**REIMAGINING THE GOOD CITY FROM ENNORE CREEK**

Interview Transcription

**Interview Information**

Interviewer/s: Gajendran V

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Transcription by: AC

**Interviewee Information**

Name: Respondent

R: Switch off the fan. Otherwise, we cannot hear properly. Switch on the AC.

GV: Okay

GV: Last time when we spoke, you had a conversation and spoke about the psychology of the house, how a house should be, Our mental wellbeing is associated with our living space, how a small room in the house can create family disputes and how it can lead children into wrong paths in lives. Similarly, the place where you lived before, Laxmi Puram. When did you move from there, how long you lived there. What was the reason to move there, how many people lived there. What were the challenges you faced when you initially moved here? Can you please share about that?

R: Yes, I will tell you. Overall, if you say Laxmi Puram, it is an eviction. The whole coastal area had eviction. First there is, CRZ notification, you know about that?

GV: Yes, Coastal Resource

R: Yes, Coastal Resource, in 1991 itself it was imposed by Indra Gandhi, she brought this because when she visited coastal areas, she noticed there was waste, and garbage thrown out. Since then, to prevent pollution of coastal areas, beach areas and to keep them clean. CRZ, 1991 notification was put into action. But twenty-seven times it has been changed. The notification was not converted into law. Then fishermen or people living at the coast could not approach the government legally for any of their needs. Now we have the Forest Act, and ST people use that. For agriculture you have an Act, they use that. But these people are counted into the category of tribal people. People of the sea area and forest area are the categories given to these people that did not include fishermen and people dependent on the sea. There were no laws that gave any rights to us, or it could be used to protect ourselves and even to protest issues that were faced by us. So CRZ was changed into CZM.

GV: CZM, which means, coastal resource management.

R: No. Management

GV: Coastal Zone Management

R: Yes, coastal zone management. We protested that in 2008, this notification was stopped in 90 days. This law aimed to cleanse the coastal area, was about how to hand over the coastal area to the landlords and the private parties and how they use the area. This did not bring any benefits or any developmental plan or safety plan for the fishing communities living here.

So, the reason I came here I shared earlier. In Chennai when the port was developed, its Kutru was created. On the other hand, people living around the area get affected more than the people living in that location. They call this Kuthu, where the water flows. In Chennai, the port is 9 km away from my place. As the port gets developed more, the water flow, waves come into our place. My mother-in-law used to say, she should walk four kms to reach the shore. But when I got married, it was only up to half -a-kilometre in the nineties. I have not seen the seashore. Married people like me were not supposed to go beyond that. I did not see the beach at all, I could only see the road. And with more development, the location of the beach became so close. Even if there is flood, the water will enter the house, vessels will be floating, this is one reason to move away. Nearby our village, around 100 CMS opposite, near to our village there was a petrol bunk. Twice there was a fire accident, we lost everything, but no lives were lost, there was loss of belonging and things. And we could manage that. But, even if a small piece touches the petrol, children and everything within 1 ⁄ 2 km will have the damage. The situation was much worse then. The containers used to fall in the queue. Nobody was able to move freely, children had to bend their body and go. Even to move and cross the road was difficult. There were some accidents involving the containers and loss of lives of the children began. So, we felt like moving out. We demanded from the Government a separate place for us. When we started thinking on that line, there was really no cooperation and unity among us. But we still gave some awareness to them like do not go to a place like this and demand a separate house. We gave awareness through Action Aid and Arunodaya. NTO kuppam and Indira Nagar kuppam demanded a separate house. Because there was no unity among us, Laxmipuram decided not to listen to us, when I visited other places to talk about such matters they accepted, but not here. This was the reason to move here.

**06:33**

GV: When did that fire accident happen?

R: in 2008

GV: When did you come here? Was it in 2009?

R: in 2010

GV: When did they begin construction of these houses?

