**REIMAGINING THE GOOD CITY FROM ENNORE CREEK**

Interview Transcription

**Interview Information**

Interviewer/s: Gajendran V

Place of interview: Ernavoor Village

Date of interview: 03 October 2023

Transcription by: RP

**Interviewee Information**

Name:

Pseudonym: Interviewee

**(AUDIO BEGINS)**

**[00:00]**

**Interviewer:** *Ayya,* can you tell us a bit about yourself? You said you were a social reformer (*samooga seerthiruththa vaathi).*

**Interviewee:** Yes. I did not know what the world was till the age of 42. After the age of 42, I learned bit by bit that – ‘people like this are in this world.’ In these 27 years. I am 69 years of age now.

**Interviewer:** 69 years.

**[00:30]**

**Interviewee:** If you look at the roads. I was the village head. So, only my street would have roads, lights and other facilities. Other streets would not have any facilities. The society would say – ‘why these people only need light’? After that, we tried, and the Government said – ‘we will lay roads only for the patta land. We will not lay roads after that.’ So, we said ‘lay it till there, *ayya.* After that, we can exchange.’

**[01:00]**

**When the** next generation comes, we could exchange. We told them like that, and we developed everything little by little. They said ‘are you developing your village? See what I do to your area’ and they shifted my area from 48 to 47. Can you or me do that? As far as I know, only if all the people in a locality sign – they can shift the are like that.

**[01:30]**

**Do you un**derstand? Only if it goes till collector, it will happen. As an individual, can you or I do that? But, they took a street from that side, and kept it over here. But they took a street in the very center and kept it over that side. Then what? They think ‘Can you stand in elections and win this?’ But I did not worry about it. I told them frankly that I would not be standing for elections either. These titles and degrees – I do not want it.

**[02:00]**

As much as I could – I just wanted to streamline this village. That is my policy. I told them like that. And I was making constant efforts. I had about 36 youngsters behind me. After that, they all ran away. I was not afraid at that time either. We did all these things. We picked up the garbage from every street. We tidied up the school.

**[02:30]**

After that, through our organization – through international Exnora social service – we formed a sports park. We gave a letter to a committee and for that ground – that ground is Government land; it is canal porombokke land.

**Interviewer:** Canal porombokke.

**Interviewee:** By 127 survey – it is canal porombokke. They came and surveyed it, and they said – ‘you can use this is a ground.’ But when the Government needs it, they can take it.

**[03:00]**

If one wants it not to be taken back by the Government – then the village people should get together; and only one person should talk. Not everyone should talk. And to one knowledgeable person – the village people should get together and .. (unclear). If you see the ground now, there are sugar patients, heart patients – can they go walking on the road?

**[03:30]**

Only if we talk like that – that ground will stand. Is it not? After that, if you see – during Jayalalitha’s period 710 schools were selected to be changed from middle school to high school. Is it not? If you take that high school and build it near the ground, at the canal porombokke – then it would have a sports park, and our village would have a high school too.

**[04:00]**

**One prima**ry school separately. One high school separately. For sports, Government would appoint a PT master and they would teach. In a sports quota, a family will survive. Will it survive or not?

**Interviewer:** It will survive for sure.

**Interviewee:** Whichever family it could be. As far as I know – through a teacher, a student from a very poor family is now studying at St Joseph’s University. Someone who studied at a Government school. The full reason for that is that teacher only.

**[04:30]**

He had seen through a paper that Government was conducting a test for about 70 schools. To make this student pass in that test, he did some collection, and took that student to his house, arranged for food for them, taught him, and he took that student to the test center, and made him write the test. And that kid also scored 70% and passed. They asked him if he needed Velammal University or St Joseph’s University. He said ‘I will go to St Joseph’s University, sir.’

**[05:00]**

Today, that kid is in a good condition. Who is the reason? Because of one person’s efforts. As I went to ask him – that teacher complained against me – saying that ‘he was talking to the teacher for 3 hours, without letting him conduct the classes.’ That teacher’s IRE (unclear) and AO came to enquire me.

**[05:30]**

During the enquiry – I had already saved a teacher there. They said – regarding this teacher \_\_\_\_\_\_ (unclear). They wrote and gave a letter to me. They said that I have to send it – one to DO and one to CO. They said – ‘if I sign it and give it to them, they will take action.’ But I did not give. I took it home and kept it. One day the AO called me, made me sit and started asking questions.

**[06:00]**

**I said ‘G**ive me 10 minutes time, I will go home and come back.’

He said ‘what, are you afraid?’

That Grama Kalvi \_\_\_ (unclear). In that school.

He said ‘Are you afraid? Why are you running away?’

I said ‘Give me 10 minutes time. I will not run away anywhere. I was born and brought up at that village, would I run anywhere?’ I told them, and I wrote a letter and they spoke.

They spoke badly also. I did not worry about it.

**[06:30]**

I said ‘Have you finished talking? Can I talk? Do you know why I spoke to that teacher. A kid from our village had gone and joined a University. He had gone to study. Whose pride is it? Firstly, it is pride for the teacher. Only secondly, it is a pride for the village. ’ Is it not?

I said ‘That was what I was talking to the teacher.’ If a student’s strength reduces, they would remove a teacher. Would they remove or not?

**Interviewer:** They would.

**[07:00]**

**Interviewee:** If they lose a good teacher, can they again get that same teacher? I told them that. From ’97 till 2010 – I was maintaining that 410 students. They would be automatically going from 5th grade to 6th grade. Is it not? I maintained that strength and saved that teacher.

**[07:30]**

I took so much efforts, and to make it as a high school, I collected about 1 lakh rupees from the village, and paid it to the education department. They said – ‘why are you wasting this money? Why don’t you buy something or do something for the intellectual development for the kids?’ But no one heard it. Because of our personal efforts, we got a round table where 6 students could sit and study – in that 3 students will study well, and 3 students will be average.

**[08:00]**

Andthose 3 kids will be the teacher for these 3 kids. We did like this and it took a lot of efforts to take them from 3 to 5. To make them study. Namakkal only used to be number 1. We brought our village school to number 2. If you ask why – at Namakkal, the headmaster covered the village people and said – ‘if you give things like this, I can bring good education to them.’

**[08:30]**

Onecomputer center, (unclear), CD, speaking through mike, the kids could talk over the mike (unclear). In the same method; we did not see them – we ourselves got the head master together and did all that. At the end, they removed me from the power.

**[09:00]**

I did not worry about it. Even then, the headmaster said ‘only till you have power, you have respect. Do not go inside when you do not have any power. They will dishonor you. All the politicians will get together and do that.’

So, 2010 was the last time I went to that school. Now it is 2023 – it has been 13 years.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Interviewee:** Tell me.

**Interviewer:** So, you were born and brought up in this village.

**Interviewee:** This village only.

**[09:30]**

**Interviewer:** So, for 69 years, you have been living here.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** How was this village like when you were a child?

**Interviewee:** It was good. I mean – you could play anywhere, and you could go anywhere. One can play any game anywhere. Now, no game can be played within the village. Because it used to be empty here. Now everything has become buildings.

**Interviewer:** Has become buildings.

**Interviewee:** Ponds, public toilets, everything has become buildings. You cannot see ponds and small lakes here.

**Interviewer:** One cannot see.

**[10:00]**

**Interviewee:** You can see them only at the countryside now.

**Interviewer:** Where were you working when you were younger?

**Interviewee:** From my childhood, there was no work I have not done. I will do any work that you tell me to. If you want to me to pick up cow dung, I would. If you want me to sweep the floor, I would sweep. If you want me to wash the vessels, I would wash them. From a big construction worker (*periya aal)* to a small construction worker (*sithaal)* work I would do.

**[10:30]**

After that, only in 1973, I went to Manali \_\_\_\_ (unclear). For civil construction work. I suffered there for about 6 years. After that, an *Iyer* saved me through his *punniyam* (karma)*.* He only got me the order and everything. After that he gave me lot of advice. The reason I am talking so much now is that *Iyer* only. He said ‘in this world, nothing happens if you do not say *‘Vanakkam’*, you dog (unclear)’.

