

Nitya- A Community Development Centre for Trichy Weavers, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu

Sanjana M¹, Supritha M Y²

¹ Student, BMS School of Architecture, Bengaluru

² Assistant Professor, BMS School of Architecture, Bengaluru

Abstract - Handloom is a long-standing tradition in India with exquisite and incomparable craftsmanship. The growth in power looms and increased influence of westernization has led to the destruction of the handloom industry and weavers lost markets for their authentic goods. Most of the weaver communities are homeless because of natural disasters, while some of the third-category weavers are unemployed and because they cannot afford yarns, dyes, and handlooms of their own and rely on cooperative societies and master weavers.

The project's major objective is to give vulnerable families a chance to benefit from their strength and individuality. Proposing a community development center for the weaver community not only provides temporary shelter but also encourages them to develop their skills and helps them generate their own revenue. The program emphasizes on empowering the weaving community while also showcasing Indian traditional handlooms globally by giving viewers a live walkthrough and experience. The younger generation must be encouraged to learn the skill of weaving and promoting swadeshi textiles. The community development center aims to house weaver families and trainees and provide them with all necessary amenities. It also encourages them to establish their own identities in the market by giving them places to sell their own goods and giving trainees the opportunity to learn new skills and work towards it in the future.

Key Words: traditional handloom, westernization, weaver community decline, community development centre, live walkthrough

1.INTRODUCTION

Area of Interest:

Handlooms are an important part of Indian culture, and sarees are traditional Indian clothing, which are an expression of India's cultural heritage. Originally the word sari is derived from Sanskrit word "SATTIKA" (Kaur & Agarwal, 2019) that is an unstitched long piece of cloth, which is draped in various styles, and its length varies from 4 yard to 9 yard. The role of wearing a saree is to promote the culture and tradition of India and to share it with the next generations. The saree is interwoven with threads of Indian culture belonging to various regions of India. In recent decades, Eastern and Western cultures have merged to develop new designs and provide fresh meaning to fashion. As a result of industrial globalization, the cultural boundaries have melted and dispersed.

Handlooms in India:

- India is a land of varied cultures, religions, ethnicities, and ways of living.
- Handlooms are an important part of Indian culture, and sarees are traditional Indian clothing, which are an expression of India's cultural heritage.
- Every state in India has its own unique saree weaving techniques, as well as its own unique weaving community.

Weaving Clusters:

Every state in India has its own unique saree-weaving techniques, as well as its own unique weaving community.

Current state of the weaver community:

The power looms have posed a threat to the survival of the weaver's profession since they provide a less expensive and quicker means to make the same goods; a weaver may need weeks to complete a task that a machine can complete in a matter of days. Additionally, machine-produced goods have an elegant appearance. As a result, large portions of India's weaver communities are rapidly disappearing. There are 31.44 lakh households involved in weaving and related activities, with 87 percent of them located in rural areas, according to the 2019–20 National Census of Handloom Weavers. (Qazi, 2021). India is one of the few nations that still have a major industry that relies on skilled weavers to make about 40% of

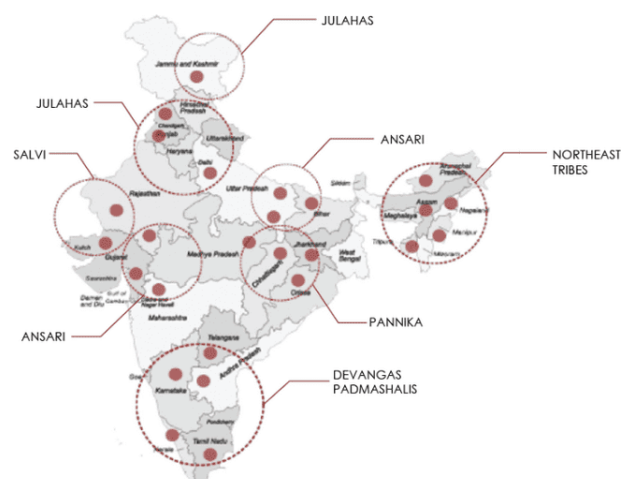


Fig-1: Weaver clusters in India

the nation's clothing (Qazi, 2021). Traditional craftsmanship is becoming less valuable, and the market pays artisans poorly for their expertise and artistry, which makes it difficult for young people to find the jobs they want and for companies to find employees who are qualified for the positions they are hiring for.

