**REIMAGINING THE GOOD CITY FROM ENNORE CREEK**

Interview Transcription

**Interview Information**

Interviewer/s: Gajendran V

Place of interview: Kattupalli Village – Men – Reside in Minjur

Date of interview: 04 Nov 2023

Transcription by: GV

**Interviewee Information**

Name:

Pseudonym: Respondent

GV: This interview is conducted purely for research. We don’t use it for any other purpose. We also do not share with anyone else. It will be shared only with project team members. We are trying to understand how a good city should be from people’s perspective. There is no need to mention your name. If you wish you can give a pseudonym.

Respondent: No need to mention pseudonym as well.

GV: If you do not wish to mention any name it is fine. We do not want names. We only want to know what happened? what kind of changes took place? If you feel that mentioning your profession as a problem, there is no need to mention your profession as well. If you give details about your village ant its situation, it’s enough for us. How long you lived in Kattupalli?

Respondent: I born in that village and lived there from my childhood.

GV: What is your age?

Respondent: I am 47 years old.

GV: How was the place when you were a child?

Respondent: The place was surrounded by Mundiri Thoppu, Savukku thoppu, people engaged with agricultural activities and also surrounded by Mango and coconut farms. The season of munthiri lasts for four months. If a person in a family leases a particular amount of munthiri thoppu, the person will manage the expenses of family with the income from munthiri thoppu for six months. Remaining six months, people engage in agricultural work and prawn catching. Women go for prawn catching.

GV: You said that people engaged with munthiri harvesting and agricultural work. What about your family? What your family member were doing in those days?

Respondent: My family members leases munthiri thoppu in the month of February. It was going up to May-June. After harvest a share will be given to the land owner and my father will sell his share use the money for family expenses for four months and sometimes it was used to manage family expenses for two more months. Era season comes after the munthiri season. Ladies were going for catching prawns. Gents were engaging in agricultural work like sowing seeds and other works. These works were there for another six months.

GV: Did you involve in prawn catching?

Respondent: Night I was going for prawn catching.

GV: Where people catch prawns?

Respondent: From Kalanji to harbour people catch prawn in river.

GV: In Buckingham canal or in river?

Respondent: In river.

GV: What kind of methods people were using to catch prawns?

Respondent: Ladies catch prawns by using hands. Men travel in kattumaran and use net to catch prawns.

GV: Whether your father had kattumaram?

Respondent: No.

GV: Then, how your father was catching fish?

Respondent: My father did not engage in fishing. He was only doing agriculture.

GV: Mother?

Respondent: She was going for catching prawns.

GV: You said you were going at night for catching prawns, with whom did you go?

Respondent: I was going along with my brother.

GV: How many siblings you had?

Respondent: Including me 8 children.

GV: Your father was not into fishing, then how your brother learnt about fishing?

Respondent: In 1984, a group of fishers came here and settled near sea shore straight to our village. They did not go to sea during Karthigai and Margali months. At that time, they come to river for catch fish. We used to go along with them and learnt fishing and also learnt to weave net.

GV: So, before 1984 you were not involved in fishing?

Respondent: Before 1984 a group from Thiruvatriyur come here to catch prawns. They use body net, the size of panels in the net will be small. People from our village were going along with them to pull net inside the water.

GV: Therefore, you were always in relationship with fishers.

Respondent: Yes.

GV: Whether your father had own land?

Respondent: No. In between Buckingham canal and river, there were two areas called eri and thangal. Eri was government purampokku land. Thangal was patta land. People of our village occupied eri land and practiced agriculture. We did not have patta land, but others had.

GV: How many acres of land your father had?

Respondent: One and half acres of land.

GV: What was your father cultivating?

Respondent: Paddy. He was cultivating my using the method vithaipadu (throwing seeds).

GV: He was not growing sapling and transplanting?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: What kind of varieties your father cultivated?

Respondent: People say IR 50. I am not able to say the name of paddy varieties my father cultivated.

GV: your father was doing agriculture; your mother was going for catching prawns and you went for catching fish. Was there any disturbance at any point of time?

Respondent: First Eb came here and the harbour came here. Some went to work in those places and gave up the traditional works. After that L&T came here and people went to work there. Slowly people gave up the traditional job. However, women are going for prawn picking even today.