**[11:00]**

**(unclear)**.

‘Sir, *Vanakkam sir.* Sir, how are you? Sir.*’* If we say like that, he would say – ‘Ah. Ok. Not bad.’ He said – ‘you are with good energy. You are not going to tell wrongly about others, and you are not going to snitch on another person. You take care of your job. Some person might come and go – if you say *Vanakkam* to him, he will not come after that.’

**Interviewer:** Ok. So you worked at a permanent job.

**Interviewee:** Yes. I finished 35 years of service. The company sent me to Japan for training. At the \_\_\_ (unclear), 32 companies attended that. Whatever company – what they did (unclear). Yearly, how much profit was it getting? All that.

**Interviewer:** So, like you – how many people were working at a company? How many families were there back then?

**Interviewee:** If you look at the surroundings, there were about 50 houses.

**[12:00]**

**Interviewer:** Some 50 houses.

**Interviewee:** On this side, they would say – this side is village (*oor),* and that side is colony. In that, there would be some more houses. That too – it is less only. Totally combined, assume that there were about 100 families. If you look at it now, everything has become houses.

**Interviewer:** How did the houses become more? Why did more people start coming here?

**Interviewee:** Firstly, the water was very good.

**[12:30]**

Drinkingwater. There were no problems for that. There was a canal here. After that, rowdyism happened.

**Interviewer:** Rowdyism happened. Why did it happen?

**Interviewee:** Cash. Money. Caste. If you have money, people will come together to you, and then you say ‘hit him.’ They make him addicted to drugs, and they separated everyone.

**[13:00]**

Everything scattered talking about political parties and caste. Only one person rose to a level that whatever he said was followed in the village.

**Interviewer:** One person?

**Interviewee:** One person.

**Interviewer:** Who?

**Interviewee:** If you see, it was Narayanan back then. Now, it is not Narayanan. To counter Narayanan, there are lot of people today. Do you understand, ayya?

Only after vacating some 10 families, Narayanan became a big shot in the village.

**[13:30]**

Only those 10 families made Naryanan a big shot. Like that, everyone were there. In those days, someone who had been educated became the leader. All the cheatings he did – no one knew. If we ask them questions, he would say – ‘*yov.* What do you know? Sit down.’ He would say – ‘He does not know anything, sir. He does not even know how to read or write.’ But they knew how to read, right? Using that, they would cheat.

**[14:00]**

After that, some sense of writing knowledge came – they started questioning. And slowly things started to change.

**Interviewer:** Was he from the village or he came from elsewhere?

**Interviewee:** He came from outside only.

**Interviewer:** How did he come here?

**Interviewee:** His elder brother was with a person who was selling alcohol. Like an informer. He would inform things from here to there, and there to here. After that, as they were doing things together as a partner, some (unclear) for his elder brother.

**[14:30]**

They (that person) hired someone and hacked him (this person). He (this person) hacked them. After that, he (this person) started doing his (that person’s) business. Then he grew. First, he started with the alcohol. After that – do you know how they make big houses vacate? If you give him 10 or 20 lakhs, he will make them vacate. After that, it went for lakhs and crores.

**[15:00]**

He got into that setup inside, and he went in that line of work. In Finance.

**Interviewer:** Finance.

**Interviewee:** Finance. Land agent. In whichever area money would come, he set up his own people in such areas, and changed things. To change himself, he stood for elections at (unclear). He showed his accounts to the Government.

**Interviewer:** Did he stand for MLA here or somewhere outside?

**[15:30]**

**Interviewee:** Nanguneri.

**Interviewer:** Nanguneri, yes.

**Interviewee:** He started making movies. Because, he had to make the money he has to be right, right? Tell me. Like this, everyone. At that time, there was Kovil Pichai, Jayaraj. Firstly, they were the people in the alcohol business. After that, some people in the village. After that, completely he took over.

**[16:00]**

**Interviewer:** So, at that time – distilling alcohol was a big business here.

**Interviewee:** They would distill it outside, bring it here and sell it.

**Interviewer:** Where did they do?

**Interviewee:** The people.. Let’s say you are a big guy, you would say – ‘do you want money. Are you wishing for money?’, and then you would bring them into your business and say ‘you take care of my business.’

**[16:30]**

Leg pain. If I have weakness there, it would cramp.

**Interviewer:** Ok. You went for company work. Was there farming and related works here?

**Interviewee:** There was.

**Interviewer:** What kind of farming was here?

**Interviewee:** Before the ETPS came; before ’62, it was fully farming only here.

**Interviewer:** Fully farming.

**Interviewee:** Till the end, it was farming. Till the ETPS compound is there, right? Fully it was farming.

**[17:00]**

At that time, it rained in the proper season. Now it is not raining properly, right? As it rains in the improper season, the yield gets affected a lot. Today, we would not get things in farming. If you ask why – the seasonal winds are blowing out of season. If the month of *Thai* is born, there would be *Thendral* (light breeze). During the month of *Chiththirai and Vaigaasi,* wind would blow from the west to the east (unclear).

**[17:30]**

After June is born, and during the month of *Chithirai and Vaigaasi –* it would rain very rarely. That rain was called as *Selva Mazhai* (wealth rain) (unclear). Because they would have harvested it earlier, right? As it rains, they would plough the field and keep it. All the lands on this side are rain-fed only.

**Interviewer:** Rain-fed only.

**Interviewee:** Only if it rains, there would be lake irrigation. If not, there would be nothing. All these were rain-fed only.

**Interviewer:** So, here *nanjai* (wetland) lands were less only.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Was there *nanjai* lands here?

**[18:00]**

**Interviewee:** Difficult only. Very few.

**Interviewer:** Everything was *punjai* (dryland) only.

**Interviewee:** Rain-fed only.

**Interviewer:** Rain-fed only. If they planted paddy, they would need water, right? For 3 months.

**Interviewee:** That is the thing. For 3 months they have ponds and small lakes, right? They would use that for irrigation.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Interviewee:** In that rain.. In the month of *Aippasi and Karthigai;* as the month of *Aadi,* it would rain correctly. We would plough it. They say ‘in the month of *Aadi,* search for seeds and plant’ (Tamil phrase: *Aadi pattam thedi vithai).*

**[18:30]**

They would seed a lot. It would rain well. And it would grow well. In the month of *Purattasi* it would be either too dry or too rainy (Tamil phrase: *Purattasi la kaanjaa kaayum, paenjaa paeyum).* They would weed it out. During the month of *Aippasi,* around Deepavali, it would rain. They would stagnate the water in the field and (unclear). In the month of *Karthigai,* if it rains – all the paddy would be like pregnant (Tamil phrase: *Garbaththula irukkum)*. In the month of *Maargazi, (*unclear). In that wetness itself; it is clayey soil, right? In the wetness itself, it would grow.

**[19:00]**

As the water dries out, there is *pachchai paruppu* (green lentils)*,* right? In that wetness itself, it will be sown. In that wetness, it will sprout. The people who harvest – in the month of *Panguni,* they would harvest these lentils.

**Interviewer:** When did these farming practices disappear?

**Interviewee:** They disappeared after ’94.

**Interviewer:** After ’94. Does ’94 represent a particular event?

**Interviewee:** There was no rain then, right?

**Interviewer:** There was no rain. Did ETPS take farmlands?

**Interviewee:** They have taken fully farmlands only. Patta lands only.

**[19:30]**

It was less price back then. One lawyer alone had about 16 acres of land. The places where there are offices now. Where they have built the boiler and all. All these lands on the side belong to different individual people. Someone else had like 2 acres. We had about 80 cents.

**Interviewer:** You had.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** You had 80 cents.

**Interviewee:** Yes. Another (unclear) 80 cents, encroached on porombokke lands and growing crops.

**[20:00]**

I am talking about the land here. At Sadayankuppam, there was about 9 acres. All those were taken by CPCL.

**Interviewer:** Oh, at Sadayankuppam?

**Interviewee:** Yes. They took it for firefighters (unclear). Government took it. The State Government took about 60 acres and it is just lying fallow now. Patta land.