HANDLOOM SAREES AT DECLINE	
1.SAMBALPURI SAREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a traditional handwoven bandha (ikat) sari. These silk sarees use double ikkat weaving. Location: Bhargath, Orissa Decline: Due to pandemic, powerloom. No. of weaver: 15000 	2.IKKAL SAREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ikka saris are woven using cotton warp on the body and art silk warp for border and pallu. Location: Ikka, Bagalkot Decline: Due to pandemic, powerloom. No. of weaver: 5000
3.UDDUPI SAREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is made of pure cotton with artistic silk design on the border and patterns on the pallu. Location: Udipi, Karnataka Decline: Due to powerlooms and pandemic, but recently govt took initiative to revive these sarees. No. of weavers: 100 - 150 	4.WORAIYUR COTTON SAREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These cotton sare are know for their block colour schemes and geometric motifs. Location: Manamedu, Trichy Decline: Due to powerlooms youngsters are switching to other fields. No. of weaver : 80 - 100

Table-1: Comparison of Declining sarees

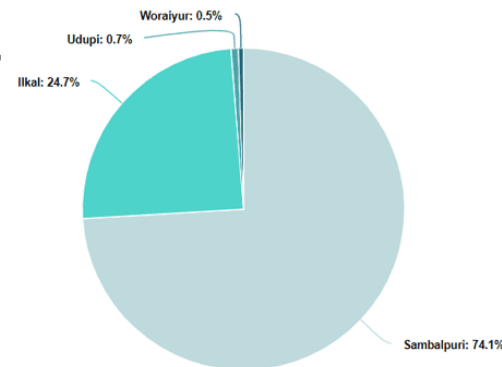


Fig-2: Pie-chart for handloom decline

Woraiyur Cotton Sarees and their decline:

The Woraiyur cotton sarees produced at Manamedu get their name from the region of Woraiyur, located along the Kaveri River. This sari is known for its simple and narrow border with plain or small motifs. The saris are available in 6 yards or 8 yards and occasionally 9 yards. They are produced in Manamedu and cotton yarn is procured from Coimbatore and Rajapalayam and the dyes are obtained from Jeyamkondan. Traditionally, men are engaged in weaving the loom, women in dying the yarn and spinning the thread. (Lamba, 2019). Power looms has eased the process of handloom production, but it is often cited as the chief reason for the death of the handlooms. The lot of families have moved out of the occupation because of various reasons being unavailability of rented houses because some people are hesitant to rent their houses to weavers because they think the unit will damage the house (Nainar, 2016). Another reason is that the new generation is not ready to take over the family business because of low wages and lack of basic necessities.

So awareness has to be created by setting up community development centres for such communities which shelters the artisan families and encourages them to carry forward their legacy and educate other rural areas.

Weavers Cluster of Trichy:

- Trichy's weaving cluster is known for its cotton dhotis and Woraiyur Cotton Sarees.
- It has 5 weaving clusters namely- Woraiyur, Musiri, Manamedu, Thataiyangarpeet, Thuraiyur.
- Trichy is the headquarters of the weaver society for all the transports.
- All clusters are located along the Kaveri river.
- Manamedu is a village in Thottiyam taluk in the district of Tiruchirappalli.
- The main occupation of People living here is Agriculture and Handloom Weaving.
- In Manamedu there are around 20 weavers currently.
- The raw materials i.e yarns are procured from Salem.



Fig-3: Weaver Cluster of Trichy

2. ARCHITECTURE PROJECT PROPOSAL

Aim/ Vision:

The aim of the project is to identify the problems faced by the weaving community and to provide them with all facilities to function well. The centre strives to provide the public with an engaging live experience, inspire people to learn new skills, and give weavers' families a chance to demonstrate their abilities and improve their living arrangements. The main objective is to encourage the younger generation to learn the traditional weaving techniques of the country.

USP: Besides promoting Indian handlooms, the centre offers an opportunity for the public to learn how to weave the traditional saree.