R: Two years earlier, they began. It was under the Tsunami project. This housing was planned on the highways side in a satisfactory manner. That included a reading room. A separate house for everybody also. One AD was there who was a chairperson who understood the fishermen’s problems. He even measured how much house building existed for everyone. But, afterwards, through the Slum clearance Board, they began construction. There were 3616 houses separately for Tsunami-affected. We came under the highways project and 2412 houses for us.

GV: In total around six thousand houses.

Six hundred houses for NTO kuppam separately. But they did not come here. They refused to come.

GV: Where did they settle?

R: Nearby Ellaiyamman koil. Next to the Toll gate. You can see ten buildings when you come to Thiruvottiyur. That is only for NTO kuppam.

GV: oh, that on the highways itself?

R: yes.

GV: Have they demanded it separately?

R: Yes. They filed a petition and obtained a stay order in the court. They did a lot of work. They met MD and even went to Delhi. Still some petitions are pending in the court, and many were not yet allotted. One case is still pending.

GV: They fought in unity. They got a separate place. So, since you came here, what are the challenges you faced?

R: Here, especially important are education, sanitation. Afterwards, livelihood base, safety. These are the basic, especially important facilities guaranteed for a human being as per our Constitution. Ambedkar wrote these things in the Constitution for that only. But how this was taken up, I do not know. They gave me one study room. They gave one TV to every house. With the existence of TV, how will the children study? Yes, the news is important. But misuse of TV is different. Tele serials are there. But, how to take good things from that? How to use it in a better way? It is important to know about world affairs. We wanted to talk about something……. what is that?

GV: it is education. You have been talking about TV.

R: We know some good things at world level. But all are present before TV. Father comes back from work and Mother comes back after fish sales. All are in the house by 6 O’clock. If TV is switched on in the only room, what will happen to the child’s education? There are drunkards in many houses. They do not miss songs on TV. Ghana pattu(song). So, in only one room, how will the child study? When we construct a house, there are parents and the children. Elders and all are there. As per the Slum Board Act, one house building will be reconstructed only after 30 years. As per 171 too, the same. But they will stretch it to 40 years. Let us take it. So, within those 40 years, whether the child grows up or not?

GV: Grows up.

R: Grows up. So, man and woman are there. Man needs sex which is as important as food. That is not like a vulgar thing. Must. Nobody can live without that. One should not live without that. There are rich people who do yoga. But this is the only means of relaxation to the People below poverty level. They only know this for relaxation. They do not know anything. They do not go to Pup. They do not go to Singapore. They do not go along with the family. They do challenge work and relax with wife. Only that is there. But how will they survive here? My question is ……. There is one doctor. They want a house close to the hospital. There is a police station. Police want to reach home soon after they finish their duty at 12 O’clock. They have houses behind the Station. For an IAS, not necessary. Have you seen the House of an IAS?

GV: Yes. Do you mention the Collector office?

R: No, the House. Four bedrooms, three bedrooms. This is even for the retired people themselves. Likewise, for those in the Forest, you have the rest house. You have a Guest house there. But, for those workers who go to work at 12 O'clock, 1 O’clock, 2 O’clock… Anytime. But how will they do their work? Education has gone. Livelihood has gone. If you look at this livelihood……. There are 3, 4 nets here. They will be at the beach side. There are some thefts also sometimes. If they go into the sea and see the fish, they must rush here and take them there. This is the problem in the livelihood here. We cannot just keep all the four nets inside there. If we keep, it is not possible to catch fish, hold them, and take them. Where is our house? We park the boat at N4. If we want to take the nets there, we need to engage auto and pay Rs.250 each trip onwards and return. If there are no fish, there…? Total auto charge Rs.500. Diesel cost Rs.500. Daily Rs.1000. This is a loss to us. We walked to N4. No going by Auto. If fish are available, they will collect the nets and go to the sea. Our area gents go and sleep there to take care of the nets. So, there is no chance for thefts. The elderly people sleep there by covering them with lungi. They take care of all the nets irrespective of who owns the nets. They live in all the winds. They know it, sense it, and live in it. They know the kodai katru (summer breeze). They can sense the meen padam (availability of fish). Immediately they will come here to collect the nets. They, after challenging work, come and sleep here. But no window here. Hence air circulation. These are the problems of our livelihood. What is the situation? How do they (the planners) think? How do they take things forward?