**Interviewer:** By ‘lying fallow’ you mean, they have not done anything with it.

**Interviewee:** They have not done anything.

**Interviewer:** It is just lying there.

**Interviewee:** It is just lying there. So, a case has been filed now.

**[20:30]**

**Interviewer:** Have you filed a case?

**Interviewee:** Someone had filed a case. I do not know. Because if the big people go, they would \_\_\_\_ (unclear). For us, they are asking for *vaarisu certificate* (successor certificate), and they say that they will look into it. If they build a factory there, then it would be \_\_\_ (unclear). They have just left it as fallow now. We can ask them to give our lands back. If we go and ask them for compensation, what will they give us? Tell me. If they had built a factory, we could ask for a job for our children.

**[21:00]**

If they go to court and ask for money, will the Government give?

**Interviewer:** So, you came here from Sadayankuppam?

**Interviewee:** I was born and brought up in this village only. For my father it is Chinna-Maathur.

**Interviewer:** Chella-Maathur?

**Interviewee:** Chinna-Maathur. Manali is there, right? Nearby there. For my mother – it is Sadayankuppam. A flood came here in ’42.

**Interviewer:** In 1942.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**[21:30]**

So, at that time – people from there were given lands around WIMCO Nagar and Thiruvottiyur. They got that and made it into a patta land.

**Interviewer:** So, after ’42 floods, many people came here from Sadyankuppam.

**Interviewee:** They came out from there. At the backside of WIMCO Nagar and other places, they gave a bit of money and got the lands.

**Interviewer:** So, your father worked at WIMCO?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So, along with your father many families would have come here from there, right? How many families came then?

**[22:00]**

**Interviewee:** If you look – along with my family; some 9 families came.

**Interviewer:** 9 families. Rest of the people were from here only.

**Interviewee:** Most of the people came from elsewhere only. One or two people might have been here. Rest all came from somewhere else only.

**Interviewer:** They came from elsewhere only.

**Interviewee:** Yes. This is not *poorvigam* (original habitation) for anyone.

**Interviewer:** From where did they come? You came from Sadayankuppam. From where did they rest of them come?

**Interviewee:** People had come here from Mylapore.

**[22:30]**

**Interviewer:** Who are they? Which community do they belong to?

**Interviewee:** Mudaliar. SC. Everyone – to some extent came here from somewhere else only.

**Interviewer:** Came here from somewhere else only. People came here from Mylapore?

**Interviewee:** Yes. They are here.

**Interviewer:** Mylapore. Sadayankuppam. And then?

**Interviewee:** From different places…

**Male voice:** From Melur (unclear)

**[23:00]**

**Interviewee:** (unclear). People who are inside there now. Came from Melur, Valloor (unclear). Do you know where \_\_\_\_ (unclear) came from?

**Male voice:** We do not know. His father is from \_\_\_\_ (unclear) only.

**Interviewer:** Where is Melur?

**Male voice:** Near Minjur.

**Interviewee:** Reddypalayam is there. Valloor is there, right? Opposite to that is Melur. Kattamunthiri (unclear). Minjur.

**[23:30]**

**Interviewer:** So, what used to be forest here – people came and settled here.

**Interviewee:** Little by little.

**Interviewer:** Little by little. Why did they choose this place, *ayya?*

**Interviewee:** On one hand, there is farming. You have a way to survive. Secondly, you have factory nearby. There were job opportunities then. People who got work there, many of them settled at this place. That is the main reason. For people who were involved in farming, they were able to take care of farming. They knew that if they come and settle here, their family would be somewhat wealthy.

**[24:00]**

So, they came here. After that – if you see long back; there was transportation services from Andhra to Pondicherry. In the Cooum River. Is it not?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Interviewee:** There was transportation through boats. As the provinces got separated, Moolakoththiram, Ennore were all quota (unclear). Moolakoththiram was the junction. Is it not? The famous place back then was Moolakoththiram only.

**[24:30]**

**Interviewer:** The place called Moolakadai. Is that the place?

**Interviewee:** Moolakoththiram was near Basin Bridge.

**Interviewer:** Near Basin Bridge. Okay.

**Interviewee:** Cooum goes to Adyar, and then it cuts through that side, right?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Interviewee:** Muttakaadu… They have kept these things there now, right? It cuts along there. If you look at Google, it will tell you.

**Interviewer:** So, they took land for ETPS, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** For that 80 cents, did they give any compensation?

**Interviewee:** They gave.

**[25:00]**

**Interviewer:** Did they give job opportunities?

**Interviewee:** At that time, everyone went in search for their own job opportunities. We were little kids.

**Interviewer:** Did your father go to ETPS?

**Interviewee:** No.

**Interviewer:** Did anyone else from your family get a job at ETPS?

**Interviewee:** No.

**Interviewer:** No one got it.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** They took the land, and only gave money.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** No job opportunities.

**Interviewee:** But people who were knowledgeable, they used their names and joined other kids there. That is what I am saying – if you are a village head…

**[25:30]**

**Interviewer:** How did they do that?

**Interviewee:** There would be a link between the officer and you.

**Interviewer:** From here, people who worked at ETPS – people said that they came from outside.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Do you know where they came from?

**Interviewee:** let’s say – if you are in Madurai…

**Interviewer:** Aaliyar is there, right? Did people come here from Aaliyar?

**Interviewee:** Aaliyar – I do not know. Firstly, mostly Malayalees came. Very few Tamil people.

**[26:00]**

After that, Telugu people. Housekeeping – mostly is Telugu people. Now, Bharath Nagar is there, right? They said that they would not leave from around ETPS.

**Interviewer:** Bharath Nagar. Where is Bharath Nagar?

**Interviewee:** Where the bridge gets down. It is the own land of Kalimbaadi (unclear).

**Interviewer:** Whose?

**Interviewee:** Kalimbaadi thing is there, right? They sieve sand and do this, right? Opposite to Ashok Leyland, right?

**Interviewer:** Kali?

**[26:30]**

**Male voice:** They would sieve the sand there and..

**Interviewer:** Yes, but he said one particular word.

**Interviewee:** Kalimbaadi *Niruvanam* (institution).

**Interviewer:** *Kanima Vala Niruvanam*? (Mineral Wealth Corporation)

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Interviewee:** Is it not? The land on this side and on the other side belongs to them only.

**Interviewer:** Of the *Kanima Vala Niruvanam?*

**Interviewee:** Yes. It belongs to the Government.

**Interviewer:** It belongs to the Government.

**Interviewee:** If you look, (unclear).

**Interviewer:** Ok. That is Bharath Nagar.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** They said that they will not leave from there.

**Interviewee:** They said that they will not leave.

**[27:00]**

**Interviewer:** Whom did you say? They are?

**Interviewee:** The Telugu people. For housekeeping work.

**Interviewer:** So they said that they will not leave from inside there.

**Interviewee:** Yes, there are quarters like buildings there. Inside. At the end, they said that they will not leave.

**Interviewer:** you mean, by the time it was closing down?

**Interviewee:** Not when it was closing down. At the starting point itself.

**Interviewer:** At the starting point itself.

**Interviewee:** There would be a wall here..

**Interviewer:** By quarters, you mean – they made huts?

**Interviewee:** Yes. Like sheds. Like a labour camp, they made sheds here and there.

**[27:30]**

If you see, there would be some 500 families in there.

**Interviewer:** They are here.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Ok, it is that big of a settlement. From where did they come?

**Interviewee:** Mostly they came from Andhra. Malayalees. Some Tamil people. That was it. I had poured milk for them.

**Interviewer:** Why did they all come here?

**Interviewee:** For work only. At ETPS. For working at ETPS, they raised those tents.

**[28:00]**

**Interviewer:** Did they come to build ETPS?

**Interviewee:** Yes. People come to build buildings and finish them, right? They came for that, and then joined there itself. Rest – if you see, some people came from outside. Village support.

**Interviewer:** Village support?

**Interviewee:** Yes. Colony and the village – both gets together, some knowledgeable people will join for work.

**[28:30]**

Leyland used to call a lot for workers. There were not any workers back then. To work. Only after that, people from out of the state came here.