Goals/ Objectives:

- To ensure that all the artisans are provided with basic amenities needed to practice weaving.
- To promote traditional weaving techniques and encourage the interested public to learn the skill.
- To normalise the direct contact of the weavers with the market so that it enhances their working ability.
- To revive and reinterpret traditional designs with modern concepts to respond to market trends and changing tastes.

Primary Case Studies: Literature case study

1. **Kalabhoomi Museum, Bhubaneshwar** - It is dedicated to the art and craft of Odisha and to give people chance to engage with the Handicrafts and Handlooms in order to increase awareness. Inspired from the vernacular landscape of the city. (odishacraftsmuseum, n.d.)
2. **Gangamakki Studio, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand** - In this weaving centre, the textiles produced here, handmade, intimate and sensitive. The centre focuses on combining different natural materials to produce finely textured, functioning facility. (Gangamakki textile studio, 2020)
3. **Dilli Haat, Delhi** - The centre was designed to showcase the country's craft and cultural tradition, and to have an open air shopper paradise which is a one stop destination for art, craft, and music and food. (Dua, 2016)

Secondary Case Studies: Live case study

1. **Yelahanka Weaver Cluster, Bengaluru** - Yelahanka is suburb of Bangalore. It was ruled by Cholas in the ancient days and was a hub of silk handloom industry. Recent days Yelahanka is divided as Old Town and New Town. Even today a lot of people in Old Town of Yelahanka practice handloom and they are known for silk sarees. Mostly the weaver communities work under different master weaver groups and get weekly wages.
2. **Vimor Museum, Bengaluru** - To revive and document traditional handloom saree motifs, techniques and their oral history. It trains and helps the weavers to attain tremendous success and to obtain identity. It houses the most exquisite traditional sarees and also encourages donation.

Comparative Analysis of Case Studies:

CASE STUDY	LOCATION	AREA	PROGRAM	MATERIALS	INFERENCE
KALABHOOMI MUSEUM	Phokariput, Bhubaneshwar, Orissa.	13 acres.	•Museum •Open air theatre •Play area •Workshop	•Laterite stone •Mangalore tiles	•The vernacular aspect of the city. •Usage of contours. •Flexible spaces for users.
GANGAMAKKI STUDIO	Bhogpur, near Rishikesh, Uttarakhand.	0.3 acres. (1500 sq.m)	•Studio space •Central courtyard •Guest House •Workshop •Gallery	•Bricks •Lime •Stone •Marble	•Usage of materials. •Balance of indoor and outdoor space. •Provision for all kind of spaces.
DILLI HAAT, JANAKPURI	Virender Nagar, Janakpuri, New Delhi	6 acres.	•Studio space •Central courtyard •Guest House •Workshop	•Kota Stone •Agra Stone •Quartz •Slate	•Flow of spaces. •Flexibility of space for users. •Balance of modern and traditional.
YELAHANKA WEAVERS COLONY	Yelahanka Old Town, Bengaluru, Karnataka	NA	•Work space •Dye area •Drying area	•Flat roofs •Red oxide flooring	•Program analysis. •Space and area analysis.
VIMOR MUSEUM OF LIVING TEXTILES	Austin Town, Bengaluru, Karnataka.	0.03 acres (1200 sq.ft)	•Display area •Workshop space	•Hollow bricks •Stone lintels •Terracotta tile flooring.	•Display features. •Levels differentiating small space.

Table-2: Comparative analysis of case studies




Site Selection

Criteria of Site Selection

- The site should be accessible through National Highways or important main road so that the centre is exposed to lot of visitors/users.
To protect the regionalism and to have a sense of nativity the site is proposed near the river Kaveri.
- The site should be located in busy area to attract crowd and the site to be surrounded by major amenities like the markets, schools, public transport so that it can be easily accessed by residing the artisan families.

- Thiruchirapalli district has 5 weaving clusters namely- Woraiyur, Musiri, Manamedu, Thataiyangarpeet, Thuraiyur.
- Trichy is the headquarters of the weaver society for all the transports. Hence Trichy was chosen for the site.

