**REIMAGINING THE GOOD CITY FROM ENNORE CREEK**

Interview Transcription

**Interview Information**

Interviewer/s: Gajendran V / Raju

Place of interview: Housing - AIR Resettlement Colony - Interview 2

Date of interview: 08 April 2023

Transcription by: AC

**Interviewee Information**

Name: Respondent

Pseudonym: R

Respondent: Election is forthcoming, isn't it? For sitting in the booth, 12 persons have been detailed. For a booth, 12 persons. For 100 electors, 1 person. 500 electorate, it means 5 persons. They demanded a list accordingly by selecting persons. In our booth, there were 1200 voters initially. Now we are supposed to link the voter Id with the Aadhar number. In whichever area people are living, they have voting rights only in that area. Out of that (1200), 600 persons belonging to Krishnapuram have gone out. By excluding the dead, double entry, etc., the list has been closed. Originally 606 votes were there in the Tsunami quarters for me. So, six persons have been appointed and I gave them Xerox copies and sent them.

GV: You said 600 people had gone out. Where have they gone?

Respondent: They have gone to……… (voice not clear). Some are in Krishnapuram, some others are in RK puram. They have votes here also. Some were dead. Some have vacated the house. Their names have been closed. Finally, there are 606 votes. My portion is the 88th part.

GV: This interview is for a small study. That's Ennore area, how was it in the olden times? How's it now? As per this area people’s wishes, how should it be? This study will help in case of new construction of buildings like good buildings……….

Respondent: yes, yes ………safe buildings, having one more bedroom, spacious rooms, etc.

GV: Yes, yes. This study will help in planning of further construction of new houses.

R: We too said the same. We have been given small houses. We have less comfort. Only a husband and wife can live in that. With female children together, the parents cannot live. Very difficult. So, if we rent a house, we should earn enough to pay the rent. Without that much income, the situation will be difficult again. Many fishermen are living there. They must pay Rs.40 auto charge one way to reach Kasimedu for fishing. Some charge Rs.30 and somebody else charges Rs.40. This happens at 12 or 1 O’clock. Meanwhile, many people quarrel with each other. There are knife stabs also.

GV: Why does this happen?

R: If we have an area with some houses only for us with a compound wall around it for Lakshmipuram people and there are houses for others in a separate area, there won't be any problem with others. What they did was that when they gave 10 houses to people from Lakshmipuram, 10 houses were given to people from Tsunami Nagar and 10 to those from RK Nagar also in nearby areas. What happened is that people from RK Nagar are not ok. So, it has become difficult for us in their neighbourhood.

GV: So, what you think is that if people who had vacated from the same area were accommodated in one place itself, ………

R: they will be okay.

GV: they will be known to each other.

R: There won't be any problem. Even if there's a problem, they will solve it and will unite. If the others come, it will be difficult only to speak and mingle.

GV: Due to that, there come many problems, you say.

R: Yes. There was a big problem recently. Last month, in front of this house, one of our boys died due to a knife stab. Here it is. It was Sunday 6 or 6-1/2 O'clock in the evening. We were only sitting outside. We used to sit, early days, up to midnight and spend time due to sufficient air outside the house. Now we don't sit outside after 9 O'clock at night and we go inside to sleep. Because after 9 O'clock, men come with knives. Some of those who had got the Houses here, on receipt of Rs.1000 as rent, gave the House on rent and settled outside this area on rent for more comforts. The tenant may be good or bad. He brings some more people. If we look at the outsiders deeply, they look angry at us. If they consume the drug Ganja, they do not know what they like. It is a mistake to do something like this.

GV: So, because the house is small, …….

R: House is small only. Only one room. There is no separate kitchen space. This too is here itself. Only comfort is the location of the bathroom outside.

GV: So, those who got the Houses here, due to insufficient space, go and live elsewhere on rent. Are you from Lakshmi Puram, Akka?

R: Yes.

GV: Is that fishermen colony?

R: Yes.

GV: How many of you were there, Akka?

**05:35**

R: There were 100 houses.

GV: Where is that area?

R: Toll gate, Beach Road Toll gate. Toll gate is the NTO kuppam i.e nalla thanneer Odai kuppam. Nearby that's TVT Bharathiar Nagar. Next to that's Suthanthira Puram. Next to that's Lakshmipuram which is my mother's place. There's one petrol bunk. Even now that's there on the Beach Road.

GV: K TV road, next to this.

R: K TV? No, this won't come. NTO kuppam, Krishnapuram. In between, one Singaravela nagar is there. Only 50 houses are there. In these houses, there will not be anybody who belongs to that area. People like me are here. These people are from Krishnapuram. Just because people belonging to two villages are living here, this place is named Singaravelar nagar.

GV: Who named this place?

R: We only named. Singaravelar was a fishermen’s leader.

GV: We were surprised because he was our great leader, wasn't it? How come you named this place after his name?

R: He was our fishermen’s leader. He was the fishermen community’s organiser, wasn't it?

GV: How is the place where you were there i.e. Lakshmipuram? Means Whether that village is still there?

**07:01**

R: No, by vacating the village, we all have come over here.

GV: Why did you come here?

R: Tsunami came, you know. Due to that. Also, they had said that as they were going to expand the roads, Slums should not continue to exist there. This has been the case for a long time. We had asked for housing land somewhere due to the increased sea erosion. Since my Aaya (grandmother)'s time itself, this case has been there. During the time of the Prime Ministership of Indira Gandhi itself, the slum houses existing on the Beach Road were demolished. After the demolition, my mother and others had moved somewhere and came back to the same place and constructed houses there. Anna (Annadurai) was the Chief Minister then.

GV: Who had filled the case?

R: I do not know it exactly.

GV: The case was against the Government.

R: Yes. Also, those who had lived on the beach were paying taxes for the land. My Appa (father) had said this. So, people said that they would not vacate the place, and all made it a problem. After that, construction of houses there had started. Nobody interrupted that.

**8:32**

**GV:** Means, they were paying taxes. So, when they were asked to vacate the place, they refused it and filed the case.

R: Yes. Then itself they had asked for this land only. This was the central government’s, i.e. the Military’s land. The Government refused to allot. Afterwards, as the road in Ennore was to be expanded, the Central Government itself arranged for a survey. The survey was taken up for 5 to 6 years. Meanwhile, Tsunami came and a half of the houses there were destroyed. No space was there due to that. That time Sami was the Minister for fishermen welfare. He was told that there was no space for housing of fishermen there. During Kalaignar's (The chief minister then) period, these houses were constructed. A meeting was held in which they were asked to see the houses planned. We were given a map and shown, on our visit, the location of the garden, house building, park, etc. However, we didn't ask to know the square feet area of the house building, etc. The building looked good. Only on occupation of the buildings, we came to know that the house was small. When we visited here then, there were trees and plants and the area looked good. We felt that we were in slums and would be shifting to a concrete building. So, everyone felt good and signed the papers for agreement. The slums were in such a condition that they would be either affected at the time of rainfall or burnt in fire accidents.

