CHAPTER - IV
PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

The profile of the study area Dindigul District and the samples blocks Athoor, Dindigul and Nillakottai blocks are explained in this chapter. The profile includes the location, demography, literacy, agriculture, climate, rivers, administrative divisions, industry, trade, transport, communication, Physiography, forest, livestocks, etc.

4.1 Diadlagul Baste Set

It serves as the District Head Quarters of this District, has a holy past. Once this City was under the way of famous ldng 'Thippu sultan'. This ancient city has a historical Rock Fort, which was constructed by the famous Naik King Muthukrishnappa Naicker'. Since the shape of the rock resembles cushion, this city is called "Dindigul". it is located between 10.05° and 10.9° North latitude and 77° and 78.20° East longitude. Dindigul Block is located in the southern boundary of Dindigul. It Northern boundary is the Vedasandur and VadaMadurai Block and the Western boundary are Reddiyarchatram, Attur and Nilokkottai Block Madurai District is the Southern boundary of the Dindigul Block.
4.1.1 Location

The District is bounded by Erode, Coimbatore, Karur and Trichy Districts on the north, by Sivagangai, Karur and Trichy Districts on the East, by Madurai and Theni District on the South and by Coimbatore District and Kerala State on the West. It spreads over the area of 4217.36 sq.km.

4.1.2 Administrative set-up

For the administrative convenience, the Dindigul District is divided into four Revenue Divisions, namely, Dindigul, Palani and Kodaikanal and Oddanchatram. The district comprised seven taluks. They are, Dindigul, Natham, Nillakottai, Palani, Vedasandur, Kodaikanal and Oddanchatram. There are 3 municipalities in the district. They are, Dindigul, Palani, and Kodaikanal. The 14 Blocks of the district are: Athur, Batlagundu, Dindigul, Gujiliamparai, Kodaikanal, Natham, Nillakottai, Oddanchatram, Palani, Reddiarchattram, Shanarpatti, Thoppampatti, Vadamadurai and Vedasandur Blocks. The district also comprises of 39 Revenue Firkas and 357 Revenue villages.
4.1.3. Population

According to 1991 census, the total population of the District is 17,60,601 which covers the male population of 8,90,783 and female population of 8,69,818. The taluk-wise population is:

- Dindigul: 6,41,378
- Natham: 1,19,222
- Nillakottai: 2,27,976
- Kodaikanal: 3,34,388
- Vedasandur: 2,56,232
- Palani: 98,598
- Oddanchatram: 23,578

The district has extensively hilly and rocky areas with undulating plains. Palani hills forming Northern spur of the Western Ghats ranging in height from 1000 to 2700 Meters. The upper plains with an average height of 2500 nits comprise valley and contain several peaks like Perumal Hill, the Vandarvey Hills etc. They consist largely of plateaus made up of rolling down covered with coarse grasses and isolated shoals in the valleys.
The lower plains consist of confused jungle of peaks from 1000 to 700 mts height, separated from one another by steep and beautiful wooded valleys. The hills are ThandigudI, Virupatchi Hills etc. On the eastern side, Sirumalai, Alagar Malai and the Natham and Ayyalur hills are found. A large number of isolated peaks namely Karumalai, a sacred hill, tapering Kodarangimalai, great rock of Dindigul, Rengamalai etc., are also found. The rest of the District characterised by an undulating plains covered mostly by Red Soil (85%). The upper plains have thick layer of black earth over yellow clay.

4.1.5 Irrigation

There are 41 Government canals, 2612 tanks and 79275 wells in the district. About 29 percent of the net area is irrigated. Wells form the chief source of irrigation followed by tanks. There are 79275 percent wells to provide irrigation to 68236 ha. Palar - Porandalar, Kodaganar and Manjalar Schemes are important irrigation schemes. Canals irrigate 12310 ha. 2612 Tanks irrigation covers 16607 ha.
4.1.6 Miners asadi streams

The river system is complicated to some extent due to several Hills and Valleys and is seasonal dependent on rainfall. The pattern of drainage may be described as dentatric on the plains and sub-parallel to in the Hills.

The plains around Dindigul and Palani drained north-eastern by four almost parallel tributaries of Amaravathi river rising in the plains. The vedasandur taluk is drained by kodaganar and part of Nillakottai taluk by Manjalar. A number of streams flowing in the District mostly drain into tanks.