Comparative Analysis of Sites:

SITE 1	SITE 2	SITE 3
		
LOCATION: Site 1 is situated along the National Highway NH 81, near Indira Nagar, Trichy, Tiruchirapalli. AREA: 5.2 acres	LOCATION: Site 2 is situated along Annamalai Nagar of Woraiyur, Tiruchirapalli. AREA: 5.3 acres	LOCATION: Site 3 is situated along the Salai Main road in North East extension of Thilai Nagar, Tiruchirapalli. AREA: 5.9 acres.
STRENGTHS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has good accessibility. • Connected to NH 81, Karur Bypass, railway, bus station • Surrounding: It is located in commercial area, near by to tourist spots (Sirangam) 	STRENGTHS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well connected to road-Karur bypass and NH 81 and railway. • Good surrounding - no noise pollution • Offers good views. 	STRENGTHS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Along the Salai main road of, also connected to Fort station road. • Railway station at close proximity comparatively. • Good commercial surrounding.
WEAKENESSES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy traffic flow. • Noise pollution - closeness to highways and railway line being next to the site. • Drainage problem. 	WEAKENESSES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not directly connected to the main roads. • Compared to site 1 - away from commercial zones. 	WEAKENESSES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Salai road main access is on higher level. • Noise pollution: Closeness to railway

Site Analysis:

Location:

It is situated along Annamalai Nagar of Woraiyur, Tiruchirapalli.
 AREA: 5.3 acres.

Access to site:

- The site has 2 access roads.
- Primary access – Annamalai main road connecting to Karur Bypass and NH81
- Secondary access - Karur Woraiyur main road.

Climate Study:

- Tiruchirapalli has tropical climate.
- The average temperature ranges from 28.6 °C - 35 °C.
- The rainfall here is around 823 mm per year.

Surrounding:

- A sports complex is yet to come in front of the site, and all other sides are residences.
- Close proximity to River kaveri and agricultural fields offering good view.
- Good connectivity to bus and railway stations.



Fig-5: Site and surrounding pictures

Design Concept:

- To re-interpret the village's layout in order to give the setting a more authentic native village feel.
- To take into account the city's climatic circumstances and use local resources to improve human comfort.

Table-3: Comparative analysis of sites

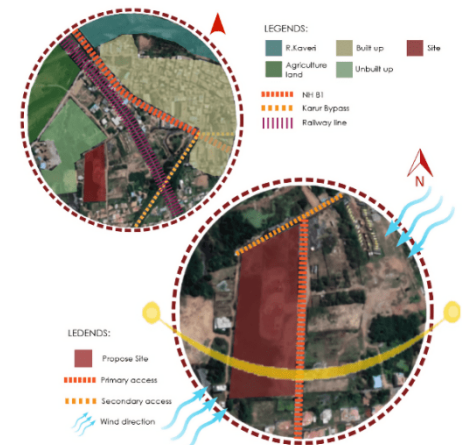
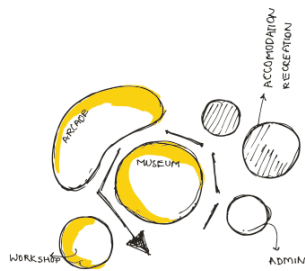


Fig-4: Site Analysis

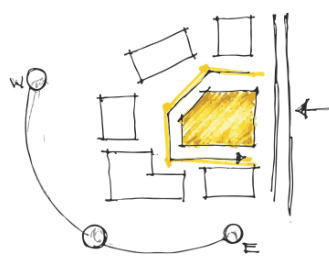
S	W
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 access roads. • E-facing site. • Good connectivity • Less noise, traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct connect to NH. • No vegetation. • No landmarks.
O	T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River, fields - good view points. • Flexible landscape. • Natural light and ventilation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less tourist - Interior site. • Near water bed - drainage issue.

Table-4: SWOT Analysis

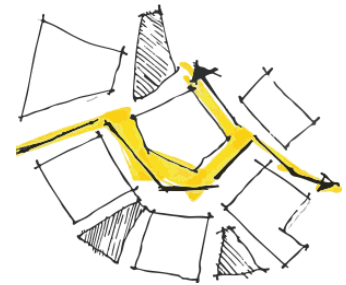
- Local building elements including sloped roofs, red-oxide floors, and mangalore tiles will be employed to implement the above ideology.
- Narrow pathways and semi covered spaces to reduce the heat.
- Clustered massing of buildings to shade the courtyards and usage of levels to reduce direct harsh sun.