GV: Even today?

Respondent: Yes

GV: When you were doing agriculture, you were independent, since it was self-employment. In case of contract work people have to work for long time, salary may be less, then why people are going to work in industry under contract employment?

Respondent: Mundiri thoppu were destroyed. People lost six months income, therefore they have to go to work in industry to met their family expenses.

GV: Why munthi thoppu were demolished?

Respondent: To build harbour and L&T, munthiri thoppu were demolished. Munthiri thoppu were belongs to four to five owners.

GV: When munthiri thoppu were acquired for industries, land owners must have received compensation, I would like to know whether compensation was given to the people who were dependent on munthiri thoppu?

Respondent: No.

GV: So, people from your village did not benefit from land acquisition?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: Whether people from your village resisted against land acquisition since it affects your six months income?

Respondent: Yes, they opposed.

GV: What happened after that?

Respondent: The opposed the land acquisition. A meeting was organized. Half were ok to get a job. Lands were given to industries by owners, what our people can do, if the land owners ready to give their land. They cannot do anything.

GV: So, there was no strong opposition from your village since lands did not belong to people in your village. Did they demand jobs?

Respondent: Yes, they did demand jobs. Our people did not get jobs. Fishermen who were depending on sea, go job opportunities. They were evicted. It is the place shipbuilding is happening now. They evicted and resettled in a place in Kalanji. Contract employments were given to them. It was said to them that they will get permanent employment, it seems their employment is not made permanent till now.

GV: Did you demand for employment?

Respondent: Yes

GV: Did you get?

Respondent: People staged protest, but employment was not given to our villagers. Till now case is going on.

GV: Who has filed case?

Respondent: CITU case is in progress.

GV: Thermal power plant, Kamarajar port and then L&T had come here. What kind of changes these industries brought in your life?

Respondent: Some got contract jobs. About 70 ladies are working in Kamarajar port. We did not get employment in EB.

GV: Representative on behalf of village had done anything?

Respondent: I think they did something. I am not aware, since I was a small boy. It was in 1989, I was 13 years old.

GV: Whether your father’s land was acquired?

Respondent: TIDCO occupied it for industrial development.

Timing: 12.50

GV: Where was your land?

Respondent: It was in the other side of the river. It was in between canal and river.

GV: TIDCO acquired those lands?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: Whether the land was acquired when your father was doing agriculture?

Respondent: Yes. It was acquired long ago.

GV: Can you explain about the development of your village?

Respondent: Our village is not prosperous.

GV: Why are you saying like that?

Respondent: In contract work people get about 15000 rupees as salary approximately. With that they can only fulfil their food needs and children’s education. However, in case of munthiri harvesting, people may get more yields resulting in higher income. Contract work is beneficial for those who got labour contracts. There may be 4-5 contractors. It is not beneficial for those who work as contract workers.

GV: So, contractors and contract workers are from your village. Those who get contracts get more benefits. In the case of Munthiri cultivation, everyone benefited. Am I right?

Respondent: Yes. People used the income from munthiri harvesting to maintain their families. People used to purchase jewellery for their children’s marriages. In off season, people went for other works and income from the other jobs would be in their savings.

GV: Do you think that saving is difficult nowadays?

Respondent: Yes. Saving is difficult nowadays.

GV: Why did you shift from your village to here?

Respondent: I moved here for my children’s education. They have to travel a long distance to reach their educational institutions. So, I moved to this place with my family.

GV: What is the situation of you home in your village?

Respondent: It is there.

GV: Have you rented out your home?

Respondent: Yes, I have rented my home in the village.

GV: Have you rented to a person from your village or to labourers?

Respondent: I have rented to company workers. They are Hindi speaking workers.

GV: Where they are from?

Respondent: Assam, Manipur.

GV: How they approached you?

Respondent: They enquired about vacant houses for rental and local people gave my contact information and they contacted me.

GV: How many workers live in your house?

Respondent: 6-7 workers.

GV: How do you see the migrant workers?

Respondent: They are ok with 12 hours of work and they are coming here.

GV: Is there any development in your village?

Respondent: After the development of companies, Panchayat is getting more money through tax and road facilities are developed with that money.

GV: Earlier road facilities were not there?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: Income of panchayat increased?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: What other facilities were developed by Panchayat?

Respondent: Community hall, ambulance, water tank. Earlier water tank was not there in the village. After arrival of companies, income of panchayat increased and infrastructure were developed. Revenue of panchayat was less earlier, since companies were not there.

GV: You have moved to this place. Likewise, anyone has migrated to your village?

Respondent: People from our village lived in places outside our village such as Mylapore, they returned to our village.

GV: No new persons have settled in your village?

Respondent: Those who married women from our village settled here in our village.

GV: Why bridegroom settle in your village?

Respondent: They native places were backward that our village. They settled here for employment.

GV: When land was acquired for L&T. What was the process adopted to acquire land? Were you informed about the land acquisition?

Respondent: Representatives of TIDCO came to our village and informed us that company is going to come and they are going to acquire land.

GV: Whether you were asked to move out of your village?

Respondent: Yes, but our people refused to move citing employment opportunities. People said ‘we can not survive in other place; all our livelihoods are here’.

GV: People of Kuppam accepted?

Respondent: Yes, they have to be moved compulsorily. It was the point of shipbuilding. Since, our village was not the point of shipbuilding, they left our village.

GV: Whether any resolution was passed in your panchayat against land acquisition?

Respondent: I am not sure.

GV: Whether fishing was affected after the arrival of Kamarajar port?

Respondent: Yes. Depth of the rived was reduced and it was muddier than earlier times.

GV: Generally, people said that prawns will grow well in mud? Was that mud not suitable?

Respondent: There should be flow of water, only then there will be growth in fisheries.

GV: In your opinion, whether industrialization is good or your previous livelihood was good?

Respondent: Because of industrialization road facilities are good. I see it as a good thing. Otherwise, it is not good for village. Earlier, there were no road facility, people have to get into water to cross and reach the other side. Since, company came here, roads were constructed.

GV: Otherwise, no development?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: Why?

Respondent: Prosperity was there in those days and such prosperity is not present in these days.

GV: Prosperity means?

Respondent: Money will remain after expenditure. Now, people are not able to save money. No savings. Income is only enough to maintain their families.

GV: People are able to manage their daily life and not able to save money for future. You are saying that industrialization has created this situation?

Respondent: Yes. If people received permanent jobs, then they will get bonus and they can save money. People are only getting contract jobs and they only get 15000 INR and it will be adequate only for their expenditure.

GV: Why permanent employment is not given to people?

Respondent: They may say they did not get proper person. They may say there is no government provisions.

GV: You said you were a member of DYFI? When did you form the organization?

Respondent: We formed the unit of the organization for demanding road facility.

GV: When did you formed the DYFI unit?

Respondent: In 1994 we formed the DYFI unit. There was no electricity facility at our village. I demanded one light service for houses in our village. We formed the DYFI organization unit in our village and they helped us to get the one light connection, ration card. We got one light electricity connection for 184 houses.

GV: There was no electricity connection at that time?

Respondent: Electricity connection was there. Only 10 to 20 houses got electricity connection. We got electricity connection for houses in our village and Kalanji. We got ration cards for families in our village. Youngster in the organization collected money and did public services.

GV: How did you know about the organization?

Respondent: There was a person called Vinayagamoothy. He was a communist and there was another person called mukunthan. When we approached them, they asked us to for the unit of DYFI and through the organization they helped us. There was a person called Krishnan in Kavundampalayam and another person Mukunthan from Nanthiyampakkam, Ramesh from Pattamunthiri, Kathivel from Minjur. Samuel, Koranjur Selvam. All these persons helped us. At that time collector office was at Kancheepuram. We submitted a petition to collector demanding one light service. We demanded a bridge connecting oornamedu. We were not able to succeed in getting bridge.

GV: Why you needed an organization at that point of time?

Respondent: No one in our village was in position to come forward and do the things for our village.

GV: They guided you?

Respondent: Yes, for sure. They helped us in getting one light service, ration card. They guided us in submitting petition to collector. When we went to collector, the persons here who belong to the organization put us in touch with the persons in the same organization in Kancheepuram and they guided us in Kancheepuram and helped us to submit the petition in collector office.

GV: So, you don’t know any one in Kancheepuram, the persons in the organization helped to get the help of people in Kancheepuram to submit your petition.

Respondent: yes. Persons here called the person of the organization in Kancheepuram and informed them that we are coming there to give petition to the collector and the persons there received us and stayed with us and helped us to submit the petition.

GV: How many of you were members of the organization?

Respondent: At that time, 120 persons in our village were members of the organization.

GV: Anything else have you done for your village?

Respondent: We all together stand in good and bad things in our village.

GV: Have you started night study centres?

Respondent: No. Since, there was no road facility, those who studied stayed in hostels. There was a primary school, now it is a high school.

GV: How long this organization was there in your village?

Respondent: It exists even today. Its members are now communist party members.

GV: Focusing on your village, in your opinion, how a good city should be?

Respondent: I don’t say that our village is a good city. There is no place to go for toilet. Our village was surrounded by compound wall.

GV: Compound wall is a disturbance to your village?

Respondent: Yes. For nature call people go to the other side. If there is land, people houses may be spacious. Now, there is no space. In that small space people are having toilet facility.

GV: Compound wall restricted the growth of your settlement?

Respondent: Yes. The compound wall was in patta land. I am not sure about porampokku land. Even patta lands were in our use. We used to play in those lands.

GV: Have you organized any sports tournaments?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: What kind of sports tournaments?

Respondent: Football, Kabadi, Cricket.

GV: When did you conduct these tournaments?

Respondent: We conduct tournaments during Pongal festival times.

GV: Where was the cricket ground, whether it is inside L&T now?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: How many teams had come for the cricket tournament?

Respondent: About 15 teams.

GV: Where do these teams come from?

Respondent: Nettukuppam, thalankuppam, kalanji, Sattankuppam, Senkanimedu, oornamedu, thirumullaivoyil.

GV: Have you conducted football matched?

Respondent: We have conducted matches between friends in our village.

GV: Have you lost the playground after the arrival of L&T?

Respondent: We did not have playground. We played in a patta land of a person. After the acquisition of patta land, we lost the ground to L&T.

GV: So, your entertainment space disappeared?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: Now, where to villagers play?

Respondent: Now, they are playing near compound.

GV: Do you think Kattupalli village is urbanized? Do you think Kattulappi acquired city’s character? Or it still remains with the village character?

Respondent: Kattipally acquired city’s character, but there is no neatness.

Timing: 31.30

GV: What kind of characters your village acquired?

Respondent: Cement road and drainage facilities are there. That’s it. In case of village, sand road will be there. We play kabaddi in the streets.

GV: North Indians are coming here for work. What is your relationship with them?

Respondent: There is no much link between us. They go to work and return to their room.

GV: There are six north Indians live in your home. Do you speak to them? Same persons live in your home for long time or persons change frequently?

Respondent: Rentiers change frequently.

GV: But always there will be some persons in your home?

Respondent: If there is no work, there won’t be any workers. Some stay for sometime and go back. They rent home when they don’t like the accommodation facility provided by the companies.

GV: What accommodation facilities?

Respondent: There are sheds constructed for workers to stay. If they don’t like to stay there, they will come here. One or two those who don’t like the sheds rent houses and stay outside.

GV: Do they pay rent properly?

Respondent: Yes, they do.

GV: Till now there is no issues between them and you?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: However, there is no much interaction between you and them?

Respondent: Yes.

GV: Do you monitor who lives in your home?

Respondent: Yes, I will go home and check once in a month.

GV: Owners impose many conditions when renting their houses. Have you imposed any conditions to them?

Respondent: No. If they keep the home clean, I am ok.

GV: How much you get as rent?

Respondent: For six persons, I get around 4000 to 4500 rupees.

GV: Whether you live in rented or own house here (Minjur)?

Respondent: Own house.

GV: When did you buy this home?

Respondent: Three years ago, I bought this home.

GV: Before buying own house?

Respondent: I lived in rented house.

GV: What was your house rent?

Respondent: 4500 Rupees. I managed my housing rent with the rent I got for my house in my village.

GV: You have purchased a won house in here, will you go back and settle in your village?

Respondent: If I don’t like this place, I will go back and settle in my village.

GV: Why did you decide to buy a house here?

Respondent: how long can I live in a rented house? So, I purchased an own house?

GV: Do you think living in rented home is problematic?

Respondent: We don’t know when they ask us to vacate. We would have settled in that place. If owner ask us to vacate, where would we go?

GV: Ok permanency is one of the major issues. Any other issues?

Respondent: Owners put condition that we cannot bring our relatives to our home.

GV: You have a house in Minjur and you have a house in Kattupalli. Where do you want to live?

Respondent: For now, I want to live here in Minjur. If I shift to Kattupalli, it is difficult to go to hospital in case of emergency due to traffic. Container lorries will pass through our village. We cannot go to hospital in case of emergency. There is a hospital here, in case of emergency we can go to hospital. It is a drawback in case of Kattupalli.

GV: Don’t you want to sell your home in kattupalli and buy another house here?

Respondent: No, a house should be there in the village I born and grew up.

GV: Where do your children settle?

Respondent: I cannot say about their preference. If they study well, they may settle in a good position. If they don’t study well the situation may be different. I can only give advice to an extent. They have to decide about their life.

GV: Do you think Ooru (Native) is permanent?

Respondent: Yes, Ooru is permanent.

GV: You born in that village and then you have come here and you are saying that you don’t know where your children settle. How do you see this?

Respondent: They are travelling in the midst of cultural change. They (children) choose what they like.

GV: Do you think that a person can live in a place permanently for his life time?

Respondent: Today’s situation, I don’t think so.

GV: If you want your village to be a good city in future, what is you expect?

Respondent: A house for everyone with toilet facility, good drinking water, a playground, a hospital. If a place contains all these facilities, we can call it as a good city. If these facilities are not there, we cannot call a place as a good city.

GV: According to you, previous situation or present situation which is good?

Respondent: Earlier time was good, but we cannot go to hospital in case of emergency. We have to cross the water by getting into the river. Today we are able to go to hospital by vehicles.

GV: So, there is an improvement in services and facilities, but no improvements in terms of income. Am I right?

Respondent: Yes, I agree.

GV: Earlier some things were good, today some other things were good. We cannot say all things were good all the time. Both good and bad exist all time. Do you agree?

Respondent: Yes, I agree.

GV: Do you think that Kattupalli village will exist tomorrow?

Respondent: I am not sure.

GV: In the background of industrialization, do you want the village to be that where it is now?

Respondent: In today’s situation, it will be good if the village remains in the same place. If people move to another place, they may suffer from unemployment. Now, at least they get money to manage their family expenses. They are able to manage their minimum expenses. If all move to another place, everyone may not get employment.

GV: If people in same place, they will at least get an employment which can give them income to manage their families.

Respondent: Yes. Now, it is safe for them. In the present unemployment crisis situation, if people were resettled somewhere, it is difficult for them.

GV: Can’t they get employment in other places?

Respondent: Where is employment? People who live here come there to work. Minjur town depends on EB and Kamarajar port.

GV: If people settle here, they have to go there for work. Therefore, according to you, living there is best.

Respondent: Yes. It will be good if all facilities are created.

GV: In Kattupalli, I came to know that mudaliars gave some lands to people belongs to your community. Why did they give?

Respondent: They gave lands to our people because of land ceiling act.

Timing: 42.30

GV: Do you remember when lands were given to people belong to your community?

Respondent: I am not sure. However, I think lands were given to our people in between 1985-1990.

GV: Whether your father received any lands from Mudaliars?

Respondent: No, my father did not receive any land.

GV: How many received lands from Mudaliars?

Respondent: As I remember, about 4-5 persons received lands. I am not sure whether my father had land. I think my father sold lands to Mudaliar.

GV: So, Mudaliars gave lands to your community people because of land ceiling act?

Respondent: Yes, a few received land because of land ceiling act.

GV: What people did with that land?

Respondent: I think a few sold to private persons and I think TIDCO acquired some lands. I am not sure. Initially land was given to people belong to our community and agains those lands were purchased by Mudaliars later.

GV: Whether land ceiling act was implemented seriously at that time?

Respondent: I think yes. Otherwise, why they are going to give land to us?

GV: What were the benefits people got because of land distribution?

Respondent: They engaged in agricultural activities.

GV: Then why people sold back to them again?

Respondent: They would have faced hardship. Or they would have in a situation to meet marriage expenses of their children. Therefore, they would have sold the lands.

GV: Your family did not receive land?

Respondent: Yes, I think so.

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