

Household Morphology Of Varanasi Weavers

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Abstract: Morphology is a focal area of significance because it is the morphology on which the built architecture, arrangement, structure and foundation is framed. Household morphology of weavers has multiple uses. There is a functional classification of multiple floors of the weaver's house. As we go up from the ground floor to first floor and terrace, the kind of activity being performed on each floors also keep changes. Such type of classification is not new, weavers house have such type of classification when their grandfather has started the profession of weaving. Research has been underway to identify the basis of change in different kinds of activities on different floors. In this respect, indigenous knowledge of the people have been examined for any kind of future changes in the morphology of their house. With the main objective of identifying multiple morphologies of handloom weavers and analyse the dynamics of different activities in Varanasi the study has been undertaken. My study is based on normative and historical method. For the generation of data both secondary data as well as primary survey have been used. To analyse the multiple morphology of Varanasi weavers, qualitative and quantitative techniques have also been used to get the desired effect. Varanasi Weaving industry align towards several Sustainable Development Goals which is set by United Nations like women empowerment, eradication of poverty, hunger, employment generation comprehensive growth, preservation of flora and fauna because Varanasi weaving industry is eco-friendly and use organic colour for colouring of sarees, which never cause any threat like other polluting industry of Varanasi. Based on the different literary works and observation a household primary survey was conducted in February 2017, in Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh. Different inference has been drawn from the primary survey. For the preparation and digitization of Varanasi map, Arc GIS software has been used. It was noted that certain activities like weaving can only be done on the ground floor because the kind of floor required for the fitting of handloom is only possible on the ground floor of the house than any other floors.

Keywords: Morphology, Architecture, Classification, Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development Goals.

1 INTRODUCTION

Morphology is an interpretation of the analytical action (Moudon, 1986). It is a method of mental reflection of conceptual operations like science and art (Hanson, 2001). Morphology is all about the pattern, creation and its recognition. Morphology is the analysis of assemblage of house and its different space. (Stephen Marshall and Olgu Caliskan, 2011). In Varanasi, Hindu and Muslim are the two community involved in the profession of weaving. The morphology of their surroundings is different from one another like there is no agricultural field in the Muslim dominated area because Muslim reside in the urban area. Every Hindu weaver has their own agricultural field as they live in the village (One of the respondents, 2017). However, there is also some similarity in the kind of activity they performed, such as flooring of weaving room of both Muslim and Hindu weavers is made up of soil because in this room they set their handloom (Fig. 4). If the flooring is made up of concrete then, it becomes impossible to set the handloom. With the increase in family size, there is also increase in the height of weaver's house. They do not have enough money to buy another land and construct a new house for their increased family members. It creates problem for the entire weaving community. For example, earlier they can easily weave their saree on daytime with the incoming sunlight by opening the door and window of their weaving room. But today, in the same room, they need tube light or bulb to weave any saree because these big houses didn't allow sunlight to reach to their weaving room (One of the respondents, 2017).

There is always doubt about the electricity in the weaving dominated area of Varanasi and such kind of human construction hamper the production of Banarasi saree to a large extent.