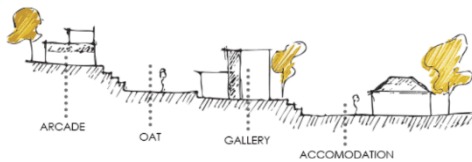
Zoning- 3 major zones



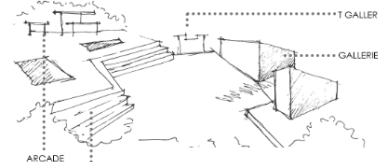
Clustering of blocks in south west acting as shading to plaza



Including open, semi- open and closed spaces along with green pockets for better user experience



Including levels to treat harsh heat



Plaza/ OAT view

Site Zoning:

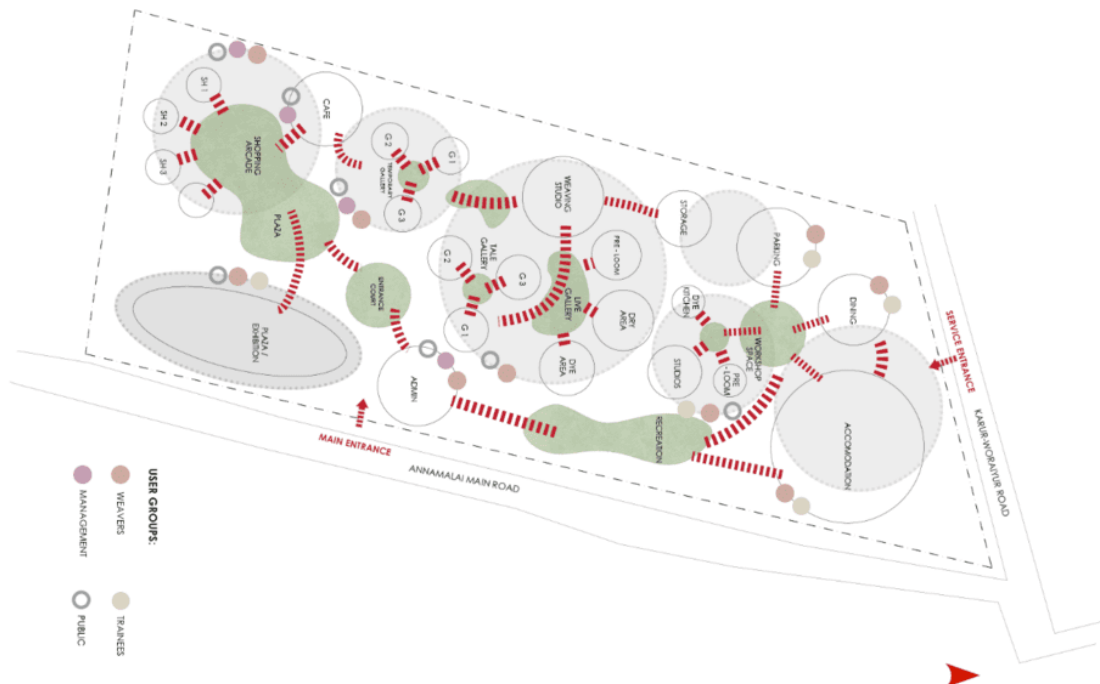


Fig-6: Site zoning

Site Area : 5.3 acres.

