

## Tamil Nadu

In december 2016 I went to India again, this time to the South, Tamil Nadu. While packing my bag I received the following message: 'Sorry to inform you that the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Ms Jayalalitha is expired just now. She is a big leader and Government is announced 3 days holiday. Transport and other essentials are closed. Entire of our plans are collapsed'.

For a moment I thought I had to cancel my trip! After some messages back and forward to India my producer told me I could take the plane and that by the time I arrived all would be quiet again. So I went. What I found upon arriving was a province in a state of mourning: pictures of the Chief Minister everywhere, flowers and various other signs of honour for this very remarkable lady.



Before Ms Jayalalitha started her political career she was a very successful actress and appeared in over 140 films. In May 2016 she started her fifth period as a chief minister. One of her most important programmes was the so-called *cradle-baby scheme*: it gives women the opportunity to give up their new-born babies for adoption anonymously. This has saved the lives of many new-born babies, mainly girls.

I wonder if she ever considered improving traffic safety, another measure potentially saving many lives if you ask me. I do agree that in Holland we tend to exaggerate and overregulate things, but for sure some rules to improve traffic safety can make a big difference .....



The reason for my visit to India is to meet with Umaselvan, my new supplier of fabrics. Bo Weevil buys most of its fabrics in Turkey. India however offers other qualities that could be a nice addition to the collection. I wanted to meet Umaselvan in person, see his ateliers and other production facilities he uses. To verify that this supplier really is up to my standards: that the working conditions are good, that no children are employed, the cleanliness of the work space. Fortunately after this visit I know all is decent a cooperation can really start.



During my two days in Tamil Nadu, Umaselvan shows me the complete process of his production of fabrics and other product. In just seven years he has built up quite a large company. In order to control the production process and to be flexible at the same time he does as much as he can under his own management. A weaving mill with 16 power looms, an atelier with 16 sewing machines and a packaging department enable him to respond very quickly to the demands of his customers.



A few steps in the production process are carried out by other producers, like dyeing and printing of fabrics. The dyehouse that does a lot of work for Umaselvan has been GOTS certified for four years now. Amongst the things that needed to be done was the implementation of a *water treatment system*. It is impressive to see how many steps are needed to clean the waste water and make it suitable again for the dyeing process. Equally impressive is the fact that the productions process has become 25-30% more expensive as a result.



Shown above is the concentrated dirt separated from the water in 12 steps.



During this very short visit I find out that Umaselvan leads this company with his heart. He tries to avoid any kind of pollution and is sparse in his usage of raw materials and energy.

Every year the company plants 300 trees in order to create green areas, together with other suppliers and customers witnessed the tree that I was allowed to plant.



Again a wonderful visit to a wonderful supplier! I trust this supplier can be very valuable for Bo Weevil and the customers of Bo Weevil.