Historical Background

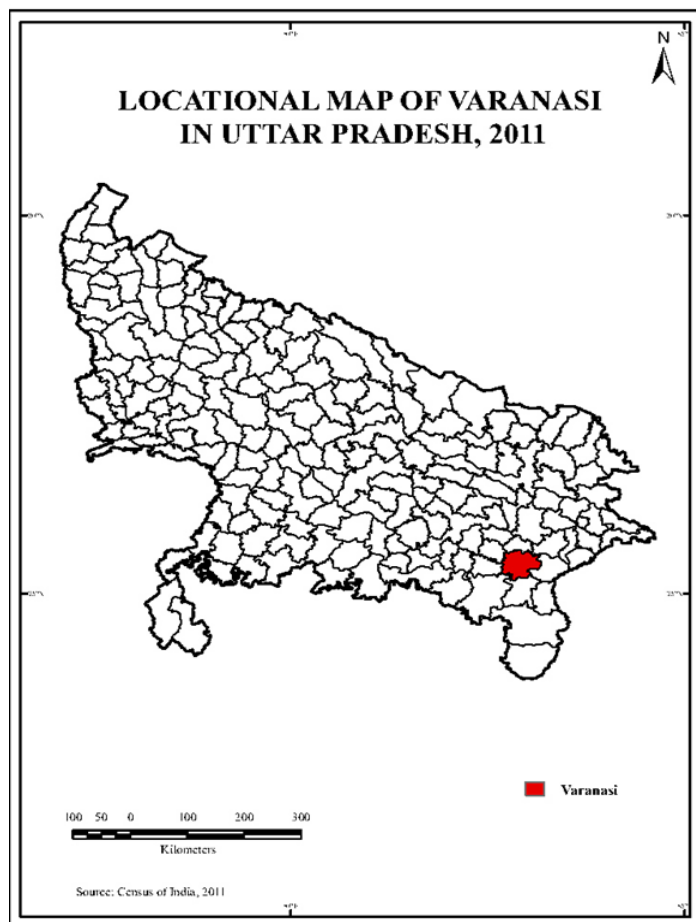
Weaver's in Varanasi is called by different names viz. Bunkar or Karigars as they weave different Banarasi sarees like Banarasi jangla dupatta (Fig. 5), Banarasi meena and Banarasi cali. They are also renowned as the iconic handloom weaver. Karkhana is known as the place where they weave their sarees (Roy, 2002). In Varanasi, around fifty years back weaver means only Muslim weaver. But, today the definition of weaver's has changed; it includes both Muslim as well as Hindu weaver. Hindu weavers who belong to the backward class, schedule caste and schedule tribe learn all types of weaving techniques from the Muslim weavers. Most of the Varanasi handlooms are located in rural areas. Mostly, Hindu bunkars daily commute to their place of weaving in the morning and return back to their house in the evening. Muslim weavers are living very close to their place of weaving and that's why they didn't commute like the Hindu weavers (Niranjana, 2004). In Varanasi 75:25 is the ratio of Muslim and Hindu Weaver (Fig.1).

Study Area

Varanasi comprises of three things: sacred morphology, sacred tradition and sacred culture (Saraswati, 1978). For the built surroundings we need sacred: sacred route with the sacred journey led us to the heaven where we have no pain (Singh, 1998). Varanasi, like Jerusalem and Rome, has comprehensive holy landscapes along with different features (Gelsler and Margaret, 2000). Varanasi is considered as one of the oldest city on earth. The name of Varanasi has evolved over a period of time. In the beginning, it is called as the abode of Lord Shiva, then its name changes into Banaras and today, it is officially called as Varanasi (Census of India, 2011). Varanasi is situated in

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eastern part of Uttar Pradesh with 25° 14" north latitude and 82° 55" east longitude (Map 1). Varanasi lies in the tropical monsoonal climate region with 50mm annual rainfall. It has population of 3.65 million that is spread over 1524 square kilometres area (Statistical Abstract-Uttar Pradesh, 2010). Only six districts in Uttar Pradesh can prepare Banarasi sarees and sell them in any market either in domestic or international market viz. Varanasi, Azamgarh, Mirzapur, Bhadohi, Chandauli and Jaunpur. Apart from six districts, if anyone prepares Banarasi saree and sells it in name of Banarasi then that person or entity has to face the punishment assign under the Geographical Indications Act. (Geographical Indications, 1999). Varanasi also grows on the bank of river Ganga in an alluvial plain and later it becomes the holiest place for Hindus. The carbon dating from Raj Ghat is a proof that there was a well-developed urban settlement around 900-400 BCE. The great Mauryan emperor, Ashoka had announced Buddhism as a religion in Varanasi and resides there. During the regime of Ashoka, a Buddhist township was established with several stupas, architecture, shrines and monasteries. The planning, circumstances and architecture of Varanasi city is also mention in Buddhist and Pali literature (Singh, 2007).



Map 1: Author, 2016

2 OBJECTIVES

1. Identifying Multiple Morphology of Handloom Weavers

Methodology and Database

Methodology is used to find the answer to questions in a scientific manner (James, 1958). My research is centred on both secondary data as well as primary survey. To analyse the multiple morphology of Varanasi weavers, qualitative and quantitative techniques have been used to get the desired result. I have also used normative and historical method in my study. Normative method involves the empirical usage with the central attention on the different ways to analyse the indigenous reality. Historical method involves historical dimensions, eminent personalities, and acknowledges stories which emphasis on the local reality from the previous accomplishment, present strategies and future defiance.