**Interviewer:** So, at Bharat Nagar, many people came here for working at ETPS. Which year did this happen, *thalaivare?*

**Interviewee:** Gandhi Nagar. Gandhi Nagar is there, right? That was ’68.

**Interviewer:** ’68.

**[29:00]**

**Interviewee:** It might be ’62. Before ’64. Because, as they finished the compound.. I think before ’66.

**Interviewer:** Gandhi Nagar?

**Interviewee:** No, as Bharath Nagar was formed. Gandhi Nagar was ’68.

**[29:30]**

**Interviewer:** Who was there at Gandhi Nagar?

**Interviewee:** That was VO. That was VO’s own land. He was Navaneedha Pillai. Ambedkar’s place – he had encroached on that.

**Interviewer:** By Ambedkar’s place, you mean?

**Interviewee:** Thiru Nagar. They have built a tank (unclear), right? Water tank (unclear). ITC Bungalow.

**Male voice:** Last – beyond the Metro.

**Interviewee:** Opposite to that. (unclear). After that, Narayanan (unclear). After that.. (unclear).

**[30:00]**

**Interviewer:** Who?

**Interviewee:** Narayanan.

**Interviewer:** Rajiv Gandhi Nagar is also porombokke land only?

**Interviewee:** Yes, porombokke land. Poombhuhar nagar is there. Kalaignar nagar is there.

**Interviewer:** Where is Poombhuhar Nagar?

**Interviewee:** WIMCO Nagar ground is there, right? Near that is Chinna Ernavoor. Near that, there will be many Nagars.

**Interviewer:** At Ernavoor, from Chinna Ernavoor..

**Interviewee:** This is Periya Ernvoor. Chinna Ernavoor near WIMCO Nagar.

**[30:30]**

**Interviewer:** So, at Periya Ernavoor. How did the Nagars form? Did they convert the porombokke lands?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** How did they change it to real estate? Can you tell about it?

**Interviewee:** That was – they kept VO with them. Some big shots – that was what I was telling, right? Some educated people. Let’s say I have not studied, right? They would say – ‘*yov.* Wait *ya.* What do you know? Shut up.’

**[31:00]**

And they would just make a deal between themselves. People would ask questions saying ‘everything was empty only, right? How are you building houses here?’ And they would say ‘We know everything. You shut up.’ If ten people get together, what would these two people do?

**Interviewer:** They would become silent.

**Interviewee:** They could not do anything, right? So, little by little they did a lot of things.

**Interviewer:** So, you said that – lot of houses have come now, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Do you think it is a good thing? Or how do you see it?

**[31:30]**

**Interviewee:** It is a good thing only. But there is no unity. Is there unity? There are about 11 Nagars here. \_\_\_\_ Nagar (unclear), Kamarajar Nagar, Girija Nagar, Gandhi nagar, Hanilal Nagar, Nethaji Nagar, this side – Ernavoor colony, DU (unclear) colony, Adi Dravidar colony;

**[32:00]**

If you look at this side – Ernavoor village, Erneeswarar temple, (unclear), maakaali amman temple – that is separate.

**Interviewer:** So, they created all these Nagars, right? So did only the real estate people create this or how was this done?

**Interviewee:** On an individual basis, everyone encroached their area a bit.

**[32:30]**

If you are working at Taluk office, and you want Girija Nagar, you would take them into your own hands, they would register each Nagar separately at the register office. (unclear - muffled). So, you cannot go beyond the *Sangam* there, right?

**Interviewer:** What *Sangams* are there?

**Interviewee:** There was Grama Seva Sangam. That was it. That was for the village.

**[33:00]**

For this village, they had 7 village customs (*kattupaadu)* in those days. That was the division.

**Interviewer:** 7-village customs.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Which ones?

**Interviewee:** Kasi Kuppam, Mottu (unclear) Kuppam, Ramanathapuram – Ramanathapuram inside will come in this only (unclear); there is ETPS compound there, right? Till there was Thiruvottiyur, Ernavoor boundary line. If you look at Ernavoor boundary line today, it would be till Jothi Nagar.

**[33:30]**

Is it not? Like this, there was a Ernavoor border line. They were protecting that. These people came. And they took it in their own hands. They would intimidate people saying ‘I will hack you. I will stab you.’ Now, can you go into Annai Sivagami Nagar? If you have to go inside now, you have to go and meet the village head only. Because, if a festival happens – all the 11 streets inside there – they are all living in unity. But there is no unity in this village.

**[34:00]**

That is the thing. People from 11 streets are united. But people inside this village are not united.

**Interviewer:** Why is there no unity?

**Interviewee:** The reason is – on one side they have brought in caste. On another side, they say ‘I have survived in this village by raising a thatched hut (*kottai),* I only know things; what do you know?’

I was the village head for a year. See. Whatever I did not know – (unclear - muffled); Because they too have the voting rights, right?

**[34:40]**

So I would ask them too. I would be fair and center – like a weighing balance. I would not be afraid of anyone. As far as I am concerned, we are all born, and we are not going to die. Is it not? So, they dragged me and they would \_\_\_\_ (unclear). Whoever it is, I would ask them bravely ‘what good things are you going to do to the village? Tell me.’

**[35:00]**

Iwould say ‘I will do whatever you want me to do; but first tell me what good things are you going to do to the village?’ I did not want any money or anything. What basic facilities we needed – water, roads, street lights, people should be healthy..

**Interviewer:** So many Nagars came here, and ETPS came here, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**[35:30]**

**Interviewer:** Do you think that is good or that is harmful? What do you think about it?

**Interviewee:** There was no harm to this village because of that. Manali Pudhunagar. In these two villages, (unclear). The wind blows that way only. It would blow that way, and that way. Only during the rainy season, it blows this way. They say as North Eastern monsoon, right? During that time, the wet wind blows this way. But mostly the wind blows that way.

**[36:00]**

If you look at \_\_\_ (unclear), mostly Manali; and that side – Chinna Sekkadu, Periya Sakkadu, (unclear), on this side (unclear). On this side – during *Maargazhi.* As *Thai* month would be about to come right, only then, the wind blows this way.

**[36:30]**

**Because,** as there is mist – it would get down.

**Interviewer:** You were a leader here. So you spoke about the ground here, right? Why did you think of creating that ground? What efforts did you take for that?

**Interviewee:** If we go outside and play, they would not let us play. There was a land that belonged to the Railways. But they made it into a ditch – by stealing lot of sand from there. (unclear).

**[37:00]**

After that, if you see, we were playing inside ETPS only. One time, they caught the kids and took them. They took them and kept them inside. I went and asked them – ‘why did you catch them, sir?’

They said – ‘You are playing here, that is fine. What the thieves do is – they just watch till you are playing. After you leave, they jump over the fence and come inside. But if you do not play, whoever comes in and goes, we would be alert, right?’

**[37:30]**

I told him – ‘Give me some time. I will look for place elsewhere.’ For some time, we were playing like that. One person came and said ‘this is patta land. You should not play here.’ So I went and inquired ‘is that a porombokke land or patta land?’

They said ‘there is no patta here. It is only canal porombokke land’.

**[38:00]**

At that time, we were doing social service. We went and told them ‘Sir, there is a canal porombokke land there. We need it for playground’ So, Exnora sports park. I still have it (unclear). If they change the name to Ernavoor Sports Park, will they lower themselves? Then, the village name also comes into that. Is it not? They named it as Ambedkar Sports Park. Then, it becomes like – it belongs to one particular community. Then they can make it like they would not allow outsiders to play there. Like that, little by little, I came out.

**[38:30]**

What is this? We created it, but because of us – it should not be destroyed, right?

**Interviewer:** So, as the sports park was created, what good things have happened here?

**Interviewee:** Today, lot of small kids play right? People who go walking on roads now go walking there.

**[39:00]**

To go further, if the village people are good, now the Government streamlines lot of places. If we give a letter. Like a parking area. Have you gone and seen behind that?

**Interviewer:** Yes, I have seen.

**Interviewee:** They have built houses there now. That is – it is based on caste motive only. And I was born a Mudaliar. If I was a SC, I would have asked them questions. Now they would just say ‘Mudaliar; why are you coming to my area and asking me questions?’

