karanthamalai and a sacred hill in Tirumalaiikeni Murugan Temple. In its north direction, Thirnmalai Keni Temple hills, southern direction Sirumalai hills and eastern direction Karaouthamalai hills are found. The rest of the block is characterised by an undulating plains.

Three streams begun from Sirumalai hills, namely Santhana Varthiny river, Pallaru and Santhaiaaru. They hum from south to north direction in the middlest area of this block. There is no check dam in these rivers. It helps for irrigation facility to about 3000 acres of this block. Like other blocks to get rain from the four main seasons. North-east monsoon is the principal monsoon.

4.16.8.2: Rural and Urban Population

As per 2001 census, the total population of this block was 107820, of these, the male population was 54231 and the female population was 53589. The density of population per sq.km area is 256.41. Of the total population, the scheduled caste male population is 10992 and the female population is 11094.
4.16.8.3: Occupation

Most of the people of this block depend upon Agriculture and allied activities. Of the total population, 15956 of them (male 11443 and female 5413) engaged in Agriculture. 25580 of them (male 12675 and female 12905) are agricultural laborers in this block.

Only 180 laborers (male 134 and female 46) are engaged in household industry manufacturing and processing, servicing and repairs work. Besides the 44256 ( male 19226 and female 25030) of them involved in other works.

4.16.8.4: Market

There are three weekly shandis at Athikaripatty, Emakalapuram and Gopalpatti. In these shandis, agricultural products like rice, cereals, pulses, vegetables and sheeps, goats and animals are transacted.

4.16.8.5: Industries

Modern technology and machinery are used in agriculture. For ploughing both traditional wooden and iron ploughs are used. For irrigation, oil engines and electric power are used.

4.16.8.6: Welfare Programmes

The block implemented several programmes for the upliftment of the people. The schemes are such as providing loan facilities for purchase of milch animal, goats, sheeps, training to the youths for self-employment, construction of group houses, schools, community centers and public toilets for the welfare of the people.
4.16.8.7: **Conclusion**

The profile of the selected blocks clearly stated that the blocks were industrially backward and people mainly depended on agriculture and allied activities. Hence, women have to play an active role the family in keeping away from poverty line. Thus, this study is significant.