GV: Were there any such fire accidents?

R: Yes, my sum was burnt. Then only we moved here.

GV: When was that incident?

R: In 2009. 9th month, 15th day, my house was burnt.

GV: How did it happen?

R: I don't know it exactly. Deepavali was followed on 17th that month. The fire accident happened on the 15th night at 09:45 pm. Fully burnt.

GV: But the reason for the incident was not known?

R: There was a fire in a slum, two slums away. We came out to put out the fire. But, since we had stocked kerosene and gas cylinders in the house, every slum got burnt on spreading of the fire. Immediately, Sami came and told us not to construct houses here as they would be allotted the Quarters.

**11:06**

Afterwards, we were given 10 days’ time to vacate the place and move here. On moving, we didn't have any vessels, etc.

GV: How did you manage? How's the situation?

R: Nothing was there. One JE (Junior Engineer) told us that he would buy and get us whatever utensils, etc we wanted. We confidently expected him to do it for us. But on his way home, he got into an accident. So, nothing happened to us. Afterwards, nobody did anything to us. Sami gave us some utensils. Then one Madhivanan who was in the fishermen’s association, Anbazhagan Arasu, gave us sarees, etc. People started pulling on life here. Somehow, we passed time here. About 13 to 14 years are over here. The 14th year has begun.

GV: You were in Lakshmipuram, weren't you? How was that place?

R: Comforts were there. Of course, they were not less. Even we survived there without electricity. Because there was enough air circulation. That was sea wind. Many trees and plants were there. We had enough sunlight in the house. Sea soil was there. No problem absolutely. Till midnight 12 O’ clock, we used to sit outside and talk. We walked close to the sea, breathed air and enjoyed ourselves there. Even on reaching here, the situation was fair only. But, due to rowdyism, the situation became bad. Fear is not there. In the old place, only the known people were there. We were not familiar with anything but peace. But on reaching here, we experience bad things. We have felt it many times. Even we went to the Office and enquired about this. We asked them to give us a place there itself (Lakshmipuram). Maybe, let them give us a separate place there. We will build houses there. They said that everything is over. Because there in the old place, roads have been broadened. That area has been fenced now. So, nobody can trespass into that place. How can we go there?

GV: Was there sea erosion when you were there?

R: Yes, it was there. I have been there since my childhood. We did not take the sea erosion as a big matter. If it is Chithirai month (the first month of Tamil Calendar), cyclones used to occur. At the time of the cyclone, there used to be a lot of changes (***specifically she describes something which is not understandable***) in soil level, sea water level or water depth in sea.

**14:24**

Knowing this, we were not afraid of anything. Even at the time of the wind blowing, we know of wind types like kodai kaatru (summer wind), Vaadai kaatru (cold wind), etc which have some effects on the sea.

GV: Then, can you say in detail about these wind types?

R: (Laughing) Oh, I’m saying it.

GV: What will happen if vaadai kaatru comes?

R: It will bring more income. Even if Kodai kaatru comes, it 'll bring income. But not Kondai kaatru, which comes from the eastern side, i.e. seaside. There will be more water on the sea on which you cannot climb the boat and move it. Because waves will overturn the boat. Now, meanwhile, there's a place. Even stones are kept there I.e. N4. From there, nets are pushed into the sea. At the time of my childhood, stones were not kept. After the keeping of stones started there in the N4, nets were not pushed here but there.

GV: You said that good income will be there if Vaadai kaatru comes, isn't it? How’s it?

R: That comes during the Thai month (i.e. a month in Tamil Calendar). There used to be more fish. You use any net and any time. You get more fish. So, more fish means more income. At 3 O’clock, people go fishing and catch ‘kanangeluthi’ fish (Indian mackerel) and come back home at 10 O'clock night. After keeping the fish on ice, they again go fishing for ‘eral’ (prawn)early in the morning. After fishing eral, coming back home and relaxing, they go to sea at 3 O'clock as usual. In Aadi month (a month in Tamil Calendar), they take ‘kolamaram’ (a specific kind of fishing craft) and get into the sea. Nowadays engines are there for that. Previously the engine was not there. They take a mat also and go far into the sea. 40, 50 pavam which means, I don't remember, how much kilometre distance is. We give them 3 days’ food and send them. The food is ‘puli sadam’ (Tamarind rice). Until they come back, we don't light the stove and cook.

GV: You cook food for them, and they go fishing. What do you do at home? You don't cook either.

R: When we cook something for them, we cook some quantity of the same for us also.

**16:44**

 Also, we don't allow outsiders to enter our house. We do pooja. That time there was no net. We go to the railway track side and pluck and bring a plant called ‘poondu chedi’ (Garlic plant). To catch big fish, we keep ‘thoondil’(bait). There was no net. They put ‘kolamaram’ plants into the sea to catch fish and bring them. Till they get big fish, they keep on putting ‘thoondil’.

GV: For what fish, they put the poondu chedi into the sea?

R: ‘Kola meen’ (Kola fish). Till we get this, other fish varieties like ‘vanjaram’ (Seer fish), ‘mayi’(sailfish), 'Koduva' (Seabass), ‘manja’, ’mavalasi’, etc get caught. When the wind blows towards our house, they keep the mat ready and bring it here. Till the wind doesn't blow towards our house direction even for five days, they will remain only on sea and not come back home.

GV: Don't you cook food for those five days?

R: No, we don't.

GV: How to eat then?

R: We keep something at home, isn't it? That puli sadam will be okay for only five days. We will be eating that. But they return normally within three days. Suppose there is no wind towards us, that time only, once in a while. We know our mat which is at the edge of the ship when the ship is returning. We keep watching our mat. When there's a mat nearby the ship and once the ship starts sailing towards us, we know from here when it will reach here. If they start tonight, they will reach here the day after tomorrow. We keep watching that from the edge of the sea. We know our mat is reaching there. Immediately, we womenfolk come home. We sweep and clean the house, heat water, start cooking the rice and we keep everything ready for them. Like that. That was one different time.

GV: Do you like that very much?

R: Yes, very much. We keep everything, including rice, ready.

GV: Did you ever go into the sea for fishing?

R: No. I go to the seaside for a bath. I never went fishing. These people are from Michur and were in our Village. We became very familiar and friendly now. Those who came over here are all Tamils only and even our community people are also here on rent.

**19:18**

Even when they come here by chance, people here won't ask them to go away.

GV: Even if fishermen come here….

R: Yes, anybody for that matter. When someone comes and tells us that I’ve come over here like this and like that, we say’ “ok. we have already cooked and let's share the food”. We never say,” No, no, we have nothing to do. you go away”.