- Secondary Data: Several sources of secondary data have been accessed. Some of the sources that have been referred in my study are as follows. Census of India, District Industrial Profile-Varanasi, Statistical Abstract-Uttar Pradesh, Ministry of Textiles, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, National Handloom Development Corporation, Geographical Indications Registry, Annual Report 2015-16, Weaving Service Centre-Varanasi and Co-operative Society-Varanasi are the rich sources of my research area. Besides these, various literary works in the form of books, gazette, magazines, eminent newspapers, articles, headlines, journals (national and international) and various other important information from the internet have been referred for the insights of my research paper.
- Primary Survey: Regarding this purposely participatory survey has been conducted in Varanasi in February 2017. I have divided my respondent into three categories viz. young weaver, old weaver and female weaver to have the insights of Varanasi weaver's morphology. I have selected sixty respondents, in this thirty respondents from young weaver category, twenty-five respondents from old weaver category and five respondents from female weaver. I found very few women who were ready for my interview. My questionnaire comprises of open-ended as well close-ended questions. It mainly focuses on the multiple classifications of activities perform on different floors. I also prepare a map of Uttar Pradesh, in the same map I have digitized all the districts of Uttar Pradesh along with Varanasi by the use of Arc GIS software. Varanasi district has been filled with red colour to differentiate it from other districts. Before going for the complete survey, I also did a small pilot survey of one week to get aware myself with my research area. The reason for selecting this area is that I am observing the household morphology of weavers from a very long period of time. Hence, I also act as my participant observer for household morphology as well. I also have a good understanding of this topic which helps me in the deeper and critical analysis in a more detailed and inclusive manner. I am also aware of what are the loopholes. What kind of development requires to tackle it? Also, examine what are the

problems that weavers are facing and what are the solutions for it. I didn't find any area better than this.

Key Findings

The flooring of weaver's weaving room is made up of soil as they dig three to four feet pit for setting of their handlooms. The size of apit is according to the handloom size. Soil gives both heateffect in the winter and cold effect in summers that's why it is also preferred. This inverse nature of soil with the weather condition help weaver's to perform their work of weaving in a more efficient and effective manner. However, flooring of other rooms except weaving is made up of concrete. Because on the ground floor they also do dying (Fig. 6) of yarn.i.e. used as raw material in sarees preparation. Male member of the weaver's family has their dominance inthe activities performed on the Ground floor. On the first floor, weaver's family reside. Here, female member of the Muslim family taught Quran to the serious students of their locality. The task of teaching Quran starts from early morning till 5pm. Those female members who taught Quran are locally called as Molani. On the terrace, female member of Hindu weaving community drying up their Mirchi. After drying, it is used for various purpose like used as a spice in the food and one of the main ingredients in preparation of pickles. Muslim female weavers are drying up their papad on the terrace. After drying, they fry the papad and eat it with their different food. Muslim weavers do not sell their papad in the market while Hindu female sells their dry mirchi. For Hindu female, mirchi acts as an alternative source of their livelihood.

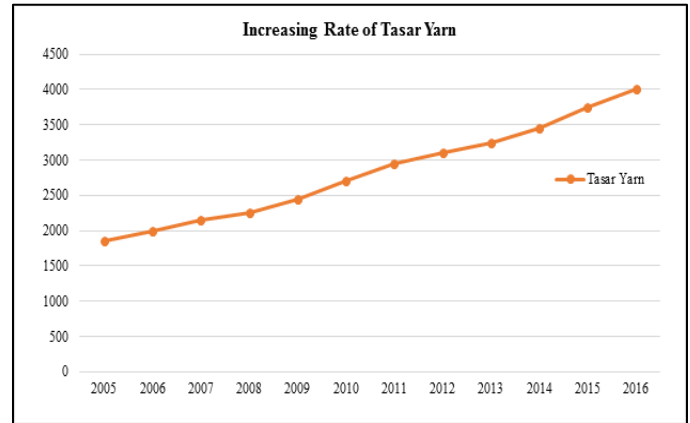


Fig. 3: Continuous Increase in Tasar Yarn (Author, 2017)



Fig.4: Handloom (Author, 2017)

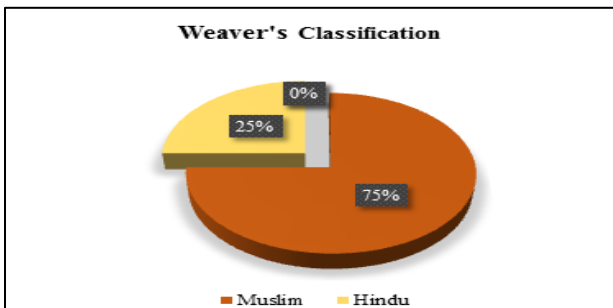


Fig. 1: Percentage-wise Muslim and Hindu Weavers (Author, 2017)