**[39:30]**

So, if one person gives a complaint. I can still behave well with you and make you vacate it. Then one has to be like Hitler? Is it not? So, we don’t want that. Why do that within the village? Is it not? They sell their own lands, and they come here and build the houses here, and no one asks them anything.

**Interviewer:** Who?

**Interviewee:** There are only about 5 people there. They encroach a part of the land, and then they sell it to someone else.

**[40:00]**

If we ask them, he would say – ‘I gave it to them for free.’ He would talk as if he gave his own land to the other person for free. If they had not built houses there, and had they built a high school in that lane – it would have become a big, good ground by now. (unclear). After 4 PM, you can go and play inside, right? Tell me, sir. You can go for exams and everything. If they (unclear).

**[40:30]**

**Interviewer:** So, you said they gave their land to others, right? Are they people from outside?

**Interviewee:** All people came from outside and settled here. They have aged now. Their fathers and mothers are all gone. Now, new generation has come. What will happen when the new generation comes? They will say ‘What do you know?’

**Interviewer:** They will say it like that?

**Interviewee:** That is what they are saying.

**[41:00]**

**Interviewer:** So, in this place – many people keep coming. They came and settled here. During your times, people came for farming. And then, they came for industrial opportunities. Is it just like that, or are people going outside from here? How is the industrial and job situation now?

**Interviewee:** Now, when it comes to business, everyone had just gone back to their native place.

**Interviewer:** They have gone back to their native place.

**[41:30]**

**Interviewee:** After retiring, if this area does not suit them. They will sell their house and just leave. It is just changing hands. They say in Bhagavad Gita right? – ‘What have you brought here, and what are you going to leave with? Everything is with me (unclear)’. Is it not?

**Interviewer:** Yes. So, it kept changing hands.

**Interviewee:** ‘It is yours today. Tomorrow, it is someone else’s’

**Interviewer:** So, it is not permanent. It just keeps changing.

**[42:00]**

**Interviewee:** The climate has changed. Very few people are left here. If not for this generation, the next generation – it will be empty.

**Interviewer:** Why are people leaving?

**Interviewee:** So, we are 4 people living. I have 5 sons. Even if one person sells it, the next person who comes, (unclear).. they will fight, right? So, they would think ‘why don’t we just sell this and leave somewhere else? We do not want any problems.’

**[42:30]**

That is what you will think, right? Tell me.

**Interviewer:** So, as family becomes bigger – they sell and leave. And as you said – after jobs retirement too…

**Interviewee:** People who cannot find a groom for their daughters also, they just sell and leave.

**Interviewer:** People who came for work – after work..

**Interviewee:** You had tea?

**Interviewer:** I had. So, after work they leave. So, people keep coming and going; coming and going.

**[43:00]**

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So, you opened that ground, right? What sports did you start with?

**Interviewee:** Football sports park – we named it. We named it first Exnora sports park. We were playing football only. After that, cricket got in here. They played cricket. Football (unclear). Everyone is same caste people only.

**[43:30]**

They did not have this thought that they should let go of certain things for each other. One thinks ‘You are playing throughout the week. I am playing only once a week.’ They had a motive like that. No one had a thought to properly learn any particular sport. Will a guru be able to teach you everything?

**Interviewer:** When you started, did you bring any coaches?

**[44:00]**

**Interviewee:** There was no coach. On my own, I was teaching them. If I hit a shot, it will be a brilliant shot. I was eating and running. I was eating and running. I was teaching them.

**Interviewer:** How many people were in your team?

**Interviewee:** At that time, there were 16-15 people. Around 20 people. We would have 3 teams.

**Interviewer:** Everyone would be mixed?

**Interviewee:** Everyone would be mixed. All caste people. Only now, they have brought caste into it.

**[44:30]**

**Interviewer:** This person is here, right? If I think of him as SC – I will call him inside and ask him to sit. In some houses, they will not let him inside. Do you know? I do not look at caste or religion. Everyone should be good. I should teach something that I know. I taught (unclear), and they caught him and left.

**[45:00]**

**Back the**n, the kids were doing something inside (unclear). I said ‘Sir, they are not like such people.’

They said ‘you do not know anything. Shut up.’ Everyone was readying (unclear).

I said ‘Sir, I teach how a human should be healthy. I teach them how they should go in a good path. If he goes outside, he will drink, he will smoke, he will do everything. In this, I am teaching him (unclear).’

**[45:30]**

Even though I was there, at the end, he joined another camp. He got into rowdyism. He showed knife to them, and.. He is tall, right? Like a police. So, he said ‘I am a police. Give me that.’ After that, (unclear). They would come at night and steal everything, right? (unclear – muffled).

**[46:00]**

**Interviewer:** *Ayya,* what things have you done for the village unity?

**Interviewee:** I have conducted sports events. At first, \_\_\_\_\_ (unclear). He was conducting, but then he left it. After that, people would not talk much with each other (unclear). If we conduct sports, then through that they would be talking with each other, right? They would see each other somehow, right? They would join together somehow, right?

**[46:30]**

**In that** spirit.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So, as you have seen – have your village turned into a good village? What efforts have you taken for that change? What do you think a good village should be? A good city.

**Interviewee:** If you consider a good city, two people should speak to each other with open hearts. Whichever caste you belong to. You should not have ego.

**[47:00]**

**‘What are** we doing to our village? What do we do not have?’ – like that, we should make a list first. ‘If we do this, would people benefit out of it?’ ‘Who should we approach to get this done?’ like that. Every man has his own talents. I believe that. That was how I grew up. I learned each thing from each person. Till now \_\_\_\_\_ (unclear). We haven’t studied much, but we can write. We can do everything.

**[47:30]**

**We should** ask ‘if I go to him, what will I get?’ We should take the good things alone and leave out the bad things. If you get angry, you should not come to public service.

**Interviewer:** Ok. How did you go to Exnora?

**Interviewee:** For Exnora.. It was like they said – ‘You simply come and stand’, and then they let it go (unclear).

**[48:00]**

**That I wo**uld do the rest of the work. Because I was the head – like that. ‘Do this. Do that.’ (context unclear). Like that, even if we do something small, even if we buy some tea – we would pool together some money, and we would have it together. Whatever funds come our way, we have a treasurer (*porulaalar)* for that. We would say we do not have anything. Only when they show \_\_\_ (unclear) card, we will say that we have it.

If they say ‘Hey, give me 10 rupees’, we would say ‘I do not have it *pa,* if you have it, give it.’

**[48:30]**

**They woul**d continue saying ‘Give me. Give me.’ We would say ‘I am telling you that I do not have it, right?’ At the end he would say ‘\_\_\_\_\_\_’ (unclear). Everyone has their talents. Today’s generation would not understand that. It won’t come.

**[49:00]**

**Interviewer:** With respect to the temple here, what I have heard about it is – earlier, they called the people who went to work at Ashok Leyland, and they were saying that if they paid money to the village temple, they would get some land. So, things like that..

**Interviewee:** People who were working at Ashok Leyland (unclear).

**Interviewer:** No, I mean – the temple lands are there, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So, if they paid money to temple, they could get a house plot for that – they were telling like that. In the 60s and 70s. Did anything like that happen?

**Interviewee:** No such thing happened.

**[49:30]**

**Each pers**on encroached on their own and sold it themselves.

**Interviewer:** Each person encroached on their own and sold it.

**Interviewee:** Yes. People in the village, anyone, would go and plant a stick on a piece of land and say ‘this is mine.’ My younger brother also (unclear). They said that we have to give 650 rupees. I gave them saying that I have only 600 rupees. The land that they showed us was \_\_\_\_ (unclear). They had encroached it separately. They sold it together and (unclear).

**[50:00]**

**I told th**em – all these things.. (unclear). They did not listen to me. You can ask anyone in this village. What people did I know (unclear). So they do not talk to me.

**Interviewer:** They do not talk. So, people encroached on the porombokke land, and sold them to people who came from outside. So, how did they change the porombokke land to patta land?

**Interviewee:** So, they changed Natham porombokke to patta land.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so they changed Natham porombokke to patta land.