GV: Why? Is this a habit?

R: Yes. All have this habit.

GV: If someone comes here asking for help…….

R: Help means, if money is their want, that is different. But some people come here saying they have nobody to help, or they come here by mistake. We have no hesitation to help them.

GV: Were there any such incidents?

R: Oh, so many.

GV: Can you narrate anyone?

R: How to narrate them all? Ok, this person is one such story. She left the home and came over here, having no place to stay. We gave them a room in my building to stay. Afterwards, she started doing a job. Sometime later, her husband was here, and we settled them together again.

GV: Is her husband a fisherman?

R: No, they are different. They are SC. Fishermen don't go like this. If they're no terms in their family, they go to a relative's house for a while and come back after two days. I’m talking about others coming here.

GV: Is there any such incident to narrate?

R: Many such things. I forgot many things. I think about them.

GV: One or two?

R: Many such incidents. I forgot. I’m recalling.

(Asking someone R2 there to narrate) Tell him whatever is in your memory.

**20:48**

R2: (His voice is not clearly audible. But, I think, he couldn't say anything)

R: See, we were in Singaravelar nagar, weren't we? That time many people used to come over there. They said they didn't have a house to stay in. I asked them to sit. See, we talked and allowed to stay with me.

GV: Like that, whoever came here from outside and sought help, they were allowed to stay, you helped them to do some job, right?

R: Yes, that was possible in that place. But here, it's not possible because I’m afraid as I can't believe anybody. I can't promise them anything. Also, that place was a village where if someone made a problem, I could tell those villagers there.

GV: They would take care of you. But here that's not possible.

R: Because people are not right. We could do something. Still, having understood these people, I bear with them. I understand the problems of those who come from outside. But I’m afraid as don't help them as these people don't want to do it. I may promise something, but I may not do it due to others' dislike. So, I’m afraid and it's difficult to help.

GV: If you want to say something else about Lakshmipuram, what's that?

R: What else to say?

**22:10**

GV: You said something about ‘kelluthimeen’, didn't you?

R: ‘Kola’

GV: You can say something about others.

R: I said ’mavalasi’, ‘koduva’. There was no big net with us for catching Keluthi. These kinds of nets were available with Krishnapuram people. These fishes used to be available in big size. Only with this big net, you can catch them.

GV: But you have said that if this fish bites, one gets more pain.

R: If the fish thorn splinters us…...? There are irunkeluthi and keluthi. If these fish thorns splinter us, it will be more painful. So, old people know how to catch these fishes alive without thorns’ splinters. Not all can catch them safely since the thorns would splinter them and cause unbearable pain. If a thorn splinter happens, one gets a heart attack. What we will do, you know? We will make a powder of tamarind seed and apply it on the splinter. That will take out the poison. Or else, we will use limestone powder for that,

**23:14**

which will give some relief till we reach the hospital. This powder also will take out the poison.

GV: Do you go to the hospital for treatment?

R: Yes. My father had this splinter which pierced through the hand. There was a doctor Ramakrishnan nearby. We took him to the doctor who, by an injection, removed the poison. Afterwards, he got medicine and all. We had to be careful.

**24:42**

GV**:** Afterfishing and bringing home the fish, what do you do on it? What help do you have? You said you would pluck some plants for this.

R: The fish is kept in ice. Or if time is s there, my mother used to take it for sales. If it is likely to be late, the fish is kept in ice.

GV: Do you also go for the sales?

R: No, I’m not used to that. I do all the domestic work including ‘valai kuthal’ (joining the torn parts of the net). I do ‘pathukattu’ on new nets, do ‘sucham mudithal’ and ‘pari mudithal’.

**25**:**32:**

GV: From whom you learnt all these things?

R: Father taught me. Father used to do it and I used to sit by his side. I don't know how to sell fish, That’s all.

GV: ‘Pari’ means something like ‘koodai’?

R: yes. the same, a basket made of palm leaves.

GV: Where do you get those leaves?

R: People bring it. That used to be sold for this purpose. Its price was just one or two rupees only.

GV: You said ‘padagu’ (boat) used to go for three days. What's that ‘padagu’?

R: That's ‘kattumaram’ (logs bound together). Kattumaram with plastic mat.

GV: In that, fishermen used to go into the sea for three days and come back.

R: Now-a-days, fiber boats, engines have come.

GV: Olden days, kattumaram used to be a nearby home. Sea was nearby.

R: Yes, kattumaram was in the house entrance.

GV: Now, you can't catch fish in the same place. you say it's not possible.

R: Not possible. Now, there is Kasimedu, N4, like that.

GV: Do these villagers need to take permission to fish?

R: Not at all necessary. Nearby beaches, one can fish. No need to ask anybody's permission.

**26**:**43**

GV: There may be a worry of the people about the fishing not possible near their place. Isn't it?

R: There was a distance. There was no vehicle. Only auto rickshaws. We had to use auto rickshaws to bring nets and transport fish for sales. If there was much water coming from the sea, they used to bring the boats by the rickshaw and park in the house entrance.

GV: Do they bring them here also?

R: Here no. In My old place there.

GV: Initially, it was a long distance to go to Kasimedu.

R: Not here. We were in Lakshmipuram then.

GV: You were in Lakshmipuram. After coming here….

R: After coming here, we don't have a boat, etc.

GV: What happened?

R: Once we left the old place, we didn't keep anything with us. Father has passed away. Mother too. So, we don't have anything now. Only my brothers keep these things. But we are not in touch with them.

**27:30**

GV: In your house?

R: We are not used to this.

GV: Do your brothers keep them?

R: Yes.

GV: Where are they?

**27:43**

**R:** You know Karumariamman koil (temple)? You know Chokkalingam house, isn't it?

GV: The multi storeyed house buildings have been constructed. Is it useful to the fishermen?

R: No use.

GV: Why do you say so?

R: The fisherman doesn't have money. One day, he won't go fishing. How to go without money? You need at least 30 Rupees to reach the auto? You need to earn that much income. They need to save some money for tomorrow. If they get only 200 Rupees, there won't be any savings out of that.

GV: You say there's no sufficient income.

R: Yes. Not like the olden days.

GV: Since you people are away from that place….

R: If the kattumaram is near the house, in case of no money in the pocket also, you board the vessel and get into the sea. But now, it's very difficult to reach there.

GV: So, it's very difficult to reach there.

R: Long distance also.

GV: So, many people have left their job after coming here? Or else, have they gone to some other job?

R: Yes, people have gone like that. Some people say. Even if ten rupees is the income, they can manage the children’s school fees etc.

GV: How many people gave up the fishing job? As I know, there were 100 families in Lakshmipuram. How many of them gave up that job? How many are still in the job?

R: As far as my villagers are concerned, all are still in that job only. Because all of them have their own boats, etc. So, they can't just give up.

GV: Means, they are not affected due to their settlement here.

**30:16**

**R:** They go by Autos.

GV: Only expenses increased.

R: Yes, Auto fare is more. Diesel price is also more. No fish available means diesel expenses are a loss.

GV: You demand a separate place and house building. Isn't it? From whom you had demanded? Have you submitted any petition?

R: Slum Board. We didn't submit any petition. We went to the Office casually and approached them by saying that as the facilities available here are not ok, they could search for some new houses and give us. They said, “There is another place with us. Why do we construct a multi storeyed house building here if we had some other place elsewhere?”

GV: So, you can't give pressure to the issue, can you?

R: How’s it possible? We ourselves know that there's no place. So, this place is there. They constructed and gave us, that's all.

GV: Did they ask your consent and bring you people here?

R: Yes, they asked. We know that post Tsunami, this construction was going on for us.

GV: Did this construction start immediately after the Tsunami?

R: Even Pre-Tsunami period itself, foundation was laid.

GV: So, you knew what this meant for you?

R: Yes, we came here and did pooja also. T.R. Balu and all came over to lay the foundation stone here. We all came here on behalf of our Village.

**31:54**

GV: So, foundation was laid pre-Tsunami period.

R: Only post-Tsunami houses were given. Construction was over after the Tsunami. Only a few buildings were over.

GV: So, the plan was there even earlier itself.

R: Yes.

GV: As a Tsunami had occurred and people were affected, they demanded it. Did you give any petition post Tsunami for a change in place?

R: No, not at all. To that extent, intellect couldn't operate. How I said, you know? I told you initially itself. That there's a meeting for every village. If morning for Lakshmipuram, Suthanthirapuram for evening. Next morning for Krishnapuram, ATO kuppam for evening that day. Afterwards, Thiruvottiyur and then Ondikuppam. Like that, separate meetings for every village. That time, after the preparation of the map etc, it was shown to us by explaining that this is a road, that's a park, this is a multi-storeyed, etc. We felt that it was better and ok. With that feeling, we came back home.

GV: What type of house must have been there for you? What do you think?

R: Not a big matter. It would have been better if one extra room had been there. Enough. We never lived with high expectations. Because we were in a slum. We were given a pucca building.

**33:23**

Whereas**,** they have given us a house like this. With an extra room, Children can sleep in one room, and we can sleep in the other room. If some guest comes or female children want to sleep comfortably, it is difficult.

GV: There would not have been a problem if an extra room had been there.

R: Yes. There's nothing else. There are less houses in this new area. Now the current problems are the breaking of pipes, ceiling, leakage of water, breaking of windows, etc. In order to make them alright, they have to issue tender notification. But, they say, tender is not yet ready.

GV: Have you complained about this?

R: Yes, we have done.

GV: You did yourself? Or through your Association?

R: I can't do it since I’m the treasurer. I asked the members to do that. When I asked, they said that they had given me that. Further they asked why I didn't do it. Matter is that only now PAN cards have been issued to us. Afterwards, bank accounts will be opened. After only opening bank accounts, I can speak to the Slum Board and then I must speak to the people. The Board says that only after paying tax Rs.250 per month, they will do something about this. Now, 13- or 14-years tax works out to a total of Rs.28,000 or 30,000. They say that only after payment of the tax, they will do repairs, etc.

GV**:** You are only the treasurer, isn't it? That’s why you are feeling it.

R: But we have not yet started this. What I say is that we will start at any time. But whatever people need, you must fulfill that, isn't it?

**35:01**

Summer is summer. There will be a water shortage. But no big problem in this place. This place is full of water and sand. Water doesn't stagnate here; it just flows away. How much water you draw, you get it. That type’s this area. Hand pumps are there. If we have one pump for two blocks, it will be ok. People break it. Already, pumps were installed once a new MLA came. But boys break them and sell them away. Can we watch the happenings outside home all throughout the night? Even if there are happenings like this, the Administration must install new pumps because people should not find it difficult here as the water shortage is there. Not all the houses can have pumps. It costs Rs.20,000 or 25,000 per pump. There's not enough income to spare money for the pump. What can these people do? When they are downstairs, they draw water and must carry it upstairs. So, a necessary facility should be created so that difficulties should not exist, isn't it? If there's a breakage in the pipe downstairs, we can repair it. But how is it possible to repair pipes for the residents if breakage happens in 4th floor flats? When we complained about it to the Office, they said no scheme exists to do such repairs. So what happens? The water from such broken pipes leaks out to the floors downstairs and flows into the house. So, the concerned house owners quarrel among themselves on this matter. Like ‘Your house water leaks out into my house, that too sewage water, this’s a problem to me’. So that's a big problem for us. Not only that, but also the drinking water supply happens once in a month. Due to breakage in the pipes, which drinking water leaks out and goes waste. So, there's no water supply from the pipes inside the house. When we made a complaint, they gave the same reply. When people complain about this to me, I find it difficult.

GV: What’re the similar problems, apart from the water related ones?

R: Water pipes, drainage pipes, doors and windows, seepages due to the old age of the buildings.

GV: What else?

R: Only this much happened.

GV: You have been here for 13 years, haven't you? Tell me how this place has undergone changes.

R: Only change is that the building became old.

GV: No changes in people's life?

R: People don't live here permanently. If the people living here are the same, you can talk about changes in their life. There are so many moving out and so many coming in. What to say?

GV: Constantly the same people don't live here. People come and go, come and go.

R: If there's a house and a girl from the owner's family is getting married, the owner sells the house and gets the girl married off and moves away to some other place.

GV: So, it goes on like a transaction. People use this house for their necessities and move away.

R: On majority, why do they sell it? Because, once the girl is married, where do they arrange in this house for the married couple’s bed? Where does the couple stay? So, they decide to live somewhere on rent. They enter into an agreement for sales and move away.

GV: Do the people come here on rent?

R: So many. GV: Where are they from?

R: You can't say where from?

GV: There may be industries and factories in the surrounding areas. People may come from there. People may be from Chennai City.

R: Yes, they are from the factories and the city also. Why, you know, the rent is less. Only Rs.1000 to 1500. That's why. If they go on rent elsewhere, they must pay separately for water and electricity. Here's not that case. Whatever bill comes, you can pay it.

GV: So whatever electricity consumption, only that much the bill is.

R: This type won't be available elsewhere, isn't it? This is not the case there. One must pay Rs.10 or 9 per unit consumption. Separately they take money for the water. So, everything is charged separately there. That’s not the case with the Quarters. Meter is installed here, and Rent is Rs.2000 monthly. You pay only whatever the electricity consumption bill comes. This convenience is not there. Due to these aspects, people come here on rent.

GV: Do you know anybody who goes to Chennai for a job?

R: Yes, there are people. They go.

GV: You were in Lakshmipuram. Was there any temple?

R: Karumari amman temple was there.

GV: When does the temple festival come?

R: We do it in Purattasi month. This Mother (Amman) doesn't take ‘kowchchi’(meat). In purattasi month, there used to be an event ‘Koozh (ragi powder gruel)-giving’ for three days which is for this mother. When we go to a koozh -giving event, we also don't take meat.

**40:02**

R: That temple has been existing since my mother's days. One ‘Samiar’ (Saint) bought it in a shop at Thiruverkadu and was carrying it. Once it reached this place, he couldn't move it beyond here. It was in the half-sea, surrounded by many houses. As the sea erosion increased, the temple went on being moved from place to place. This temple wasn't built in stones. Till the temple moved from there it was only a hut. There were three neem trees in its entrance area. Cobra was living there. There was a snake pit. A big sea wave came over there and washed that pit away. So that baby snakes started entering the surrounding houses. One person, without knowing about these baby snakes, killed them. Once people from the village gathered there, they identified them as temple snakes. They said that the person had to go to a Thanneer Perumal Temple and do a specific ‘Puja’ (worship of God) by using milk, etc. That person did it. But he didn't have a child in family. Afterwards, one other person killed a baby snake when it was moving on the wall of his house. But he did that milk puja. Afterwards, the snakes became out of group and one or two were seen moving here and there. So, what happened?

**42**:**14**

People became afraid of, like, it was not known which houses the snakes would enter and what they would do. People continued to be in fear. So, we went and gathered there and lit camphor and cried,” please accommodate your babies yourself and don't send them here and there. We are only a few here. Don't chase us away from the village “. Afterwards, the snake didn't come. One year later, much water came in and was very close to the god statue’s place. There's a heap of stones, you know, water is there upto that edge. God statue is close to the same. We told the petrol bunk owner that once sea waves come in, the statue will go away, and I placed the statue near the Temple. They instructed that you can only place it like that but not to do Pongal, because petrol bunk was there. We asked God and She told us that She won't go away from this place and not to lift Her away.and not to get afraid. We didn't lift Her afterwards and She remained there only. Even at the time of the Tsunami, she remained there.

GV: Did the Tsunami not affect Her?

R: Nothing happened. It was a big surprise. Just a small statue. Even water entered the houses. But this Amma was sitting there only. After we left that village, we asked God that we wanted to lift the statue and place it here. God agreed. One week later, someone else lifted the statue away. God was not available to us. Afterwards, we have placed one other Karumari Amman here.

**44:04**

**GV:** How do you mention that the statue was taken away?

R: Not seen anywhere else. Till recently, it was there. Once we settled here, this became missing. What to say then?

GV: Did you make a new statue?

R: Yes, we made a new one, made it sit in grace, built a temple around it, put the statue therein and did 48 days' mandala puja.

GV: The same Mother had come.

R: Yes.

GV: Did they tell you?

R: Yes. After that, I went to that village for one day's mandala puja. I didn't go there afterwards.

GV: Where's it?

R: 14th block……. (Laughing)

GV: Are your people still there?

R: All others are there only. I’m the only one here……(laughing)

GV: Why did they allot to you in a separate place?

R: After construction, the first allotment was made to us.

GV: So, the whole lot of people didn't vacate?

R: Yes. We are only…. only 55 or 60 were allotted separately here.

GV: All those 55 are here.

R: Yes.

GV: The first 55 persons, after the houses got burnt in fire, were allotted.

R: Yes. Allotted in stages.

GV: When did the remaining others come here?

R: After 10 or 15 days, one month, like that. Continuously came. People came from NTO kuppam. But the first allotment was made to Singaravelar nagar only.

GV: Why the first to that nagar?

**45:24**

R: Since the houses were burnt, the first allotment happened to this place.

GV: Are you the first who came here?

R: Yes. I only received the allotment letter the first. We put a stage, called Sami, and made him, KPP Sami, the Minister for fishermen welfare, come here.

GV: Did you take a photo of that?

R: Yes, we have.

GV: Is it in the house?

R: Yes.

GV: Can you show it to me?

R: I must search for it…(laughing). Shall I search and get and send it in WhatsApp?

GV: Ok. Is that a photo of the place’s map?

R: No. no. The map got burnt. Near my house, they gave it on a stage. They made us stand there, gave the map to us and took a photo also. But that got burnt alongwith the house.

GV: Did they ask you to come here as soon as the burning took place?

R: No. There were 48 wards under Thiruvottiyur. I was responsible for 27th ward, i.e. Singaravela Nagar. So, I was called here, and they spoke to me.

GV: You came up to a responsible position, didn't it? How did you get interested in coming forward?

R: I, in 1989 as I remember……. My younger brother took me somewhere to request a NC seat. Then he was a responsible person. Our ward was a lady’s ward. He called me by saying that he would get me a seat in the political party and took me and introduced me to the political party. I got a seat also. As soon as I got the seat, all the party persons belonging to AIADMK those days were ganja partypersons. Only a few families were DMK party persons.

**47:49**

WhenI got the seat from DMK, if you were at Krishnapuram, there were 1000 votes. Out of it, not even 50 were DMK votes. So, 950 votes were AIADMK votes. Then, NTO kuppam, that's also AIADMK only. In my village, if you see, only my family was the DMK. My uncle (periyappa) was AIADMK. After I got a seat, there was a meeting. In every village, there was a meeting, and it was said therein that a woman from our community got a seat and we had to vote for her only. When we went for the vote campaign, it was told in NTO kuppam that all should vote for her since she belongs to our community.

**48:37**

It was told in our Village and nearby Singaravelar nagar also. In Krishnapuram only, their villagers were in contest. All our votes put together would count 550 only. But there were 950 votes. So, 450 votes were a waste. Since then, I have been going to the party.

GV: Afterwards, did you contest the council election?

R: I got a seat for the second time. In 2002. As soon as I got it, my son expired. When all the things were over, Napoleon Sir came campaigning for votes here. My son was in my younger sister's house. As soon as news of his death came, that DMK and Moopanar party were in an alliance for election, a person called Machchakanni had also demanded the seat from that party. That time, one Viswanathan was the chairman.

**49:00**

He told me,” No, poonkodi, you are very young. Next time, you can contest. You have just lost your son. I told myself that I can't contest because my child has become so. He said, “No problem, Poonkodi. We’ll give the seat to the alliance party. Whatever the situation may be, you function as if you were an MC”. I said OK.

GV: What happened to your son?

R: When he went to worship God, he fell into water and drowned. After coming here, I had demanded the seat twice. The 3rd ward is a Ladies ward. That time, I went once and demanded the seat. I demanded for the sake of the wife of the former MC, Burma nagar also. Another, the Taluk secretary’s wife had demanded. I went for an interview. He asked me,” If he doesn't give the seat to you, will you work for the election of another person?”. I said that I’ll work for anybody, not necessarily that I should get the seat and I would work for the party. Afterwards, they gave the seat to the wife of one Velan who was a Taluk secretary. But the election stopped. After that, an election was held just now. It has become an SC ward now.

**51:04**

So, I didn't demand this seat. But I demanded a 2nd ward seat, that too, only for a formality.

GV: Means, there are more SC people in this ward.

R: This ward cannot be a SC ward because only fishermen are here. If you see in Quarters, there are 5000 people and 3000 are fishermen out of that. How is it, you know, Kasimedu, N4, Nagararkuppam, NTO kuppam, Thiruvottiyur, Ondikuppam, Krishnapuram, Lakshmipuram. In all these places, you see, Thazhakuppam, Chinnakuppam, Periyakuppam, all the people living here are the fishermen only. If you take 50, 50 people, out of 5000 people here, they are all fishermen only. Meanwhile, if you see, in Kelikkaikuppam, Nadukuppam, JJ nagar, TKP nagar, Othaivadai, Indira Gandhi kuppam, all the people here are fishermen only. If you see SCs, they are more in Burmanagar only. In that place, Burmans are also there in addition to the SCs. So, there are two castes here. Unnecessarily, they have made it a SC ward. They could have notified a new ward.

GV: You said that there are 3000 fishermen families out of 5000 families here. Why is that this has become a cause for problem?

R: Fishermen, you see, go to work, take food and remain within the house itself. Males don’t go outside. Even if they go, they play Cheetu (Rummy, etc) and remain in their area only. If you ask them to bring a knife, they are afraid. Further, they will think that they are going there for survival only and why should they have an unnecessary problem. That time, if you do Anarchy, what will occur in their mind? Fishermen don't take knives, they are not that type, they only want to earn, take food and remain in the house. That’s what they think. If the people who have come from somewhere and settled here do like this, what will they do? Even if there are 3000 people, 1000 people are afraid of knives, because that's a knife, isn't it? If somebody is alone and he fights on his own, we can say that you go, you go. But, when you are drugged with ganja and talk like a mental case, can I talk about anything with you? What’ll it be to you?

GV: If all these things are to be set right, what to do? What do you think?

R: What to do? Even the police couldn't do anything. What can we do?

GV: The police could do nothing.

R: Only after all the problems are over, they come in a jeep to the place. If we give a call, they say that they're outside or else, they don't attend it.

**53:48**

Afterwards, they make a call and ask us what’s the matter. So, they come after the problems are over.

GV: So, the police station should be here.

R: That's here.

GV: No use due to that?

R: If any scapegoat is caught, they will thrash him into pieces.

**54:07**

What I say, you know, that as soon as the police arrest the troublemakers, they should not give the latter bail. They should be lodged in jail for at least two to three years. Then only, they will come after correction. If, within 15 or 10 days, you release them outside. The policemen tell, “this fellow cry, ma. Go and take care of him “. Then, who will correct it?

**54:30**

Policethemselvessay this. Will that fellow correct and behave in the public properly?

GV: You were issued an allotment letter, weren't you? In the allotment letter………. when you were there, you were paying taxes, isn't it?

R: When?

GV: You were in Lakshmipuram then.

R: That time when my grandmother was alive. But we didn't pay taxes.

GV: Whether you have got patta?

R: No.

GV: But you were paying taxes?

R: That's, we were paying the soil tax (land tax). During Indira Gandhi times, I have told you, they levied soil tax.

GV: That tax was for the occupation of the land.

R: That too, for a short period only.

GV: You’ve got the house here. Do you have the right to the land?

R: No. Even the quarters allotment doesn't give me any right.

GV: How do you say so?

R: How I say is that, in the allotment letter itself, it is written that, only after payment of taxes Rs.250 for 18 years, allotment to own the house will be given.

GV: 18 years is not yet over?

R: Not over. We didn't pay taxes either. We have paid taxes for 3 or 4 months only. Sami, what he did you know, he represented that we people didn't have earnings and earnings may be there or not also and the government should not collect taxes from us. So, we didn't pay tax for 10 years.

GV: Now, you can demand your ownership of this house, isn't it?

R: Yes, we did. One time, a meeting was held. So many people here don't know this. I stood up and spoke. We also didn't pay tax. We paid it as turning charges.

**56:12**

because they must pay a salary. I said that the Slum Board took a loan from the World Bank and constructed these houses. The Government must pay back the loan. If you leave the loan on our heads, we will pay it back. But these houses have been given to only those who had taken houses and not to others not connected with that. That's what I stood up in that meeting and spoke that word only. Hereafter we can't pay tax. Or else, you allot us only land. We will construct houses there. I had spoken then itself. This had happened in the beginning.

GV: Beginning means when? When did it happen?

R: 7 or 8 years back.

**56:53**

When AIADMK came to power, it happened.

GV: Why was that meeting held?

R: Non-payment of the tax was the reason. You should pay tax. Only owners should live here. Not to be rented out. Houses to be as they were constructed. Not to be joined. They brought new rules. On and off they checked whether rules were being followed. I have a shop which gives wedding catering Utensils on rent. All the utensils were kept in one room. On checking, they told us that houses were given only for living. How could I keep wedding utensils here? I told them that they gave me a house, I was living there and doing business there. In that case, they said, they will seal it. I said OK. I’ll deal with it. They didn't lock it. I immediately contacted Udayakumar Sir. He said that he will speak to them and not to mind that. We had already been told that we can’t pay tax since the houses were given to us in replacement of those houses taken over by the Government.

GV: What do you say is that since your housing area was taken over by the Government, ………

R: No, that land is not ours. But we had houses on the land owned by the Highways. We had that house over generations. My mother, grandmother also lived in that house only.

GV: Since the houses where you had lived over generations were taken over and the government has given houses in replacement only.

R: We won't give details. (*In between she says something which is not understandable)* You have constructed and given us houses, ok. You hand them over to the Municipality. We have voting rights to elect the Municipality. So, you hand over everything to the Municipality. That's what I said. You hand over the garbage, sewage canals, and water to the Municipality. We are not on the ‘porambokku land, are we? We are within the rule of the Municipality. Hand over to them and look after your job. They said “Not possible “. In that case, why was the school handed over? How was the street handed over? When all these things were handed over, why not this alone?

**58:55**

In response, they said that they would discuss this.

GV: Do you think that it's good to hand it over to the Municipality?

R Only if handed over, there would be a problem for us. You can easily speak to the MLA or Minister or anybody else. If there is any block in the sewers, we will call over telephone one AE, call the supervisor and tell them that there is this problem. We ask them whether you can solve it or not. We can even do picketing on the road. If the Municipality fails to do what we say, there are many opportunities to speak to them. But you are asked to respond to the Slum Board in every case. Why should we respond? Once you constructed the house, you just go away after handing it over. There's no necessity at all for me to respond to you. I have spoken everything.

GV: So, it's only the job of the Slum Board to construct the house. After the construction, he must go away.

R: You don't construct from your own funds. You obtain a loan from the World Bank and do it. So, the loan is on everybody's head. You have only the right to just earn from that and go away. You have no right to ask us to give all these things. You ask those people who were given the houses since they had lived on the platform. They had paid rent. So, you ask them to spare that amount as tax.

**1:00:02**

But, our house, life, rights, all the things have gone. After bringing and reaching us this place, you are asking us to pay tax. Where will we pay it?

GV: So, you say, they took your life base from that place and simply brought you here, is that what you say?

R: Yes.

GV: In that place, both the house and life base were there. Here you have only a house. This is what you say?

R: Yes. The life base is elsewhere, somewhere long away. So, it's difficult here.

GV: If this housing colony comes under Municipality…….

R: Not Municipality, Corporation. I suggest that this colony should be handed over to the Corporation. You have already handed over sweeping the street, maintaining the sewer line, school, park. When you did this all, why do you keep with yourself the drinking water, pipeline, windows? You must hand over all the things, don't you? We'll speak to them, won't it? If they come here and ask, we will tell them, isn't it? Without handing over, you are asking us to pay. How will we pay? Say, for example, no water supply in the pipe. We will give a letter to the Municipality. We will ask them to investigate it. We will go to a MC (Municipal councillor) to ask him whether there's a quota? If yes, I will ask the MC in my capacity to use it for us.

**01:01:27**

If I ask the MC, he replies that Slum Board and himself have nothing to do.

GV: He says that there's no relationship for him with them, isn't it?

R: No relationship. He says that if there's any other area, tell him. This they can only do. How can I do this? But people don't understand this and are asking, “He has won the election, why he couldn't do anything? He has no business to interfere in this. He can interfere in the business of school, park, sweeping. He can only deal with these three things. Only these three have been handed over.

GV: Those who are in contact with people directly are cut off. These people couldn't contact the Slum Board directly. Why is this so?

R: The Board says that only regarding the works tendered and contracted, they could do. No funds.

GV: You can visit the Slum Board Office and tell them.

R: Only they, Slum Board people come here and hold the meetings.

GV: Why do they tell you not to rent out the houses? There are many problems here.

R: Not now. Initially, they said so. They don't tell me now.

GV: Why don't they say so now?

R: People didn't listen to what they said. So, they left at it.

GV: Do you think that the renting out, leasing out cannot be prevented?

R: How to prevent it? Initially…. there was a house…. This house was sold, and a daughter was married off. His family moved to Thiruvottiyur. It happened in 17th house. The one who bought it was a neighbour. He joined both the houses by closing the entrance and constructed a verandah inside and made one house. The Office came to know this, and they removed the windows and doors which they had issued. The owner has placed the new ones in that place. Immediately, two jeeps came. The Board Office staff were there. They asked the owner as to how he could alter the houses given by the Slum Board. They called for the allotment letter. I said, “I have bought it”. They told,” you may have bought it, but you cannot sell it”. They also said” We will bring here the seller”. I replied,” Ok, get him here”. They brought him here. They asked me,” I sold it to you. But how can you sell it?”. My daughter got married off. So, I had to sell it for money. What else can I do? Tell me. Will you give me the required money?”. They again said,” You can't sell it”. I retorted,” go, complain it to whomsoever you want”. They just went away.

GV: They went away. They couldn't do anything.

R: Yes. They further said,” you have bought it, you have to pay tax”. So, after payment of ₹25000 as tax, they gave up the house issue.

**1:04:05**

GV: After paying ₹25000, they kept the house for themselves.

R: Oh no matter what they do. They will go to each house and say what to do, what not to do, don’t use the motor and all that. A few people were scared, some thought a house was given to us, so why should we bother.

GV: But do you think that having a home is someone’s right? Do you think you can change anything?

R: hmm, everyone makes changes according to what they can afford, also it is their interest how the house should be.

GV: So, do you think that is fine, correct to do that?

R: What can we say about their house, because in some houses, when you nail the wall, it chips away, so you need to repaint, repair again and again.

GV: when did you form this association, you have created?

R: It has been 6 months now.

GV: Ok, before this was there any association?

R: It was like this, for the same community of people. But it did not work out well.

GV: Why is that?

R: Because of the rowdies around this area, if we go ask or raise a concern, they will give us dismissal looks. So, we left the work as soon as we started, the board and all that remains here. And we restarted again now.

GV: ok, what do you think is the purpose of this?

R: Slum board committee has told us that if we started an association, they would hand over all the responsibilities. And then we can take care of issues that arise in this area by collecting an amount of ₹250 in the neighbourhood, and if the work can be repaired and completed within ₹30000 then you all could go ahead with such matters. But if any repairing work requires more than ₹30000, then the slum board takes up the responsibility and completes the work. They also said if you visit homes and request, people will start paying this tax to the association and your work can continue. But the problem is some people pay and some will question us, why we should pay, there will be disagreement and quarrels among us in the community here. So, we are still patient and haven't started anything yet.

GV: Earlier you said the corporation will take care of all the problems of the municipality. But now, it has come to you, this is not the work that the municipality will do.

R: yes, that's right

GV: If the municipality was doing, they would collect all this tax and that would not be your concern right.

R: Yes, this is an initiative for sharing responsibility. And they are not handing over the responsibility, then what to do. So, they encouraged us to start these associations to resolve concerns among us. Now it is a sand house colony. They have started the association, also in Indra Gandhi colony, only here it has paused and not so active, as the area is very big here.

GV: ok

R: In those areas it is about 500 to 1000 houses, only so many here, you will not have so many housing settlements like what we see here in other areas.

GV: Do you think that there will be a problem with the cost of resettlement houses like this? Is it better to have small settlement areas like those in Indira Gandhi colony or better to big ones like this.

R: Smaller ones are better, if we are around 1000 people, we could go, ask and talk to them, but if we have around 10000 people living how can we approach all of them. Our work gets very difficult.

GV: Ok, smaller settlements are better.

R: That's what I'm saying, there are people who come from every town, if they could have this kind of association, it will grow into a bigger association among them.

GV: So, you are suggesting, during the time of resettlement, peoöle from the same village should be put together in the same location, they could start an association.

R: Yes, but what is the use now, we have been resettled, it has been 6 years already, and we are nearing the phase of breaking down these. Now only if they complete the resettlement planning and phase, we can do what best could be done. Nothing can be done now.

**1:08**

GV: Ok, where do children go for schooling here?

R: There are schools here to study until class 8th.

GV: to study after that?

R: We have Ennore High school, on the other side there is Vellanchetty, there are many around.

GV: ok, what about hospitals?

R: There is a municipal hospital here.

GV: Earlier you were in Lakshmipuram and Singaravelan area right.

R: Yes, both are same

GV: Is there any difference between the school, hospital facility you had there and here?

R: There we would not be using the municipality hospital.

GV: Why?

R: Because there were many private hospitals there nearby, like Periya Samy, Raghavan, Kuamr doctors available there. It is very close to the homes there, we could go there for any emergency, also we did not suffer from any major illness. For fever, if we give ₹5, we can get an injection.

GV: So here you feel you were suffering from many more illnesses?

R: Yes.

GV: like what?

R: We get frequent fevers, chicken pox, and people take a long time to recover. In one building one person gets, many around them also suffer, the same for chicken pox, people in that house also suffer and the neighbouring ones.

GV: So, the spread of illness is more here compared to other places.

R: It will be right if the population of the area is more.

GV: You are not suffering like what used to happen in Kuppam?

R: yeah, it is not like that, here it used to be a lot when we moved in here. But what, such is the situation.

GV: Here if we need to improve facilities, what facilities are required for you here? If we need to develop this area, what do you want in the future?

R: What I would like is that my children should have a better life than what I had. What I would like is for them to have a good education and grow. their learning experience should have access to a library, a good playing ground. they should not be spoiled or become bad. If their routing has access to the library, playground then we can feel confident that their future will be good.

GV: So, you want things that are good for the children's future?

R: Yes. yeah, also to have a tuition center, adult and learning center as many offices don’t know how to read and write here. Many developments can be done here but now we are in an end phase or closing period?

GV: What do you mean by the last phase or closing phase?

R: when we came from there, we didn’t know many things, we just wanted a house to live in. Now the current generation of children will look for what facilities they will want in their home that will make them feel more comfortable at home. so, the facilities should match as per their needs and wants.

GR: So, you're saying just the house is not enough it should contain the facilities we require.

R: Of course, if you have the facilities we require when we will feel this is our home to stay, our community, and place we belong. isn’t this good for everybody.

GR: So, you want a house with all facilities and not just a house

R: Yeah, we can also move our house if this is not comfortable, we can always put ₹500 or 1000 we can move to another place so we should have all the facilities we require in this colony.

GR: So, you will call it a home when it has all the facilities, not just a building that is given to you in the name of house.

R: Exactly.

GR: OK

R: See now here we have a school, and all these children go to school, those highschool boys jump over the school walls to smoke. So, I feel we should raise the height of the wall so that children don’t jump over and come.

GR: OK

R: Even the playground is very big and when it gets dark you don’t know who is walking in and out, and when there is an issue, we call the municipality police and they come when the issue is over and done.

GR: OK.

GR: How far was the sea then?

R: Oh, it was 5-6 towns away. to my knowledge it was very far. Now when we are so close to it i feel happy.

GR: Why do you think the sea is coming closer?

R: Hmm, in chithirai or aippasi month, the sea waves become more, and the sand gets pulled in and the water level increases. so then as the sea comes near, we keep moving further away. and at that time there were many empty spaces, so we continued, and the municipality did not raise any issue. see if my daughter gets married, she could build a hut right next to me.

GR: So, from young you have been there right, how many times have you moved or relocated?

R: Actually, I am not sure, around 10 times.

GR: OK in your knowledge 10 times, your house has never been in one place.

R: Yeah, if this is our house right next to it the sea water will come. First our fence will go away but then we continue to live and when it starts to come close to the wall and due to rain there will be many leaks in the house, we will open the hut wall and reweave it, during that period we will move away a bit more.

GR: Everytime you reweave your hut you move a bit more.

R: Yes, but once our whole house got washed away at night 1:30

GR: Were you all inside the house then.

R: Yes, we were inside. yeah, we knew the sea waves were coming so we will not sleep. we will put all our vessels and things onto one side. That time the wall broke off and the roof started coming down. That was the last time we saw something like that. so, then we came closer to the road.

GR: OK

R: Yeah, that place belong to a moslem family, we gave ₹ 1000. there was only one woman living there and she gave us this piece of land leaving some space for her. and we told her she could come and stay with us anytime.

GR: Was the wall made of mud.

R: yeah, it was made of clay. and we whitewash with calcium carbonate. We will make it by soaking seashells for 3 days in hot water and when we filter it after 3 days the seashells will come separately, and calcium carbonate will remain.

GR: So, you do it by yourself.

R: Yeah, we make it, we don't buy it from shops.

GR: Ok what do you call them?

R: There are different kinds, and we have a name for each one of them. We even find pearls on the seashore.

GR: Have you taken them.

R: I have not but my uncles are in Nagapattinam.

GR: What about Chennai?

R: In Chennai it is difficult to get. Sometimes inside fish we can find them.

GR: Do you make dry fish here,

R: yes, we do.

GR: How?

R: Like we will collect tail fish, remove its intestines then we will wash it well and add salt, tie it, and store it well. Dry it in the sun for 2 days.

GR|: What else do you do?

R: If it is our kind of fish, we will cut it into two, add salt, leave it to ferment overnight, take it out, wash and dry under the sun. If you want to store it for longer days we will add turmeric to the salt, ferment it. Then the next day we will wash it and dry it, it will help us to keep it for many days.

GR: For how long it will last.

R: Upto 6 to 7 months.

GR: If you just added salt how long it will last.

R: Not sure we don’t keep such stock.

GR: Where will you get the salt from?

R: We get it from a shop that is not Thoothukudi.

GR: Because people said that time, they were able to collect salt.

R: Yeah, that time in Ennore.

GR: Have you gone and collected it?

R: Yes, maybe when I was 10 years old, our relatives' houses were nearby so I have seen the process of making salt.

GR: How did that place look

R: It used to be a lot of fun going there.

GR: I have heard there are many fruit trees like guava and other trees there.

R: Yeah, during then even movie shooting happens there like Rajnikanth and others. We went on a boat to see the movie show thing on the other side.

GR: That time where did you get drinking water from.

R: In Lakshmipuram the water was super tasty, we had borewell and ground water. We never bought water even though the water tank lorry will come.

GR: Your house is very close to the sea right.

R: Yes, but the water was good. We even grew many plants.

GR: What kind of plants.

R: we had a banana tree, rose plants and snake gourd, bottle gourd and other varieties. It was like a small garden like what I have here now.

GR: So, you grew your own vegetables.

R: Yes, like what I have now. Vegetables such as brinjal, drumstick, and mangoes. we will not buy this from outside.

GR: Thes gourds are also from there.

R: No when we moved in there, we had this. This is Lord Murugan and ganesh.

**1:25:19**

GR: What is the area of this house now?

R: It must be about 340 square feet. It is just the hall, kitchen and bathroom on this side.

GR: 340 square feet all together?

R: Yes, everything together. Have a look at it, you will understand.