GV: So, when you talk about the House, like the rights existing for the forest people in the forest, the fishermen on the seaside must be close to the beach.

R: No, no. You (the Govt) have taken forward the limit of five hundred kms (500 M as per the Rules), because Tsunami could not affect. but there are resorts within that area. There are people within that. We are safe because we know how to swim. Fishermen did not die due to the Tsunami. But the dead were only the tourists. There is now a Taj hotel in Kovalam which is only a resort. So, the outsiders are there in the resorts. Can they die?

**16:29**

GV: These are the challenges, you said. Ok. Where to locate the Houses?

R: House should be by the side of the sea, not to be affected by Tsunami. In foreign countries, they construct on the sea itself. Do these buildings collapse there? No. You say, Technology has advanced. There is an income of Rs.10K crore due to the fishermen community ‘s work. The income to you is only due to us. But you do not spend it on us. you spent only Rs.732 Cr. this time. But we give you an income of Rs.10k Cr. every year. What is the interest out of that? How much did you spend for our welfare board? What did you do for our development? Anything you did for our women’s development?

GV: How did you say Rs.10K cr?

R: There are Exports to foreign countries. So, the income including GST out of that. One Raal costs ₹5k, 6k, even 10k. This goes out on export, with eggs, live. We catch them alive and export them alive by flight. We are saying this. You must speak at least one third of Rs.10k Crore for us, don't you? You mention the income out of TASMAC, income out of Agriculture. Ok. Why no news about income of Rs.10k crore due to fishermen? You issue a statement.

GV: you said now that while on sea, there's sea erosion and you were once four kms away from the sea. So, you were affected. Are you not still affected when you are close to the sea?

R: Getting affected is a part of our daily life. There are three lives every month. Last week, in Nagai, one fisherman got into the sea and lost life by default. The week before last week, there was one such life lost in Kasimedu. We are fighting in our daily lives. We are into the sea knowing fully well that we will die. My husband regularly goes there. Can you go there? Can an IAS do that? An IPS cannot go. His capacity is only that much. It is ok to die. We earn and save our people. We face our life. Will we die? Did we ask them to shift us? We did not.

GV: You did not ask. They are doing it by force.

R: Yes, this is an eviction. So, the Government should do good things. To a human being, leave alone the fishermen. What is the duty of the Government? What the Constitution says? What a human being’s need should be done. Do you do that?

GV: To that place and this place, is there any good thing?

R: Nothing of that sort. What is that one thing, you know. At the time of rainfall, cyclone, we used to stay in one place. That is joyful to us. Some people still used to be there to safeguard our nets because there may be thefts by the outsiders. Still, we women, children and all used to stay in community halls, chathrams (like Kalyana mandapam). This is occasionally. Not often. But gents used to go to take care of the nets. But, still, we enjoyed it. We were jolly. Because what property did, we must safeguard? We only had nets and household items. We sometimes lose nets. Our then was not luxurious. But now, we have something to worry about. Due to luxurious life, we are spoiling.

GV: Due to heavy rains, you had to stay in shelters…….

R: That used to be announced early. Corporation (Municipal) used to arrange shelters, food which may be good or bad, etc. But we enjoyed that life. We liked it. Because nobody goes to the nets (fishing). Normally, mothers used to go selling fish. Fathers used to go fishing. Children used to go to schools. There used to be nobody washing even the school uniforms. While in shelters now, everyone plays, laughs, and is not affected by the effect of heavy rainfall.

**21:55**

GV: So, there was a community life, you say.

R: yes, that was there. There was a culture. No outsider could come over to our place. Lovers cannot spend time in our area. If they walk over our area two, three times and some of us sees them, we will inquire as to where they are. If there is a stranger in our area, we know very well that who is the host of that person. But, nowadays, there is everything around our area. I am not public about this. That may be sex work, illegal things, thefts, ganja, TASMAC drinks, all things are there.