**[50:30]**

**Interviewee:** This was a pond (*kuttai).* So, for this pond – it is 20.

**Interviewer:** What is it?

**Interviewee:** Bar 20.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Bar 20.

**Interviewee:** For that pond it is bar 10. Like this, how they name it in Government – only few people know this. Not everyone knows. So just like that they would say ‘I have registered it.’ Each person has to register for themselves. At the register’s office. Is it not? So if they bring that \_\_\_ (unclear), everyone would know that this is a pond, and this is a lake, right?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**[51:00]**

**Interviewee:** Is it not? They would be demolishing all that earlier, right?

**Interviewer:** Yes, correct. So, they encroached it individually, and as outside people came in here – they sold it and..

**Interviewee:** For them – ‘okay, we have some place to stay here, right?’ Soul (*aathma)* only, right? Only in the end, when it goes..

**Interviewer:** So, you were telling earlier about rowdyism, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** He came without any way. Then, he became a rowdy.

**[51:30]**

**Interviewee:** If there are 100 people behind you, you will be a *dada* (rowdy) only, right?

**Interviewer:** How did so many people get behind him?

**Interviewee:** Everything was money. As he got more money, automatically people would come, right?

**Interviewer:** So, after that, has rowdyism reduced now?

**Interviewee:** Now, it has raised its head so much inside. Not him. There are these small kids here, right? Without any kind of education – one plan that *Kalaignar* brought in (unclear). It is called \_\_\_\_ (unclear) system. After that, the teacher should not hit the students.

**[52:00]**

**They kept** it as Mother. Father. Teacher. (*Madha. Pidha. Guru.).* Why did they arrange it like that in those times? The one who does not get tempered at home, maybe he would go to a teacher and get tempered. In those days, he was given the right to hit them. Now, they have reduced that right, right? Tell me. Someone might make mistakes. Does not mean that everyone makes mistakes. Is it not? If I do not like someone, I can show thousands of excuses. One must interrogate fully. What do you say, sir?

**[52:30]**

**Some peopl**e would not like a lot of people at school. They would say - ‘you have left your kid at school, right? Do you want your kid to study or not? If you do not want, take him and go.’ I am not telling ‘no’ to that. ‘If you do not like one school, take him and join him in another school. In this school, you should be like this only. This is not Government school. This is a convent. Do you understand? We have a convent here. You should be like this during prayer. You should play the instrument like this during prayer time. After prayer time, you should go to the class.’

**[53:00]**

**‘Each grou**p should correctly go to each class’. At first was wood. After that, carpet (*paai).* After that, tables and chairs come.

**Interviewer:** Today that ground is there, right? The ground that you created. Under whose control it is in now? Who is taking care of it?

**[53:30]**

**Interviewee:** In that, there is taking care. If we let it, they would sell it as plots. At first, there was a village head called Baskaran. It was like ‘he was everything here.’ But actually, he did not know anything. He belongs to those people (unclear), and they said they have proper patta documents.

**[54:00]**

**What I di**d was - \_\_\_ (unclear). I said ‘*Ayya,* someone is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (unclear) to your land. I will go and bring them.’ ‘Sir, he has proper documents for this land. Please inquire about it and tell, sir.’ I said like that, and I just stood there folding my hands.

He would say ‘What, they say that you have patta for this. Did you see? For whose land who is having patta? If I put you in prison, you would not come out. Patta is there, it seems. What – everyone is cheating around here.’

**[54:30]**

**He went a**way just after that, and he did not come back.

**Interviewer:** So, to encroach the ground as well – there were lot of efforts. So, one has to keep maintaining it.

**Interviewee:** I was maintaining it. After that.. Now – little by little, and little by little – there are some encroachments coming in. In few days, it might decrease in size too. Or it might not exist at all. They would start fighting amongst themselves. Do you understand?

**[55:00]**

**What I am** saying is – the common public should come. A man should have good discipline. The kids. Someone who is addicted to drugs – if you buy him drinks, then he would talk for you. Tomorrow, if someone else buys him drinks, he would talk for him.

**Interviewer:** So, within the village – there used to be farmlands. After that, industries came.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** After that, many people came here.

**Interviewee:** Everything has become buildings. What used to be a thatched roof hut has become buildings now (Tamil phrase: *Ola kottai’ya irunthathu ippo building ah maariduchu). I*

**[55:30]**

**Interviewer:** So, when you see all this – do you feel like these are all developments.

**Interviewee:** There has been some development for sure. But, basic facilities are not here.

**Interviewer:** Basic facilities are not here. What kind of basic facilities are not here?

**Interviewee:** They built a canal (*kaavaai)*. I think it is ’97. Storm Water Drainage Board (*Mazhai neer vadikaal vaariyam)* built it. The Government built it. In the end, the same Government said – let the sewage flow through that. They have let everything in that.

**[56:00]**

**They have** taken away Storm Water Drainage Board, they demolished it and rebuilt it. So, in this rule if they build it, the person who comes in the next rule will demolish it again and rebuild it again. Fort (Kottai – unclear). To build it newly, they would come and get deposit from you. Once we give deposit, he would say that he built it here and he built it there and all. Again, he would make them stand here and there (unclear), and make it piece by piece. There would be frequent powercuts. So, how can I think that this is development? Tell me.

**Interviewer:** Ok. How do you want your village to be like tomorrow?

**[56:30]**

**Interviewee:** If you ask my opinion, we need a standard solution. If there is electric department, it should be like this only. Whoever comes for whichever fault – there should be a system in place, and that should be made safe. There should be no damages. They should not go inside there, and keep their hands inside there. Similarly, if you have a canal – the canal should run that side.

**[57:00]**

**If they di**g it up, and dredge it, it should go that way. Roads should be roads. No one should come and dig a hole in the middle of the road. The people who do the work with the permission should make sure that the roads are without any potholes and it is uniform. Will they do?

**Interviewer:** I am asking. Your expectations are – if there is good infrastructure (*Ul-kattamaippu),* it will be good.

**Interviewee:** It will be good. That is my opinion.

**[57:30]**

**Similarly**, what is a need for a village? A library. Is it not? A public place. For four people. If you take this ground, if we improve the lights, many people would come. If we say that – after this time people can come, and after this particular time, people should go – then they will go at that particular time.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So, there is Annai Sivagami Nagar, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So, people would come from there to here, and there would be problems here? In those days.

**[58:00]**

**Interviewee:** Who created that problem? You only. They only created it. You went and acquainted yourself with them, and grew the fights. Who did? You did. He does not come inside on his own accord. He would be afraid to come on his own. If there is unity amongst us..

**Interviewer:** They say that that area has developed a lot now.

**Interviewee:** Yes. I am saying that too. There is about 11 streets.

**[58:30]**

**That was** Annai Sivagami Nagar. Do you understand, *ayya?* A festival. What do they not have? A social gathering hall (*Samuthaaya koodam).* Temple. Sports park. School facilities. Market. They have everything inside. You tell me. It came up around 1974 or 1975. You say that this is the original habitation; but there is a market here, which is in a dilapidated state.

**[59:00]**

**Someone g**oes and encroaches that too. That is all about this village people. They would say ‘You give me *maamul* (bribe)’ Do you not see other people in the village as humans? He would think that he is the big guy. Because, once he takes a stick – everyone gets afraid of him. So, as long as there are cowards – how will it be?

**Interviewer:** So, they had a unity amongst them. Using that, they have accomplished it.

**[59:30]**

**Interviewee:** They have accomplished it. Unity is the reason (*Ottrumai thaan kaaranam).* If there is unity amongst us, we can accomplish anything.

**Interviewer:** Here, there is no unity.

**Interviewee:** There is no unity here. Completely no. Zero.

**Interviewer:** By unity..

**Interviewee:** Do not think badly that I am saying like this. He would say ‘he is a Parayar. He is a Mudaliar’ I am telling you frankly. We went and asked them (unclear), they scolded me very badly. I say ‘scold and go.’ If you see in those days, it would be politics (unclear). These days, they would just take the money from your pockets.

**[01:00:00]**

**If we giv**e complaint at the police station, he would get money from you, and he would get money from him as well. (unclear). If he scolds, we just say ‘if you are scolding me, just scold’, and we just have to move on. Tell me. If we ask questions against them, there would be problems. The kid would say ‘Why *pa,* don’t you have any other work?’ If he asks, let him ask – I cannot go like that (unclear).

Sir, if you see the reason why this village became bad – if a person comes to do something good, they should let him.

**[01:00:30]**

**Interviewer:** They should let him.

**Interviewee:** From \_\_\_ (unclear), they sent officers to Ernavoor to see how Exnora was doing things here. They came and interviewed me. I took them around and showed them everything. I showed them the things here. They shook my hand. I took them to a hotel and bought them food (unclear). They patiently talked at our office.

**[01:01:00]**

**\_\_\_ (uncl**ear). 36 people were there united. That unity was broken.

**Interviewer:** Was broken?

**Interviewee:** All caste people are in that. It is not like – only one caste members are there. They could not move it. No one could get in. (*Asaikkamudiyathu. Yaaralum ulla nuzhaya mudiyathu.)* I would ask questions. Educated. Un-educated. Everyone. By writing letters, I will manage people who they had to be (unclear).

‘*Anna,* they have done like this.’

‘You have done it, no. If they ask, say that you have not done it.’

They would say it like that. They would not come to me.

**[01:01:30]**

**Do you un**derstand, *ayya? ‘*I \_\_\_\_ (unclear). You \_\_\_\_ (unclear). Tell me. Hey would you do this? Get something from me. Tell me.’

**Interviewer:** So, as there was no unity here – according to you, this village has not grown like Annai Sivagami Nagar.

**Interviewee:** It has not grown.

**[01:02:00]**

**If you se**e in everything. If you see, everyone is of different types. But, when it comes to a problem…

**Interviewer:** They all come together.

**Interviewee:** At that time, \_\_\_\_ (unclear).

**Interviewer:** So at that time..

**Interviewee:** The politician came, right? He would need votes, right? So to get into the village, he would say ‘tell them that I would make this happen.’ Like that, they would \_\_\_\_ (unclear). Everything would be done like that, right?

**[01:02:30]**

**They are** not spending. They would keep their hands on other people’s heads and complete their work. That is their skill (*saamarthiyam).* Only if there is unity, they could accomplish all that. If there is no unity at any place, nothing would be possible *ayya.* There would be someone. \_\_\_\_ (unclear). That one person alone cannot accomplish anything – where there are 50 people. If 49 people are together, then that person would be said ‘go away.’

**[01:03:00]**

**Interviewer:** So, there is business growth (*thozhil valarchi)* here, right? Do you think that the business growth has brought in development here?

**Interviewee:** If you look at business growth.. If you look at business here, there is no business without any competition.

**Interviewer:** I do not mean business growth (*thozhil valarchi),* I mean industrial growth (*thozhirchaalai valarchi).* There has been lot of industries around here, right? Due to that – has there been any development here?

**Interviewee:** All the development that it brings.. That is what I am telling.. All that is taken by the Nagars inside.

**[01:03:30]**

**All the d**evelopments – the people in those areas get into those companies and make use of that. From this area, on an individual basis only \_\_\_ (unclear). They get it like that individually and make use of it for themselves. But they do not use it for the village.

**Interviewer:** So, industrial..

**Interviewee:** If you take Girija Nagar, they are working at Leyland, right? They would take care of Girija Nagar only, not take care of the village.

**[01:04:00]**

**Interviewer:** So, people from Girija Nagar used to work at Leyland.

**Interviewee:** They used to be there. If you look now, there would be a social gathering hall, there would be a temple; the people who are there, who are educated and are at a good status, they know things. One person was working at the Secretariat. One is a lawyer. In such a place, only 2-3 streets get together and say ‘we are the entire village here.’

**[01:04:30]**

**Interviewer:** Ok, so people from Girija Nagar used to be with Ashok Leyland.

**Interviewee:** They were.

**Interviewer:** Today, they have changed.

**Interviewee:** They have changed.

**Interviewer:** You also told about other Nagars right? Girija Nagar and Bharath Nagar – people who speak Telugu are there.

**Interviewee:** That is on the other side of the bridge. I am talking about places inside Ernavoor.

**Interviewer:** Okay, on the other side of the bridge.

**Interviewee:** Yes. On this side of the bridge.

**Interviewer:** So, now this way – this side, there is Periya Ernavoor.

**Interviewee:** So, as I said that in the very beginning. On this side of the bridge, it would go under Ennore’s control. On that side of the bridge, it would go to the \_\_\_\_\_\_ (unclear) control. I told them like that. No one believed me.

**[01:05:00]**

**If you loo**k at it from a social service person’s point of view, one should ask – ‘what are they talking? What are the things going to come in the future? How should we be?’ But no one will listen.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So, you said Girija Nagar. And then Brindavan Nagar.

**Interviewee:** Brindavan Nagar.

**Interviewer:** People from Kerala came there, as you said.

**Interviewee:** If you see there as well – there would be Leyland employees. In that – from PF there would be \_\_\_\_ (unclear), do you know?

**[01:05:30]**

**From thos**e funds, they would give – Leyland. What they did was – they built a library. From Ashok Leyland.

**Interviewer:** At Brindavan Nagar.

**Interviewee:** The same – people who worked there from Ernavoor – what they did was – they did not do anything.

**Interviewer:** They did not do anything.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So, people who came from outside – they developed themselves.

**Interviewee:** They developed.

**Interviewer:** People from here – who worked from here…

**Interviewee:** People who worked from here – they did not do anything at all.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**[01:06:00]**

**Interviewee:** What have they done as being part of the administration?

**Interviewer:** So what did the Grama Seva Sangam do?

**Interviewee:** Nothing. What they would do is – the month of *Aadi* is coming, right? They would conduct a festival during the month of *Aadi.*

**Interviewer:** That is it.

**Interviewee:** The month of *Purattasi* comes, right? They would conduct a festival for the Perumal temple. In that, they would think – ‘how much can we get, and how much can we eat?’ For 11 years, my mother’s elder brother’s son – (unclear), they stood against my brother. For 11 years, they are the Head now.

**[01:06:30]**

**Most peop**le in the village would not know about me. Mostly, I would not come outside. I would not go outside. That \_\_\_\_ (unclear) is there, right? I would go there, sit down, I would go to play, come back home, eat, sleep. That was how it was. My life was like that only – happy. Till the age of 47. In this 27 years, if you see, my experience is making me talk like this.

**Interviewer:** So by 27 years, you mean – since you joined Exnora.

**Interviewee:** No. Since I started thinking a little bit about the problems.

**[01:07:00]**

**Interviewer:** So in that 27 years, why did you start thinking about the problems?

**Interviewee:** There were some problems – with family. Only at that time, I sat down and started thinking. Certain things I decided to avoid. Little by little. Little by little. For me, \_\_\_ (unclear), even if there was a small function, I would say ‘yeah, you conduct it, *pa.’* I kept things within such planning.

**[01:07:30]**

**My two you**nger brothers are drivers. They have their own vehicles. They would have left it at (unclear). They almost sold the property for the younger sister’s marriage. I got a small loan from my father-in-law. They paid interest for that and gave it back. The place we are staying is kuttai-porombokke. If 5 feet of water comes (unclear). I left it, and said – ‘after death \_\_\_\_ (voice unclear)’.

**[01:08:00]**

**But what t**hey said was - they would be there. Bring the document and (unclear for a minute). Had to give it and leave (unclear). I did not know that the other one was kuttai porombokke. (unclear).

**[01:08:30]**

**In a fami**ly too, till there is unity – it would be a family. Once something starts to fall apart, that family would be gone. That original property of the family – someone else will get that. Would it go or not?

**Interviewer:** It would go. So, you are saying that a house is not permanent. It keeps changing.

**Interviewee:** It won’t keep changing. It will be there till your generation. For the next generation, it will change.

**Interviewer:** It will change.

**[01:09:00]**

**Interviewee:** The person who wants to protect it (*katti kaakkanum)* would have mental strength for that. After you are gone, no one will have that strength.