4.1.7 Climate

Semi-arid tropical monsoon type of climate is prevailing in the plains. However upper plains recorded low temperature and fairly heavy rainfall.

In the plains, the Maximum and Minimum atmospheric temperature are 40C and in the Hill stations 37 C and 8.5C respectively. Heat becomes intense in April and May and shoots further up unless interfered by rains. Dust storms whirlwinds blow from various quarters towards the end of March.
Except at these times and the period of Monsoon, the air is calm and undisturbed. The severity of wind storms is evidenced by sand deposition and subsequent sand dunes over vast area, especially in Palani Taluk.

The moisture regime of the district is dusty, when the moisture control section is most, continuously at least 90 consecutive days. This period can be profitably utilised for crop production. The high rate of evapo transpiration indicated that this will affect the soil moisture and high transpiration from crop plants thereby affecting the crop growth in years of low rainfall. The climatic condition reveals that the ideal season for irrigated crops lasts between May and September. The remaining months may be put under dry land management.

4.1.0c Forest

Forest covers 18.8 percent of the total area of the district. Forests fall naturally under 3 main formations, the mixed deciduous, the ever green and the grass land. The natural vegetation is rich and varied. About 700 species accounting for 50 to 80 percent of the flora of whole Indian Peninsulla have been identified in plains besides a large number species peculiar to themselves.
4.1.9 Agriculture and land use

The total Geographical area of the District is 5080 J 6 ha. Net cultivable area is 274707 ha. Out of the net area sown as low as 9 percent is sown more than once. Dry farming is predominant in the District and the important wetland track is located in the Shanmuganathithi and Kodaganar basin. Paddy is the principal crop (37 percent) followed by oil seeds (23 percent) fruits and vegetables (24 percent) Cholam is the major irrigated crop (30 percent) followed by oil seeds (18 percent) and paddy (11 percent).

Sirumalai and Virupathci Hills are known for a special variety of plantains. Fruits like Orange, Lime, Mango and Grapes of special interest in Dindigul, Niiakottai and Palani taluks. Colecrops and temperature fruits growth chiefly in Kodaikanal lower plain yield coffee and Cardamom. About 900 ha. is put under Kuruvai system of cultivation and the crops raised are Potato, Cabbage, Tenai, Samai, Brinjal, Cotton and Ragi in the forest reserves.
4.1.10 Infrastructure

Public facilities like co-operative societies are available in the District. Dindigul and Palani are educational centres with few colleges. The District has two Universities viz Gandhigram Rural Institute at Gandhigram and Mother Teresa Women University at Kodaikanal. The Nation's prestigious Highway NH-7, passes through the District besides NH--45. and a network of roads. Dindigul has an important Railway Junction. A broad gauge Railway line from Karur to Kanniyakumari has been completed. The nearest aerodrome is located at Madurai, which is 65 kms away.

Marketing facilities are inadequate. Madurai market committee has gained momentum in this direction. Exports of the district include hides, skins and leather, dyes and tans. cotton and silk fabrics, tea, cardamom etc. There are 78 post and Telegraphs, 437 Post offices and 3 Telegraphic offices in the District. The district has 141 Commercial Bank Branches, 83 Rural Bank Branches 30 Semiurban and 28 Urban Bank Branches.
4.1.11 Industries

Next to fanning a sizeable population depends on Industries. Dindigul is the important industrial centre. A number of Spinning Mills are coming up in Vedasandur and Vadamadurai blocks, besides a few paper mills in Swaminathapuram. A steel industry has been established. Lock industry, Tobacco and cigar manufacturing, metal industry, dyeing, iron industry, cotton spinning and weaving are tire promising industries.

This districts is having a thriving handloom industry at Chinnalapatti which is located 11 Ions away from Dindigul. Chinnalapatti silk sarees and sungadi sarees are famous throughout India. More than 1000 families are engaged in this industries. At present, there are 8009 registered small-scale industries and 61 Large and Medium scale Industrial units in Dindigul District.

4.1.12 Tourist Attractions

This District is privileged to have one of the six celebrated hill abodes of Lord Muruga at Palani hills. Famous Dhandayuthapani temple is situated on the hill pilgrims come
down to this holy temple during festival days important among them are "SURA SAMHARAM", "VAIKASHI VISAGAM", and monthly karthigais, provision of three electric winches, the first of its kind in India is an unique feature of this temple. This facilitates the aged, children and disabled to reach the temple by 8 minutes. The income of the temple, which is the large in the state, is growing year by year and now it exceeds Rs.4 Crore.

