SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACED BY RAG-PICKERS USING OVER LAP BLOCK FUZZY COGNITIVE MAPS

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The problems faced by rag pickers in Madras city are multifold. They choose this profession for their livelihood due to acute poverty or run away from home or no education, or frustration or it is the only self employment etc. Once they are in the profession of rag picking they face still more problems by the police, by the public, by the middle men, by the other rag pickers and so on. Apart from these problems they face acute health hazards, no proper place of sleep, exposure to evils of society (like ganja addiction, alcohol, smoke, sex, etc.), which are forcefully imposed or thrust upon them due to their profession as rag pickers. All the problems associated with them be it social or economic or psychological no one can attribute a specific cause for it, we see the very problem involves lots of uncertainties and ambiguities so the data associated with this is only an unsupervised one; we are at the outset justified in using fuzzy technique in general and FCM in particular.

We associate with these ten attributes derived by interviewing over 100 rag pickers and these ten attributes are divided into over lapping blocks of size 4
and adopting the overlap block FCM we derive the following conclusion and suggestions.

1. The police exploit the rag pickers, for they find it easy to register petty cases of theft etc., falsely.
2. The health hazards faced by them is very acute. Most of them suffer from seasonal fever, malaria (due to mosquito bite) and other skin ailments due to very bad hygiene.
3. These children become easy victims of all bad habits and become real criminal due to misuse.

Unless some sympathetic/understanding social workers help them with good guidance and protection they will die at an early age for they are unaware of any health problems they face due to their profession. They do not know the means to save or use properly the money they earn by rag picking. Unless public and government take a sympathetic stand and help them nothing much can be achieved.