GV: Why can't it be controlled?

R: not possible. Modi says one culture, one Government and he rules. He says that. Will it deliver? Hindikkarans (natives of Northern States of India) sit on the lap. But, whether a Keralite or a Tamil, he will not sit on my lap. We have experience. Hindikkarans, while coming in a bus or vehicle, ask us whether they can sit nearby. Though there may be vacant seats. Please do not mistake me. This is their culture in their States. They give respect to women. But, if the people from North India, do not mistake me, it does not seem to them like a mistake, will they be given such respect? That is their culture. This is our culture. If we talk about women's rights, leave alone the women’s freedom and feminism, there is nothing like this now.

GV: so, do you think that the Housing project AR Nagar is against women's rights?

R: Yes. Sure, I say. There are three storied buildings. There are always some women having uterus operated upon, undergoing family plans after second child, elders unable to climb up the staircase. Have you seen the disability and constructed it? After several fights, now, ok, they say disabled can stay on the ground floor. Even now, what type of house building are you constructing? You see in Alayamman Koil. Built like a lodge. Nobody knows who goes to which room.

GV: Where is it?

R: Nearby DMS, Nandanam. It is Tamil Nadu Nagarpura Valvida Mempattu Variyam (Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board). We fought and said that you are not slum dwellers and the name need to be changed. But no use out of that.

**24:42**

GV: So, any good thing between that place and this place?

R: Nothing you can say. You do not get wet in the rain. Nothing else to mention. Safety of children, women. Is there anything to mention? Women fight in their life. The fight may be against the husband, children, and those in the Office. Outside home, against the travellers in the bus, train. The fight is at home also against the discomforts in the house construction. How is it possible?

GV: What are all the struggles here you know?

R: Here, I do not say it is an illegal or illicit relationship. My concept is different. It is the women's wish, feminism. But it is happening. People are from various places. They make friendships. They rent out a house here for a monthly rent of Rs.2000 and use it whenever they stay here. But, if they go to a cottage in a resort, the rent is costly like Rs.5000 daily. So, this is cheap.

GV: So, this has changed like that.

R: Now, suppose the children between 13 to 18 years of age are seeing this. Mature boys and girls. Of course, if they are to be all right, we should create such an atmosphere for them. If my child between 13 to 18 years of age should not go a wrong way, not a wrong way, but they should not take interest in that. How should I behave? Not to have sex in their presence, maintaining distance. I may reveal to them what it is. This is ok. But they do not have that knowledge.

GV: Many people from outside take the houses on rent. So, there are many here.

R: Yes. Who are they, where are they from, are they thieves, what did they do before they came here? Nothing known. When any issue is there, the police go upstairs and check their Aadhar cards. That is all. Over.

GV: Is a community intervention possible there?

R: Not possible. Due to the rental income, they become rich. Take my case. My children are earning. I have settled here. I leave the house on rent there. I do not know what is happening there.

GV: So, you say, once you are up in the ladder due to social mobility, you cannot live there.

R: We learnt. We felt that house space is not enough for us. One house there for me where my daughter-in-law is living. So, I moved here. I was given only one house. My daughter has been married. Now I am going to arrange the marriage of my son also. So that house space was not enough. So, I moved here.

GV: So, the future of the building and its use was not thought over then.

R: Yes. That house was handed over in 2010. My son was already 18 years old then. Now what is his age? Now he is 29 years old. If I arrange a marriage for him, how can I live there? Will they both sleep there, or I sleep there?

GV: So, there was no futuristic thinking.

R: No.

GV: So, if they get a good house, many may move out. What are the chances of rehabilitation of those living there to better houses?