Maximum Plot Coverage : 60 %

FAR = $\frac{\text{Built up area}}{\text{Plot area}}$

Plot area

FAR : 1

Maximum Height : 15m

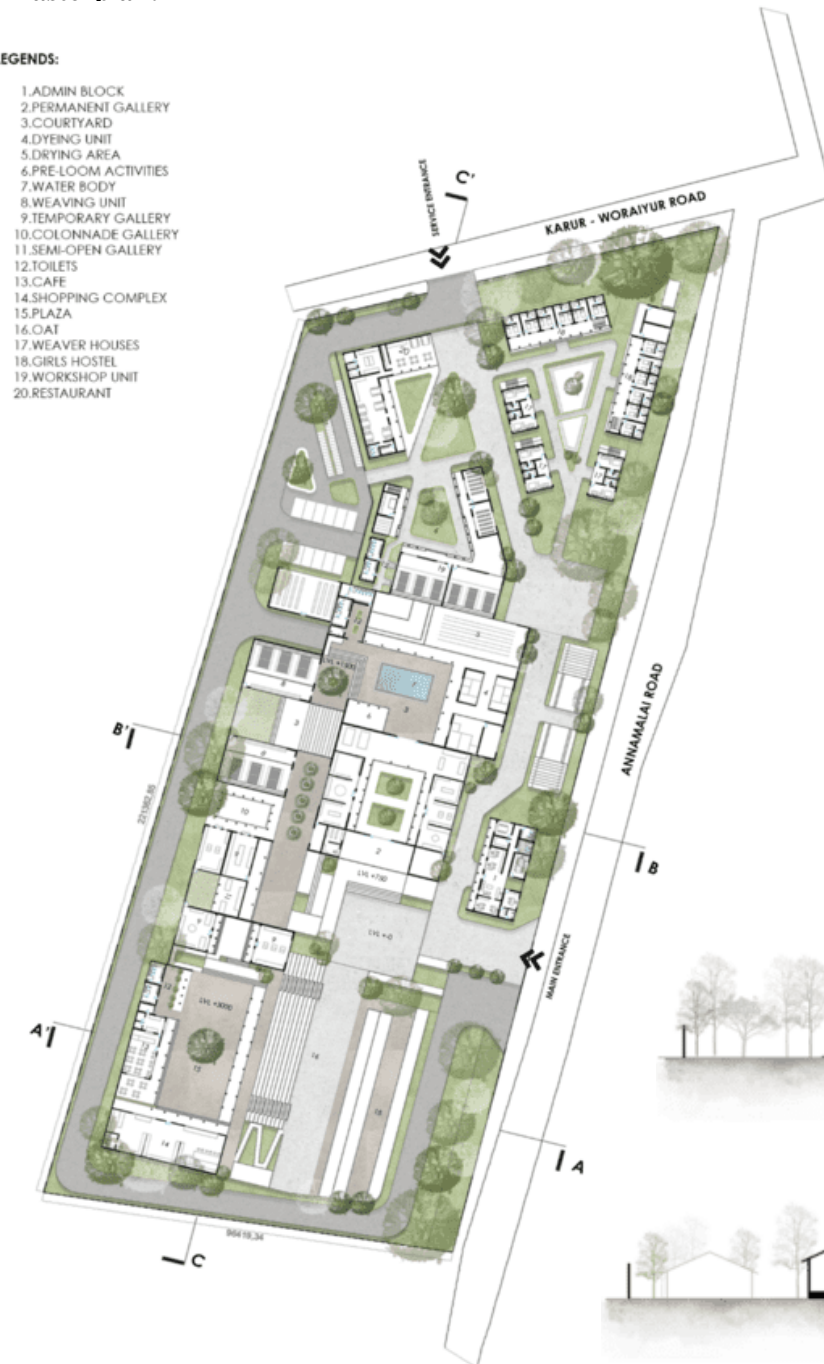
Built-up area = 9250 sq.m

Setback : 3M on all sides.

Masterplan:

LEGENDS:

1. ADMIN BLOCK
2. PERMANENT GALLERY
3. COURTYARD
4. DYEING UNIT
5. DRYING AREA
6. PRE-LOOM ACTIVITIES
7. WATER BODY
8. WEAVING UNIT
9. TEMPORARY GALLERY
10. COLONNADE GALLERY
11. SEMI-OPEN GALLERY
12. TOILETS
13. CAFE
14. SHOPPING COMPLEX
15. PLAZA
16. OAT
17. WEAVER HOUSES
18. GIRLS HOSTEL
19. WORKSHOP UNIT
20. RESTAURANT



Design Approach:

-To improve human comfort, the site has been separated into three major sections based on usage and climate. The first section consists of the museum, which serves as the main area and is intended to act as a live tour for visitors to observe the entire process.