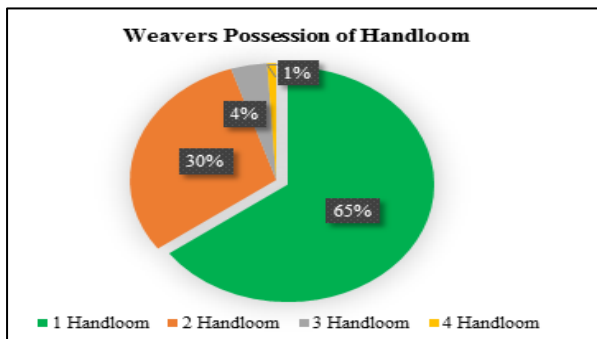


Fig. 2: Weavers Possession of Handloom with Percentage (Author, 2017)

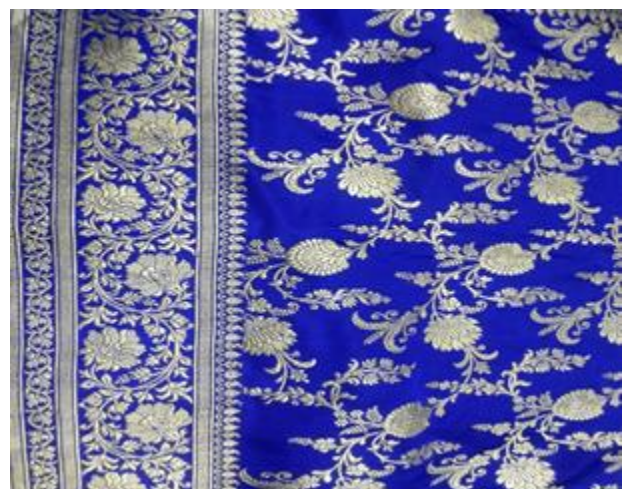


Fig. 5: Banarasi Jangla Dupatta (Author, 2017)



Fig. 6: Dying (Author, 2017)



Fig. 7: Patching Shop (Author, 2017)

Way Forward

The life of weavers and work of weaving is not confined within the four walls of their house. There are numerous outside work involved in the process of weaving. For example patching shop, (Fig.7) when there is any kind of disarrangement of Tasar yarn or some sort of hole appeared in the saree then, weavers take that saree to the patching shop. Patchmen have a big white table and under that table, two to three tube lights are fit by the patchmen. On the same table patchman unwrap the entire saree and check each and every portion of it, wherever there is upward coming of light from the table then they come to know that, this is the point where patching is required. After that, they take several small pieces of white paper and pins to mark that point as the patch point and do patching on that point. Since the last few decades, there is a sudden rise in the price of Tasar yarn (Fig. 3). It is a great cause of concern for the weavers. Though, the government came out with the policy to avoid this kind of rise in the Tasar yarn price on one hand and on other hands, it is also negotiating with the Marwaris of Bangalore because they are the main supplier of the yarn in Varanasi. It is also observed that maximum weavers have only one handloom, followed by

two or three and very few weavers have four handlooms (Fig. 2). This data shows that they are one of the most downgraded people in Varanasi. It requires urgent government attention to provide more handlooms which is their instrument to this sector, to these Bunkars at subsidised price to improve their living condition and preserve this rich cultural heritage of Varanasi. Weaving industry fulfills various sustainable development goals which are 17 in total and also has 169 targets set by United Nations like provide employment to the poor and marginalised section of Varanasi, help in the rejuvenation of flora and fauna because this industry doesn't release any kind of pollution in our surroundings as it nature-friendly industry. Due to labour intensive nature, it has immense potential to provide job to the millions.

3 CONCLUSION

All the process involved in the preparation of weaving is not fixed to specific floors like ground floor, first floor and top floor or terrace. However, there are activities like the colouring of yarn which is a thread used in the preparation of saree, can be done on the first floor, instead of the ground floor. But, such kind of changes mainly done in case of some sorts of urgency in the preparation of saree or when there is a huge demand to prepare several saree within a very short span of time. However, the work of colouring is mainly done by male member of the family on the ground floor but, when it is done on the first floor then female member also participate actively. By this, we can draw a conclusion that colouring on the ground floor shows gender bias while colouring on the first floor shows gender neutral.

Ethical Clearance: It is a survey article.

Source of Fund: Self.

Conflict of Interest: Nil.

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