R: Regarding rehabilitation, they need not ask me. They can ask the people there. But, in any case, Engineers are only constructing. The same engineers are constructing for the IAS. If you construct for the ordinary people, what is necessarily to be there in the building? If they construct the same type of building for the IAS, we will give them better ideas. Where did the Engineers go? Why should I say something? You read the Constitution. I do not know how to read. I am a fisherwoman. I know only to sell the fish. I do not know about the Constitution. You IAS write the exam, pass it, and become IAS. You eat out of our tax income. This is one. The second is that there is a separate Secretary for fisheries. Since one person is drawing money against two ration cards, the ration cards are linked with an Aadhar card. Since we are living in two separate areas, they want to link the Aadhar card to check the malpractice of drawing money against two ration cards by the same person. When you think so, don't you know how to build a house for an ordinary person who has two children? Sit and speak with us. Why do you ask me? Read the Constitution.

**30:30**

GV: So, they know it. But they do not apply to poor people.

R: Exactly, they know they are below poverty people right. That is why I said ten thousand earlier to you. What Adani gives away is others' money. And this is our cost. Adani collects and borrows others money and gives it away to you, that seems like an important thing to you. This is our work and that is 10000 cr. Then why didn't you give away our planning to us? give us ⅓ or give a certain percentage to us. For one hundred, give us 2%, that will be two hundred cr, it will be 2000 cr.

GV: As you said, many have left from here right, where did they all go?

R: We are all in and around this place. Near here, thandayarpettai, not far away. Though our culture gets lost, we have lost a lost, but I have not expressed that much loss to you. We will not stay inside our homes, we will come out and eat, share our food with each other. But now, this culture of locking inside apartments, not even aware if a murder happens next door, such culture has pervaded here now.

GV: More individualistic?

R: Yes, more individual life. Before, when a fight happens, they will jump into our thatched roof house. And others chasing them cannot enter the house, the women will do everything inside the house, from eating to bathing, she will be part of this house. We never considered them as outsiders. When his drunkenness reduces, then she will move out to her house. This will happen to me and to neighbours. This is not a big deal to us. This job of running to court, asking for divorce, making police complaints is not a job for us. We know they will make us run, if it is you today, tomorrow it will be me. We have accepted this kind of life and used to live such a life. Now we do not have that right, now to meet our relatives there is a lot of ego between us to interact.

GV: Until we lived there helping nature between each other was there?

R: Yes, there was bonding, affection, love we shared, we did not lose our culture, we were scared. For example-, I never wore chudithar, because my elderly people would not like it. Even if I wore it, I would change in the train station and change into a sari. But today I am wearing chudithar. Now who should I fear, my family itself is not there now.

GV: Would you not see this as a freedom for women?

R: But this is my way of showing respect. If my brother told me not to sit on a chair, when I go outside, I sit, not seeing the difference between men and women. In my family, I never break that if my elders were there, I would not sit. My sister-in-law will not sit in front of elders and will not call people by names. I will call everyone by their names, I will sit in front of everyone, and will wear clothes of my choice, we are not supposed to wear nighties, but I did break all those norms. Nobody questioned me. Because I like to do things, they did not ask anything, because they accepted me, I gave what they wanted. When they told me not to do something, I will do that because it is my women's rights, I have the independence. They gave a lot of space to me, from dressing code and to everything. For example: even after my husband passed away, many rituals were not done for me, like not wearing bangles and bindi. They said let her be how she likes to be, do not break the bangles and all that. If she likes to do it, let her do it. But I saw it as a sacrifice to my family, my husband, and my children. But now for whom should I, do it? When I do not have any family, I am not scared of the community. I feel more independent. Sometimes my brother-in-law will not stand in front of me if I am wearing a nightie, he will run away quickly. My husband does not tell me anything, but when I step or auto, he has asked my sister-in-law, who is she wearing clothes like that. But I do not want to hurt anybody with my act, others have felt different.

**35:36**

GV: Even in that space there was women’s rights.