Besides this renowned Munigan temple, there is also another Murugan temple at Thirumalaiken, 25 kms away from Dindigul Town which is growing into a pilgrim centre. Abirami Amman Temple in Dindigul Town and Raja kali amman temple at Thethupatti 20 kms away from Dindigul are the other temples worth mentioning. Kodaikanal, Popular summer holiday cum health resort, located at an altitude of 2133 meters in the western ghats is the famous hill station of this District.

4.2. Dindigul Block

Dindigul Block is located in the Southern boundary of Dindigul. Its Northern boundary is the Vedasandur and Vadamudurai Block and the Western boundary are Reddiyarcfiatram, Athoor and Nilokkottai Block.
Madurai District is the Southern boundary of the Dindigul Block. The Block covers an area of about 82237 hectares. In Dindigul Block, number of cultivators are 10111 and Net cultivatable area is 69 percent of the total area. Number of Agricultural labourers are 23560 in the Dindigul Block.

In Dindigul, there are 234 commission mandies for selling Agricultural products like onion, chillies, groundnut cotton etc. Another Industry for which Dindigul is noted is leather tanning. About 3500 people are working in 61 tanneries around the town. For a long time, Dindigul is associated with locks of good quality and durability. A lock manufacturing unit under Co-operative sector is functioning here.

4.3 AtEiooff Block

Athoor Block: is located in the southern region of the Dindigul district. Its Northern boundary is the Reddiarchatram and the western boundary is Kodaikannal Block. Batlagundu Block and Nillakottai Block are eastern boundary of the Athoor Block. Athoor block has an total area of 266.39 sq kms. Number of occupied residential houses are 31765 and number of households are 31774.
Total population including institutions and house less population is 136049 lakhs. In particular, the male population is 68218 and female population is 67831. The scheduled castes are 29 270 and among them males are 14774 and females are 14496. Scheduled Tribes population is 266 consist of 130 males and 136 female.

In this Athoor block the total literates are 71,337. Among the literates, male are 42841 and females are 28496. In this Athoor block total main workers are 64354. Among the main workers males are 39976 and female are 24378. There are large number of male cultivators i.e., 7196 male and 3022 female cultivators in the block. The Agricultural labourers are totally 34528. Among the total farm labourers, male agricultural labourers are 17910 and female Agricultural labourers are 16618.

Out of total 2589 non farm workers, 1443 are male and 1147 are females, marginal workers are 2030 consists of 139 males and 1891 female workers. Non workers population is also very high i.e., 69665 in the Athoor Block. In particular male in Non-workers group are 28103 and female are 41562. The revenue villages in Athoor Block are:
4.4. Nilakottai block

Nilakottai block is located in the southern region of the Athoor block. Its Northern boundary is Batlagund block and the western and Eastern boundary is Madurai district. Nilakottai block has an total area of 23475 ha. Number of occupied residential houses are 51457.

Total population including institutions and house less population is 227976. in particular, the male population is 116,755 and female population is 1,11,221. The scheduled caste population is 57,670 and among them male are 29,484 and female are 28,186 Scheduled Tribes population is 1868 consist of 1,214 male and 654 female.

In this block main workers are 98666. There are large number of male cultivators i.e., 26,227 in the block. The Agricultural labourers are totally 51506. Non-workers population is also very high i.e, 124009 in the Nilakottai block.
The revenue villages of the Nilakottai block are:

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<tr>
<th>Ethilodu</th>
<th>Gullalagundu</th>
<th>Jambuduraikottai</th>
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<td>kottur</td>
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<td>kullichettipatti</td>
<td>Malagoundenpatti</td>
<td>Mattaparai</td>
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<td>S. Methipatti</td>
<td>Musuvanuthun</td>
<td>Nakkaluthu</td>
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<td>Nariyuthee</td>
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<td>Piliyarnatham</td>
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<td>Siyagnanapuram</td>
<td>Veelinaickerpatti</td>
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<td>Vilampatti</td>
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Based on the brief profile of the study area, the present study analysed the performance of small and cottage industries in Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu.