**REIMAGINING THE GOOD CITY FROM ENNORE CREEK**

Interview Transcription

**Interview Information**

Interviewer/s: Gajendran V

Place of interview: Kattupalli Village – Dalit mam

Date of interview: 22 Oct 2023

Transcription by: GV

**Interviewee Information**

Name: (if consented to)

Pseudonym: Respondent

GV: We are conducting research on the topic ‘What is good city?’. We are trying to conceptualize good city by looking at the Ennore region. Starting from Ernavoor to Kattupalli we are trying to capture how these places looked like earlier and what is the situation of these places today? What people like the places to be in future? We are trying to understand how these settlements were formed and we are collecting information on these topics. This interview is conducted purely for research purpose. We will not mention any individual names. I am from IIT Hyderabad. We are conducting research on the topic ‘Reimagining the good city from Ennore creek’.

Are you from Kattupalli?

Respondent: Yes. I born in 1977. This village is native place for my father and mother. I will tell you how this place was before and after the arrival of companies.

GV: How this place looked like when you were a child.

Respondent: When I born here, this place was filled with nature. To my knowledge this place was filled with trees and people were doing agriculture. After 2010 Kamarajar port and L&T came here, we do not have jobs. We have given our lands and we have filed case in court 10 years ago seeking jobs. We have not received jobs, even though we have given our lands. Those days were prosperous days, we collect chippi, we cut trees and Mundiri thoppu were available in this place. After the arrival of the companies, we are facing hard times. If we ask jobs, companies are curbing us with the help of police. Employment for 50-60 persons were given for constructing road for Adani. After that their employment was terminated. Local leaders are not bothering about it. If we prepare petition demanding jobs, we are silenced with the help of police. We are living the life that we lived earlier. We are struggling to live now. We are not happy like earlier. We were happy earlier, we roam inside forest, we engaged in agriculture. We are living with hardship.

GV: Did you have land?

Respondent: We had 15 acres and we also had 25 acres of thoppu. The bridge is constructed in our lands. Ten of us have filed a case demanding jobs. A high court lawyer is helping us in the case. There is a new law it seems. If land is not used for 10 years, it should be returned to owners. We have power to stall the bridge. The bridge was constructed upon my mother-in-law’s land.

GV: So, this bridge was constructed in 15 acres of land?

Respondent: It is villagers’ land. My mother-in-law’s 2 acers of lands were taken for constructing the bridge. Outer side company was constructed. We want to file a case, but other are not strongly agreeing to it. People are afraid of police.

GV: Whether compensation was given for the acquired land?

Respondent: Three lakhs were given as compensation per acre of land. We have filed case in court demanding job, till now judgement was not given for our case.

GV: Who was handling the case?

Respondent: A Lawer named…………………… high court lawyer is handling our case. He is trying to become judge. Few days ago, I spoke to him. It is going like that.

GV: Do you know the case number.

Respondent: I will share the case details.

GV: Where was your 15 acres of land?

Respondent: From MFL. Our village people have lands in that area like 1 acre etc. Many did not file case since they are not aware. Only 10 of us filed case.

GV: What was the content of the case?

Respondent: Demanding government job for each family whose lands were acquired. Initially we got 3 lakhs and after filing case we got more compensation. We have not yet received a job. Lawyer is saying judgement will come and we are waiting. We filed case in 2013 today it is 2023. Ten years completed.

GV: TIDCO acquired land?

Respondent: Yes. TIDCO acquired land.

GV: How they approached you?

Respondent: A meeting was organized and in that meeting it was told to us that company is going to come and jobs will be provided to us. We have gone to TIDCO office several times, but we have not received any proper response. We also met Chairman, but no response.

GV: Were they any GO passed?

Respondent: An order was passed during Jayalalitha period. No one have registered documents. They may have xerox.

GV: How many families were here, when you were a child?

Respondent: In 2002 there were 92 families. Now the number of families have increased. There may be 350 families in Kattupalli and here 150 families.

GV: Here means?

Respondent: In Anna Nagar there are 150 families.

GV: in 2002 there were 92 families and now 500 families. How such big increase happened in 18 years?

Respondent: When a daughter of a person gets married, she stays here with her husband here. Since there are companies, people stayed here in the expectation that they may get job in companies.

GV: After marriage women are not moving out of village and settling in her husband’s village. Instead they are settling here in her father’s village. Am I right?

Respondent: Yes. If we are 120 families, they may be another 120 families. Sons-in-law of our village persons settle in our village.

GV: So, sons and daughters of people of your village settle in your village after marriage?

Respondent: Yes. In total 550-600 families will be here and there are 140 families in Kuppam. In Kalanji there are 150 families. In total there may be 1000 families.

GV: How many families are there in Anna Nagar?

Respondent: There are 130 families in Anna Nagar.

GV: When Anna Nagar was formed?

Respondent: I came to Anna Nagar in 2002 and settled here in Anna Nagar. We occupied land ans settled. In 2013 during the period of Balaraman MLA we got patta. I was involved in the process of getting patta.

GV: You lived in Kattupalli and settled in Anna nagar?

Respondent: Yes. This is Mandaiveli purampokku. After 10 years during Jayalalitha period a scheme was announced to issue patta. We submitted petition to DRO and got patta. There are about 160 families and 75 families have patta and remaining 75 families don’t have patta.

GV: Whether it was free patta?

Respondent: Yes, I initiated the process for getting patta and got patta for people. We got patta under Amma scheme.

GV: What are the other types of purambokku lands here in this village.

Respondent: Grama Natham, Neer pasana purampokku.

GV: Whether patta was issued for grama natham lands?

Respondent: No.

GV: All 500 families have patta?

Respondent: No, may be 350 families have patta.

GV: How many have settled here from another village?

Respondent: 60 to 70

GV: Did you do agriculture?

Respondent: Yes, in my father’s land. When I was young, I drove bullock cart. Harvested paddy and dumped at out home. We were happy at that time. There was no money. If we give paddy, we get dosai. Only now we know about money. We do not know what was money.

GV: What was cultivated in the 15 acres of land acquired by TIDCO?

Respondent: Savukku and Munthiri

GV: Land was in whose name?

Respondent: The land belonged to Nagur Chetti, who was the muthalali of my father. We got one job. My father was working as a watchman. I also need to get a job. So, we need to get tow jobs, one for my father and one for me. My father’s owner gave in writing in letterhead stating that my father worked in his land. Based on that letter we have filed a case in court. They got settlement amount and they suggested to give employment to watchman.

GV: So, landowners got compensation?

Respondent: Yes, they got money and went away and nominated watchman for job. Based on that we have filed case for getting a job.

GV: Who was Nagur Chetti?

Respondent: He lived in Thambuchetti street. Now, all of them settled in Bombay. Elders died and only their children are alive.

GV: So, they owned land and you worked in their land?

Respondent: My father worked. About 50 persons worked in their land. They harvest mundhiri and cut savukku maram.

GV:So, they got compensation?

Respondent: They got two amounts. Initially they got a compensation and filed case and got another compensation My father got a letter and I got a letter for my work. And about 10 persons have filed case demanding job.

GV: You have filed case for job?

Respondent: Yes, we filed case to get a government job. I am expecting that my son will get a job and I am waiting for that to happen. My son has completed BA and he is going to do BL. We are expecting that my son will gat a job. I got a job under a contractor who got labour contract for 20 years. 17 years are over and there more years are remaining. Only after that we may know who gets the new contract.

GV: Where are you working?

Respondent: …………………………………..

GV: You have seen industrialization now; do you see this as development?

Respondent: This is not development. If we go this side or other side for seeking job, they are saying jobs are already given to us. If we demand jobs, we are silenced by police. We are not able to speak anything now.

GV: Have you organized any protests?

Respondent: We have staged many protests and we gave up protesting.

GV: Why?

Respondent: No support. No support from Panchayat thalaivar, MLA, MP. If those who are in posting protests people will get confidence. If they are not coming front, what people will do? People protested at Sudukadu (cremation ground) by keeping the dead body in front. L&T called police and police chased us away. Cremation ground was inside the L&T.

GV: I have seed two cremation ground under construction.

Respondent: L&T removed the cremation ground and two cremation grounds are under construction outside the L&T.

New Person: Why two cremation grounds?

Respondent: One for Mudaliar and one for us. Some see prestige. There are many issues.

GV: What are the different types of issues you are facing?

Respondent: If there is any small fight, they will lock the pass and sent the worker out. Under R&R scheme 140 jobs were given to people of Kuppam. Decedents of those who died did not get job citing that they don’t have direct inheritance. One boy committed suicide. After the suicide, five families got job. If there is gain for them, they will give job, otherwise they don’t give jobs. It’s been ten years, only now job was given.

GV: When the person committed suicide?

Respondent: Three months ago?

GV: Very recently?

Respondent: The one who committed suicide in sea. A job was given to his wife. She got the job because of him. Otherwise, they don’t give job. All are working under contract and working like a Kothadimai (bonded labourer).

GV: What about your company?

Respondent: Our company is ok. There won’t be much rest time at L&T. I one goes to job at 7.30 AM he/she will come only at 4.30 PM. Mostly 12 hrs duty.

GV: How was your income when you were doing agricultural work?

Respondent: We don’t get to see money. We harvest and give it to our parents; they will take care of everything. We are not aware of money at that time. There were no shops at our village at that time. We have to go out side to buy anything.

GV: You have good road facility now.

Respondent: Yes. We have good road facility and we have shops. But no employment facility. We are working under hardship, if we ask, we are threatened by the police.

GV: Whether L&T is doing any good things to your village?

Respondent: Under R&R scheme a school is constructed for an amount of 42 lakhs by L&T. Kamarajar port is ok. They will things for us, if we ask them. Others are not doing anything for us. One RO plant is constructed by IOC in school. Adani will give cycle and go. They do not do important things.

Timing: 17.38

GV: How you want your village to look like tomorrow?

Respondent: I am not sure, whether my village will be there in future. After the arrival of Adani, it was said that 2000 meters inside the sea and 2000 meters outside the sea will be acquired, people are in panic. Kalanji and Karunkali villages are in threat. L&T left our village aside. We do not have fear. If land is taken for Adani, it will be taken outside from Pazhaverkadu. We went to collector office to remove the wall constructed by L&T and collector said that it was not under their preview and collector said that they will acquire our village if government gives instruction and it was informed to us that we can live till that time. At present Kalanji and Karungali are under the threat of acquisition, we do not have any issue right now. If L&T asks land for construction of company, at that time our village may be acquired. Till that time, this village will not disappear.

GV: Were you asked to move to another place? (18.43)

Respondent: In 2009 or 2008 we were asked to move to another place. We agreed to move if employment opportunities were given to us. Then we realized government is playing double game. We said that we do not move from this place. People from kuppam were resettled since their place is required for constructing berth. They were relocated and 140 of them got employment. Later 100 of our women got contract employment. The employment was temporary in nature. 6.30 or 7.30 Am women go to work.

Timing: 19: 26

GV: Has your village developed?

Respondent: No development. Everyone is in upset. Well off are taking contract and poor are working as collie.

GV: Have your people got labour contracts?

Respondent: Yes. Those who don’t have anything work for coolie. They work for 10000 to 12000 rupees.

GV: How they got labour contracts?

Respondent: Those who supported company got contracts. People like me were for villagers and came out. Those who raised voice were silences by giving labour contracts. Initially, L&T placed thorn fence and later concrete wall was constructed. We fought against it and it was over.

GV: Where was the thorn fence placed?

Respondent: It was in the place where the present concrete fence is. Savukku kambu were installed in a line and thorns were placed. We fought against it. Even if we need to go to sudukadu we have to remove the thorns and go to sudukadu in case of any death.

Timing: 20.35

GV: So, they have told you that it is their place and asked you to not to enter in to their place.

Respondent: They also have land in village. A ground belongs to them. Our people play in it. I do not do there now. I only focus on my work. Daily wages people are struggling.

GV: So, you are saying that there is no development for you because of industrial development?

Respondent: Yes. We would have lived in a free environment, if previous situation remained. Savukku thoppu, munthiri thotam were there and we lived in a free environment. People are suffering from cancer and many lost eye sight.

GV: In general people are saying that younger generation are not interested in agriculture. Industrialization will provide employment to them. Am I right?

Respondent: They are not giving employment. Even now Adani is ready to pay 30 lakhs rupees per acre. Once they work is done, they do not care about us. If someone is having 10 acres a different price is offered to that person for his land and if a person has one acre of land, he gets a different price for his land. If a person has 10 acres, he sells for the price offered to the person. This is the situation now. This is the situation in Kattu and Minjur as well. In Uthukottai land is acquired for bypass road. Road is under construction by destroying the agricultural lands. In all places, this is the problem.

GV: Who is buying land by paying money?

Respondent: Adani. Government is asking land for him. If a person refuses, the government threatens that they will deposit money in the account linked with Aadhar. They are doing in an authoritarian way.

GV: Whether you accept or not money will be deposited in your account?

Respondent: Based on the account details attached to the Aadhar number, money will be deposited. They are doing with the help of police. This is the authoritarian way practiced now. No one is there to support people.

GV: In Kattupalli village, what kind of work you were doing in your young age?

Respondent: I was doing agricultural works such as weeding, transplanting and harvesting. We also engaged in collection of chippi and sold more money and we used that money to run our families. We cut savukku maram for wages. We spend three months in munthiri harvesting. We do not aware of making money. Only today we are aware of money making. Only today we are speaking about rich persons. To my knowledge in those days, we go to work in the morning at 8 am and we get 1 rupee as wages.

GV: Today you are getting more income. Am I right?

Respondent: Rich are living good and poor suffers. Today there is road, but there are no buses. My son suffers to get bus to go tohis college. We have complained to our leaders and they have told that bus services may be available from next month. They are doing their best, but government is not supporting.

Timing: 23.54

GV: Will you be ok if you get employment?

Respondent: Hereafter, we won’t get employment. If land is acquired in nearby villages, they will get employment. They don’t give employment to us. Government does not require our village land right now, so our village will not be acquired.

GV: Do you want to live in this village?

Respondent: Even if we are ready to go, big person such as Mudalali will not move. They are engaged in contract business. They have filed case in court. They will not move. We also do not move till they live here. We told them that we are ready to move if jobs were given to us. They told that mudalis have filed case in court. Further, they said that we have missed the chance in the beginning when lands were acquired. In collector office, it was informed to us that cases were filed by mudalalis in our village against land acquisition. For example, there are 9 mudalalis in our village they have big houses and cars and they also got contracts in the nearby industries. They said that it may take 30 years to move us from our village. We are also not bothered about that now.

GV: You are not ready to move from this village?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: Why?

Respondent: There is no proper transportation facility. If we were moved to another place there may be transportation problem. There is no possibility to evict us now.

GV: You are saying that there is no employment opportunity at this place. If you wish your next generation to move upward in life, how you want this place to be?

Respondent: Our children have completed degree courses and they are living inside this village. They are working in industry as contract workers. They do not have the knowledge about moving out of this village and gain employment. Even now people are suffering without employment.

GV: Do you think that contract employment will bring improvements in people’s life?

Respondent: No. We can work for 10 to 20 years. Our children can work. Salaries are very low like 8000/9000/10000 INR. We are only getting 15000-18000 INR now. We joined in 2008. Only now we are getting 18000 INR. We got increment like 500-600 rupees.

GV: So, this is the increment?

Respondent: We have not crossed 20000 INR yet.

GV: You are working in the same organization for the past 18 years.

Respondent: Yes. I am working in the same organization for the past 18 years. If one or two years goes, we may know whether our salary will increase or not. Government will change contract and at that time we may get to know about increase in our salary.

Time: 27.00

GV: Don’t you see this road facility as improvement?

Respondent: It is created for company. It is done for Adani, not for us. When this road was constructed, we organised a protest. Employment of sixty persons were denied by citing some reasons such as no pass. We fought and gave up fighting three years ago.

New person: Workers do not organize?

Respondent: Police will come, so people don’t come for protest.

New Person: Instead of dealing with people, they are dealing with police and off the people.

Respondent: If we plan a strike tomorrow, today police will come and stand in this place. There are people in our village to give information to police. Our people only spoiling. About 1000 workers came for a protest and a case was filed against workers.

New Person: Contractor gave a case and worker was denied employment citing that there was a FIR in his name. We asked for the FIR and it was not given to us.

Respondent: It’s been six years he was denied employment. Our company is ok. In case of Adani, straightly workers have to go to home. There won’t be any hearing. Recently, three persons from our village was denied from job at L&T. If someone takes leave for two days, the person will be removed from his job. If a pass of a person is locked, the security will not allow the worker to enter. In our company CITU is there, we will speak to the management and get employment for the worker who was removed from job. These two companies are worse.

GV: You are saying that your village have not seen improvements?

Respondent: Yes

GV: Do you think that the condition of your village will improve in another 10 years.

Respondent: We don’t know, who will be there after 10 years.

GV: Do you think that the condition of your village will improve in another 10 years.

Respondent: We will be happy in that case. But I don’t that so. There is no chance for that. If government takes land for L&T there may be a chance. But not sure. I don’t think that they will give a housing an employment for us. To my knowledge, people who were resettled under R&R did not get proper employment. People were displaced and resettled with the promise of employment in one year, even they have not received proper employment. After seeing that we got awareness about the outcomes. Why should we go? Under R&R program 140 families were assured jobs in one year at collector office during Jayalalitha period. They have not received proper employment. Are they going to give us employment? Bore water is good at this place. Good water, there is no problem. If we go to Minjur we have to start early for work. If we start here at 8 AM we can go to work at 8.30 AM. But if we move to another place, we need to start early for work. People are not interested to move out. In case if we need to be evicted, there is a porambokku land nearby. We are ready to go there not to another place. If government make the purambokku land habitable, we may go. They have not asked about it to us and we also not discussed about it with them.

Timing: 30.28

GV: If you are evicted, you want to live in a nearby place?

Respondent: Yes. People are aware about the transportation issue. If we come from Minjur, we have to start at 6.30 Am to reach the work place at 7.30 AM. If one is late, they will get the pass and send them back to home.

GV: If one is late, then the person is not allowed to enter for work.

Respondent: If a person misses the 7.30 bus. The security will not allow the person to enter for work.

GV: In case of contract worker, they have to go to work in time.

Respondent: Yes, it is like going to work in time. If the duty time is 7 hrs, the contract worker has to be there one hour ago.

GV: So, this place is convenient for going to work?

Respondent: Yes

GV: If you are evicted you demand a job.

Respondent: There is no chance to evict us now. We also lost confidence after seeing what happened in the near by village.

GV: In case you are evicted you want to resettle in a nearby place?

Respondent: We have already asked when Ponraj was MLA. Apartment with a job was a demand. At that time government agreed, but company did not agree. We are not interested in apartment.

GV: Why are you not interested in apartments?

Respondent: We have already seen in the city. There are many issues in apartment. If we get a separate dwelling, we can live. After Tsunami a woman trust constructed a house for us and we live in that house for ten years. We do not trust these two companies. If we think about the companies, we end up in depression.

GV: So, you do not want apartment type of houses.

Respondent: Yes. If a job to each family and a house in a nearby place is given, people may show interest to move.

GV: If you are moved you want a place nearby.

Respondent: Yes. Where will they house 500 families. We have noticed many issues in apartment type of houses.

GV: What kind of issues?

Respondent: fight occurs. People don’t like apartment types rehousing. In 1990s people were evicted in Ennore and resettled in Athipattu and each family got a job and a housing plot. I was 12 years old at that time and I lived there in my uncle’s house and I was studying at that time.

GV: you came here from that place.

Respondent: I was there for my studies. This is my native village. I was there for my studies. If a house and permanent job is offered to each family people accept to move. Even if collector gives in writing, collector is violating the agreement. We lost the trust. Even if Chief minister says, collector do not follow. Collectors were also transferred. With whom can we negotiate? I have been to collector’s office for 10 times for people. People are working as a contract worker. Our village leader is a contractor and another person is a contractor.

In this place there is no permanent work. All works available are coolie works. Earlier people worked as agricultural coolies and now they are working as daily wage labourers in industries.

GV: There is no improvement in life.

Respondent: Yes, there is no improvement in life.

GV: When you were agricultural workers, you depended on Mudaliars for work.

Respondent: Yes. Earlier, it was like that. My father worked in a Mudaliar’s house. 50 villagers worked with them. They operate bullock card, work in munthiri thopppu. We lived with freedom. One in a week we come here during school holidays. We do not know what money means. If we change 500 rupees we spent 500 rupees in a second.

GV: What kind of future you visualize for your son?

Respondent: People will prefer to move if an alternative place is given to us and a job is assured to us. Even in that case people may not agree, since they have seen the experience of the neighbour village.

GV: According to you, how a good city should look like?

Respondent: We should get a compensation like people who were resettled in Athipattu pudunagar and in that case we can live peacefully. If they say that each family will get a job and fail to give a job, people will not agree to move. There are many issues. I am forty years old now, I struggled for 15 years and we gave up our struggle. If we fight, some of us take contract from them and stand with them and say let them come, we will manage. At that time my name will get damaged. Collector was changed once in a month. When we go to collector office, they say collector was changed, it was a diverting strategy. We went to collector office to get patta.

GV: How did you get patta?

Respondent: We got patta during the period of Balaraman MLA. Then we met DRO and we got patta.

GV: Did you go as a group?

Respondent: Villagers went as a group. We got 72 pattas. Even now we need to gat patta for 20 to 30 families. We formed a committee and represented 72 families and got patta for 72 families.

GV: How it happened?

Respondent: We formed a group and collected money and gave it to officer and moved for patta. MLA came to know about that. He intervened and got patta for us. Patta for 5 persons was issued at Jain College Ponneri and remaining persons got patta in hands.

GV: you petitioned to whom for patta?

Respondent: Gave petition to RDO, Tehsildar and Surveyor measured the land.

GV: You got patta during the period of Balaraman MLA. Which party he belongs to?

Respondent: ADMK. He was full support to us. Government announced a scheme to issue housing pattas in Manthaiveli purampokku and grama natham. We gave petition for patta and our request got approved.

GV: Which year did you get patta?

Respondent: In 2012 we got patta. During Amma period, a scheme was announced to issue patta in Manthaiveli purampokku and grama natham.

GV: Was that a GO?

Respondent: No, it was a xerox copy with government seal. They told that it was valid. There is another patta, people are not coming together to get that. Value of this patta is less. The value of orange patta is high. It is permanent patta. We missed to get that. People were afraid to come together, since they want to go to work and they did not come together to get that patta.

GV: It came means?

Respondent: The scheme came to tehsildar office, since there was no initiative, it went back to collector office. Now, it is not possible to get such patta, since Adani is here. So, they don’t give such patta. We can live with this patta till time permits. This also has value. The value of original patta is higher than this patta. This is just a paper. It is original.

GV: Can you elaborate little bit more about the patta returned?

Respondent: When we asked in VAO office, they told that it went back to collector office.

GV: What is the name of this patta?

Respondent: Mandhaiveli patta.

GV: I am asking about orange patta.

Respondent: This is xerox, that is original patta. This is dummy. This is with government symbol. The power of that patta is higher than this patta.

GV: So all have patta?

Respondent: Half have patta. Half lost their house due to L&T and houses were built for those who lost houses.

GV: Where?

Respondent: Here. Inside Kattupalli. Shall we complete the interview?

GV: Yes, sure.

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