R: There was burden, domination. You cannot enter the space, you cannot sit in Panchayat (village council), only after the Tsunami did, we start to sit in Panchayat. In my life when I joined Arunodaya, my husband was the leader. From Arunodaya, mam visited and gathered at a village meeting. They invited me but my husband is not allowed to enter. Immediately mam noticed and she said I am also a woman, how can I alone come here, if they are feeling uncomfortable then I will also not be here. All such changes were brought by NGOs, during discussion women were invited, women were encouraged to participate in all celebrations, such changes began to happen. Among fishermen groups, other than rights, there was a lot of pressure, without earning, there was a lot of stress, because they take care of household finances. All family responsibilities were on women’s shoulder.

GV: So, there was responsibility for women, domination also towards them?

R: Yes, there was also domestic violence towards them. They will not step forward for any act.

GV: On one side there was a lot of closeness in the community.

R: Yes, we accepted that life. We knew that there was domestic violence, child marriage, dowry, these concerns needed more awareness among the group. Now we can say it has reduced drastically across the coastal areas.

GV: In this AR Nagar what was the status.

R: In that area there were many children marriage, because it was a one room apartment, the man was a drunkard, how to keep the girl child. So, the solution was to get them married off. There were many child marriage cases. We involved police into such cases, then it started to reduce. Then economically we supported and developed them, by letting the women go to work, asking them to not conduct marriages by borrowing money rather than by saving money from doing work. Because once women are economically better off, they can start to make decisions for the family. This has been by learning. Economic importance is particularly important, before they had to listen to the others in the family.

GV: After you came to AR Nagar, the community bonding broke off, were there any efforts by the public to retain the community connection.

R: Why will they put effort, it is difficult to do. There are no chances. The family itself was broken off. In my house, there are around 12 to 13 people, if there is any issue for me, they will all come and stand for me.

GV: Is it not the same now?

R: No how will that be. For myself now, there are three of us. All of them are separated and living away.

GV: Everyone has moved away, distant from each other, so they cannot come if there was any sudden issue, right?

**40:45**

R: Yes, there is a difference when they are present now and later. If you come and tell me after two days that so and so argument has happened, and I react to it then, would the power have not reduced. But if I go right then when an incident happened, would not that support be quite different. Even with the relatives who are not in talking terms they will come and stand by me when I am in a problem.

GV: Since the time you moved to AR and now, how is it?

R: it has become very worse, when we moved from the highway to here, there were only a few people. But now we do not know what is happening. There is a lot of use of Ganja (drugs).

GV: So, drug abuse has increased here a lot.

R. Yes, there was a murder right here three months ago.

GV: During the mela, festival time.

R: Yes, I was right there, this man was shouting and walking into this side. I was wondering why they are running into our town. If he had come at least this side, we would have saved him.

GV: Who is that man?

R: Someone from there itself.

GV: Ok, when we were returning, we noticed a lot of blood.

R: Yes, same here, we were returning after the festival celebration, we noticed and understood the problem was inside the town itself.

GV: What has caused all this violence?

R: Of course, there is no unity among people here, no restrictions, people across various places are coming here. Before there was any eve teasing of a girl, the panchayat will take care. Suppose there are five towns here and if there is a girl studying in the school here, and some teasing has happened towards her, we will not approach the police station first. The panchayat will send a letter first to the other town people who are responsible for the act. The girl will also tell her relatives, they will all meet in the panchayat of the town who issued the letter. Even then there was some respect. We will sit and discuss the issue and try to resolve it. We form the laws, and we are the judges to decide about a particular issue.

GV: So as a community you had managed everything.

R: Yes, if somebody had made any mistake, we would not go to court or police station, we will look at the issue and give punishment for that crime act. For a girl’s life, we will decide about her marriage and what steps need to be taken. But now everything is lost.

GV: OK, so this panchayat has disintegrated.

R: Yes, that broke away. This has changed into katta panchayat (Kangaroo courts). Now if you misbehave, as panchayat officer you know the situation, but have the intention to change the culture, so you the katta panchayat in your hands, punish me to go to jail.

GV: Ok, so this Katta panchayat has replaced the panchayat.

R: in some places it is strong, like in the south. In poombukar, what they decide is the final. In some cases, they even take stay order, if you make a crime, there is no tax.

GV: So, this change of homes has broken this community system.

R: Yes, it has broken down completely.

GV: The community feeling, the control of Panchayat and everything has changed.

R: Yes, you cannot say anything is positive.

**45:50**

R: How you build a home is especially important. They should have built with the intention of having the whole town here. Example if you take this Indra Gandhi Nagar, you will find only ten of our town people living there in the building.

GV: All of this was supposed to be for kuppam.

R: Yes, but people have sold their homes, somebody else has rented it. How can the Government be like this?

GV: Why do you think this happened, selling off homes?

R: I will blame both the government and public. There are two issues, one ration card is linked to one Aadhar card, in some houses there are four ration cards and they used to misuse that. But now we cannot misuse that way. This is a good finding and practice. Now, fishermen will collect money from multiple places. This has stopped now, and this is good news. This kalaignar urimai thittam, many people did not agree with that. From the government each citizen should get only one benefit. Now, as a widow I collect my benefit of Rs. One thousand as provided by the government. If the government is not giving any support that is a different issue. But people will collect first in one place and then again Rs.1000 or Rs.2000 in another place, then how can people who are suffering than me will get the benefit. Why was this thought not used in providing housing? But this issue has changed now, only if you have an Aadhar card, ration card in a particular location only there you will be allotted housing. Earlier all this was not there.

GV: After you came from there, is the place an issue or the rehabilitation could have been done better.

R: Yes, they could have individual houses or at least two houses as with one on the top floor and the other below. For example, if I have one daughter in law and we all stay in the same place, we manage. But if I have another daughter in law, where would we go? If the top floor existed, then we would shift them there. So, they should have built a house that is better with management. If you come from work, and we are watching tv, where will the newly married couple get privacy, if there is no space, to be together and discuss. Now they come here and return to their house because of this problem. Their place is nearby so they are going back, what if they were living far away can they meet me and then return to their place. Support our children in their growth, we will need a good atmosphere. Lead a good life as a human, we would need a good atmosphere for that.

GV: This AR Nagar did not give such space?

R: Not at all, ask anybody here, they will respond the same, there is no atmosphere here, we are not sure why we came here.

GV: To me, instead of constructing these apartments, if they had allotted a certain piece of land to people from a particular location, would that have been better?

R: Even in that, if there were buildings such as this, what is the use. If there is a small town, constructed a wall to separate from others, we would have solved our own issues.

GV: So, you are saying even if everyone is given the same place, each community of people should be separated and not mingled.

R: Only then people can survive, you are telling us to grow trees, then increase oxygen levels, you are also saying the place has become hot. We cannot sell anything here, there in that small place itself, we used to grow plants and trees such as drumsticks. Fishermen like to cultivate small vegetables by themself as agriculturists, they feel happy about that. Here there is nothing.

GV: Now people leaving from here, where do they go?

R: They have a house here, so some sell and some are still staying back in the old place. They should put a condition to not sell and buy these plots.

GV: It is there, you are not supposed to sell the houses here.

R: All rules are only in papers, if one person begins to stop this process, will this continue. Everyone will be compelled to live here. They are selling away because it is too much for them.

**53:12**

GV: Someone had told me; they sold the house to get their girl child married off. The slum board offices had asked them why you did that as you are not allowed to sell these lands. Their response was what other properties do I have for conducting the marriage of my girl. If you see this, they see their home as a property, like an asset to use in emergency cases.

R: But will they sell off their land when we were living there? There we used to borrow for marriages. And living in hardship is a fishermen's lifestyle. They do not have any source of savings; their lifestyle has become like that. That is another issue. My question is where they will go after selling the land, they question the government but then what are they doing when they are given homes to live in. They should not be allowed to sell. I know that later they will show the same ration card to get the benefits, which is not right. I am not speaking for the government nor for the public. We are blaming the government, but we should also work hard and make a better livelihood. You are living in thatched roof, you want to sell that away for marriage, but who will buy that land? Because of such poverty is why the government provided these housing, then why are you selling it away. We are only blaming the government, but we should understand there are mistakes on our side too. I am living in the same place, all my documents are linked to that home address, my Aadhar card, ration card and passport, everything is linked to that.

GV: But you mentioned you do not like the house.

R: yes, but I like the place, however you are troubled, you will feel relieved there, in the building 14 blocks. You will like the place too. The house does not have enough space to sit and sleep, but what to do.

GV: If the house were built a little more spacious, it would be a good place.

R: Yes, there is a space shortage. If they had given the land or built two stories the building would have been better. This house, if they had given the land, we would have built it better. Now many fishermen ask for land rather than housing. We would make the kitchen smaller, make one room into two rooms, build one another floor on top. We will not disturb anybody for more space or room then.

GV: The house is not enriching your living rather than obstructing the growth.

R: Yes, living space is important for betterment of life and nourishment. Education and cleanliness are especially important, are not these basic needs, and here everything has been taken for granted. Land is particularly important, especially for women. The land would be given on women's names.

GV: In that case even if the family is growing, you would explain the house and live in the same place. Because that is not a possibility, people move out and other conflicts along with that emerge.

R: Yes

GV: There are many issues such as sex workers, drug users and many others here. Are there any efforts to reduce this or stop it?

R: People are not doing anything. Government should do something about it. Police support the use of drugs here. How does Ganja come here without their knowledge?

GV: ok, you police are aware of its availability in the community.

R: Government should prohibit completely; how does it enter inside a place. Here people will go buy alcohol bottles but will also be able to buy some drugs over the counter. The cost of these drugs is so cheap, alcohol will come up to Rs.200 but this is only for Rs.30. And this gives higher when you consume it.

GV: They need these drugs, are they?

R: These have got addicted to it, young boys see others using it and they would like to experiment with it and friends influence each other. Because it is so cheap, the Rs.30 is easily available, and they try it. In their homes parents give Rs.30 to have lunch at school, so they have access to the money easily.

GV: So, consumption of alcohol has reduced?

R: Yes, there is more drug addiction. There are more people and men consuming drugs than alcohol in this area.

GV: Here they are many families, doesn’t this sex work business affect?

R: Of Course, it does, but people say if you like to stay here given all these problems you can, otherwise do not. If the house has been sold off, we cannot even do anything about it.

GV: Who says this to whom?

R: The people who do such business say this to neighbours. So, we cannot even challenge them. I have found many such cases, called cybercrime and police, and caught them. But some husbands will not like it if you interfere in such cases, as we may invite unwanted trouble to you. Our lives are like a cycle chain, interrelated. Even murder here has become so common, they are under the influence of drugs when they do such actions.

GV: How to resolve such conflicts, having a good town, good living space, or would just providing land would solve this, or do you have any other suggestions?

R: Yes, land and creating homes in discussion with asking the people about their way of life and living source of income. Because living space and work should be not separate, if they are too far apart how can they access home for having lunch or even having night duty work, or even to attend urgent matters.

GV: So, house and workspace should not be seen separate, they are together,

R: Yes, for people dependent on the sea, houses near the sea, for people dependent on land, it is land and for forest it is forest. We tribals must climb the hill early in the morning to collect medicinal plants. If the house is far, how can they go?

GV: So, a house should be created in that concept.

R: Yes, like in villages the farmers live close to their agriculture lands, taking care of goats and cows also.

GV: Do you think this is possible in the cities?

R: I am not talking about here; I am talking about profession. Like, near the toll gate, they have planted dates and pineapples, but they could have built houses there for us, instead there are companies and other buildings. In NTO kuppam, the houses are best, like houses in Mumbai (Bombay) model.

GV: Did they say it is a Mumbai (Bombay) model?

R: Yes, they said it is. Mumbai (Bombay) model means, fixing parts. (**This was not clear**). They have built houses to their needs, in Kadalur it is good, with tile flooring. In Chennai they have done the worst construction. Houses should also be renewed after every ten years. Here when it is falling on their head, they will do some repair work. The rent here is Rs.5000.

**GV and R- closing words.**