-The supporting zones are located on the either ends, the shopping complex and plaza on the south end and the accommodation centre on the north end.

-The accommodation block is located on the north end, as it has secondary road access which provides privacy for the movement of trainees and weaver families. As north sunrays are not very harsh it provides better comfort during the nights.

-Due to the severe climate, the site has been divided into levels for improved human comfort. Parking is located below the south end's blocks, which are elevated. Because they aren't used for extended periods of time, the blocks are set aside for plazas and shopping centers. Long colonnaded verandas are also designed to allow for user movement and improved comfort.

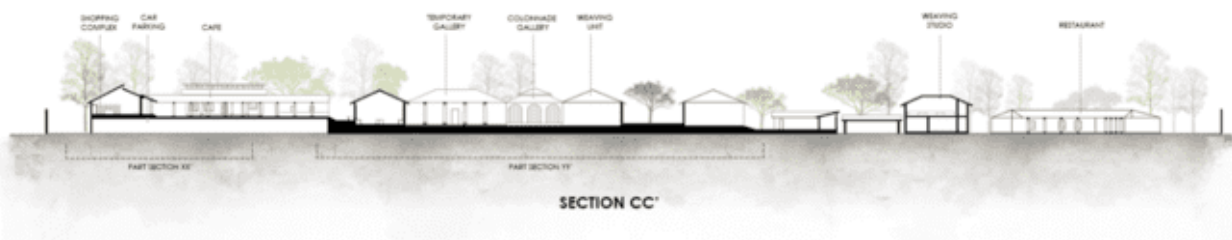
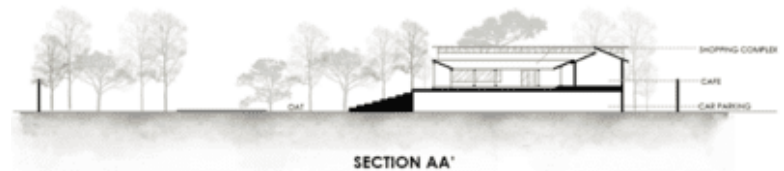




Fig-7: View of Shopping Arcade and



Fig-8: View of the OAT that is multifunctional and accommodates temporary booths and Cafeteria.



Fig-9: A view of the entry court leading to the museum and temporary galleries



Fig-10: View of the central colonnaded courtyard in the museum



Fig-11: View of Dyeing unit and Pre-loom area situated around plaza



Fig-12: View of accommodation: Weaver families

3.CONCLUSIONS

Scope:

The main of the project is to provide shelter to vulnerable artisan groups along with encouraging them to continue their weaving practice by providing dedicated space for the practice. Along with this awareness has to be created among the public regarding the handloom industry and opportunity must be given to the public to learn the art of weaving.

Limitations:

The proposed Community Centre will only be able to provide a part of the program since the site area won't be able to accommodate all the requirements. The community centre won't be able to meet all the demands of different user groups

References

- Dua, G. W. (2016, July 4). Retrieved from Architectural review: <https://www.architectural-review.com/buildings/dilli-haat-is-a-brave-experiment-that-brings-fresh-energy-and-dynamism-to-an-otherwise-banal-landscape>
- Gangamakki textile studio. (2020, september 26). Retrieved from wordpress: <https://architecturecasestudies.wordpress.com/2020/09/26/ganga-maki-textile-sudio-dehradun/>
- Kaur, K., & Agarwal, A. (2019). Indian Saree: A paradigm of global fashion influence. International Journal of Home Science.
- Lamba, N. (2019). Weaver Communities of India. Sahapedia.
- Nainar, N. (2016). Silence of the Looms. The Hindu.
- odishacraftsmuseum. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.odishacraftsmuseum.odisha.gov.in/viewMore/1227>
- Qazi, M. (2021). Our dying crafts. The stateman.
- Vimor Museum of living textile. (n.d.). Retrieved from Vimor handloom foudation: <https://vimorfoundation.org/#intro>
- <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/archohm-dilli-haat-concert-hall-bazaar-new-delhi-09-20-2017/>
- <https://www.archdaily.com/777641/dilli-haat-archohm-consults>
- <https://architectuul.com/architecture/ganga-maki-textile-studio>