**Interviewer:** They will not have that strength.

**Interviewee:** They will say ‘he had gone somewhere. Who is he?’

**Interviewer:** So, this is human tendency.

**Interviewee:** It will change. Will it change or not change?

**Interviewer:** It will change.

**Interviewee:** That is my opinion. Someone else might say something else.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**[01:09:30]**

**Interviewee:** Till I am here, it will be here. If you see the property on that side, if it is under my name – yes, it is (unclear). What they say even now is – they have stopped it at the police station. They have stopped it at the village administration level. Now, the people who are there continue to be there. I have to go and ask them to vacate. Or I have to give them notice to the court. If they give notice on my name, my name will only come up. Is it not? If I register it (unclear), can you start a case against me? Tell me, *ayya.*

**[01:10:00]**

**As I aske**d my friend (unclear), they said ‘they have made a mistake in registering it for you.’

I said – ‘is it? Did not know it till now.’

So, I told them to bring (unclear), and I will sign it and give. They say ‘cheated. Cheated.’ I am telling frankly to you now. Even now, if they split it between the three of them. Three of them for four parts – in that, one part for me. They could do that. They could pay that and we can measure the land (unclear).

**[01:10:30]**

**Which one** - who for. For them, we can (unclear – wind). Is it not?

**Interviewer:** Correct only.

**Interviewee:** If there is anything wrong in this, please tell me.

**Interviewer:** Nothing wrong in that.

**Interviewee:** My land. I am staying in my land. I am not going to their land.

**Interviewer:** Ok. As far as you know – there is village area and the colony area, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Has the colony area developed? How is it?

**[01:11:00]**

**Interviewee:** That is.. If you look at how it is called as a ‘colony’, it is like (unclear). But now, their encroachments has increased a lot. If you ask why – for anything, they would go give a complaint saying that ‘he had called me as a Parayan’. By telling the caste name. Therefore, people who are there are in a situation to just vacate there.

**Interviewer:** So, the Adi Dravidar folks who lived there was..

**Interviewee:** So that is canal porombokke.

**[01:11:30]**

**Interviewer:** So that was canal porombokke?

**Interviewee:** Actually, the term ‘Adi Dravidar’ will fit only the Irulars here, right? It will fit them only. It will not fit the SC. They call the SC as ‘Adi Dravidar’. When they write in the certificates, the Government does not know. Is it not, *ayya?*

**Interviewer:** So, their area – they have sold and some are encroached. But has that area developed?

**[01:12:00]**

**Interviewee:** That area has developed little by little now. The road that was nothing became a tar road. They have installed street lights. Every house has ration cards. They are there in this situation. If they are vacated, they would be given apartments only. They have gone to that range. You have to see it as a cat on the wall. We do not know if it will jump this side or that side.

**[01:12:30]**

**Because w**e should not hurt their hearts, right? If you are in a rented house, just think that the rent is free now. Till you are there, it is your land. I can say it like that. That is it. For that, I should not say that this land would not stand. It would go away. I should not hurt them like that. As far as I am concerned. But if you are all united, then a land would be shown for you.

**[01:13:00]**

**Will they** show or not show?

**Interviewer:** They will show.

**Interviewee:** If you see – there would be more than 200 houses there.

**Interviewer:** More than 200 houses.

**Interviewee:** Is it not? Definitely, the Government would show them a way. That is my opinion. I can only say that. Other than that, I should not say ‘you won’t have this land here.’ But they are cheating them. If they become alert (ushaar), they will be over. Because, they have the strength right?

**[01:13:30]**

**Only till** they (those people) are there, they (these people) will have strength. If they (those people) go away separately, they (these people) will not strength among themselves.

**Interviewer:** Among who?

**Interviewee:** People who are within the Ernavoor colony, right? For them.

**Interviewer:** Because of who – they will not have the strength?

**Interviewee:** Adi Dravidars. Sir, here, all caste members are here.

**[01:14:00]**

**Some cast**es.. That is – on this side, Mudaliars; and on that side – SC. This is the problem now. They (those people) will not grow. These people will also not grow.

**Interviewer:** If there is no caste, then both will grow.

**Interviewee:** People who come from outside, right? If things are left to them, it will grow.

**Interviewer:** It will grow.

**Interviewee:** Things will grow. (unclear). What more do you need? For them, if they just keep a stone there, they think it is a big thing.

**[01:14:30]**

**How long** do you think that stone will be there? Tell me.

**Interviewer:** For some days. Ok. According to you, a good city should have all basic facilities.

**Interviewee:** Should have all basic facilities.

**Interviewer:** Only then it is a good city.

**Interviewee:** If you take Manali, it is with the same SC only.

**[01:15:00]**

**They got** \_\_\_\_ (unclear) from CPCL, and they built a stadium. It would be shown as CPCL sponsored. Do you understand? For the people who built it – they get a name. And for the village too..

**Interviewer:** They get it.

**Interviewee:** They get it. They got the panchayat board president. They got some funds, and built a hall (*chathram)* inside the village. Thiruvalluvar chathram.

**Interviewer:** Thiruvalluvar chathram.

**[01:15:30]**

**Interviewee:** They have a Lakshmi temple there. On this side is Ellaramman (unclear) temple, and on the other side is Lakshmi temple. They built stores and rented it out so that the village administration will get some money from it. They have a jeep (unclear). They have a library. The same caste that is here, right? The same people only accomplished that right?

**[01:16:00]**

**Interviewer:** So, what you are trying to say is – if people belonging to the same community are there, they develop.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** If there are people from different communities, there is no unity for them, and they cannot do things.

**Interviewee:** Yes, that is the truth.

**Interviewer:** So, you said you are a social reformer (*samooga seerthiruththa vaathi).*

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Have you been able to bring it to your own community? Did you try?

**Interviewee:** They see prestige. They say – ‘Mudaliars should be like this, separate.’

**[01:16:30]**

**I told th**em – ‘Mudaliars are staying here. As a Mudaliar, what good have you done to this village? There is nothing. Only if everyone gets together, the village can accomplish things. For drinking water too, only if everyone gets together, we can get it. If they have drinking water with them, and they say that we should not get it, can we go get it?’ You tell me. It should be common. Only if the consensus comes that ‘it is common for everyone’, only then things will change

**[01:17:00]**

**Till then** things won’t change.

**Interviewer:** So, you are saying that common things should exist.

**Interviewee:** Generally. Whatever a human says – one should listen with all his ears. After listening, if there are any damages, one should ask him questions. There should be a proper response for that. That is administration.

**[01:17:30]**

**Is it not**, *ayya?* There should not be any damages to anyone. The village should also go in a good path. Now there is a maternal hospital here – you came here, right (unclear)? Near that *amma unavagam*. That *amma unavagam* was a big well. It could give water to the whole area; a motor room was also there. There was an overhead tank, and we maintained it. If it was good, it was good; if not, I would ask questions.

**[01:18:00]**

**Today, one** person says that is his. Everyone is just sitting only, right? Why? So, you are afraid of that one person, right? If everyone comes up like that, what will happen? Will the village get developed? Tell me, *ayya?*

**Interviewer:** So, common things should be common for all. If not, people should ask questions.

**Interviewee:** They should ask questions.

**[01:18:30]**

**No one is** asking.

**Interviewer:** If questions are not asked, then it will not be a good city.

**Interviewee:** It will not be. If someone is encroaching a common land, everyone should get together and ask questions, right? Only if that command land is there, we can do something with the funds that the Government gives. For our own growth. If we could determine how the next generation should be – now itself; then the next generation would be at least slightly better, right? Everyone will be good. Tell me, *ayya.*

**[01:19:00]**

**Interviewer:** Definitely.

**Interviewee:** According to me, if you are born in this world without English knowledge, then it is a waste. I am telling including me as well. Because, I am an uneducated man. However, my experience has shown me which is good, and which is bad. Theory is different. Practical is different. Is it not, *ayya?* I have the practical knowledge. You have theoretical knowledge. If both gets together, what happens? No one can do anything. This is my opinion.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**[01:19:30]**

**Interviewee:** Do you have anything else to ask, tell me.

**Interviewer:** Ok, *ayya.* I will go and listen to this, and if I have any other questions, I will come and ask you.

**Interviewee:** Ok.

**[01:19:41]**

**(AUDIO ENDS)**