**REIMAGINING THE GOOD CITY FROM ENNORE CREEK**

Interview Transcription

**Interview Information**

Interviewer/s: V. Gajendran

Place of interview: Kattukuppam

Date of interview: 26 March 2023

Transcription by: AR

**Interviewee Information**

Pseudonym: Respondent 1

[00:00:00]

**Respondent 1:** Are you asking about our livelihood, how was it before and how has it changed now? Are you asking about this? You can tell if it is something else also.

**Question:** One minute. No, everything has to be asked. Specifically…

**Respondent 1:** You can sit here.

**Question:** You can talk about Ennore and how many years have you been working here?

**Respondent 1:** What I’m saying is, if you tell us what type of questions are expected, we’ll give explanations according to that.

**Question:** Now specifically, about prawns, vannathi crab, the one with a long leg, related to that. How the river soil has transformed, how it was earlier and what is its state at present. So, these are the main topics. Other than that, there are 4-5 more topics, one is how the creatures have been affected by this, secondly, how livelihood has changed, that also we have to address. First can we finish this, Anna? The questions related to prawns; we’ll finish first.

**Respondent 1:** Hmm.

**Question:** So, the first question is, where are prawns most dominantly found in this zone? **Respondent 1:** You are asking about now or before?

**Question:** Even if it is in the past or at present also, you can tell. If you talk about the past, you can tell, when and where was it found the most?

**Respondent 1:** In the year 1990, prawns were abundantly found in the Ennore Kosathalaiyar river, saltwater, that area was full of prawns. The place where we are living now, a good deal of prawns used to exist here. During seventies and eighties, we could catch plenty of prawns in this area. As far as we know, we have caught pathukannu.

**Question:** Pathukannu??

**Respondent 2:** Power house is there, right? There prawns would exist.

**Respondent 1:** Ennore Thermal Power Station is there, right? It requires water. There would be pathukannu along the river. There would be pathukannu power house, it would be 3-4 meters deep. The power plant would suck the necessary water. The required water that the company needs, it would suck that much, which resulted to the decrease in the river water level. So, to avoid wastes to get stuck in the mouth, the government would stick a tunter and they always maintained and cleaned it. The ocean water used to mix with the river water. They wouldn’t allow the contaminated waste from Chennai and ash waste from ETS (Ennore Thermal station) to come out, they discharged it rightly in the ash storage. Before we started doing this occupation, we used to get plenty of prawns, when we started working, ashes were gradually let out from the Ennore thermal power station. Sediments started accumulating.

**Question**: Hmm

**Respondent 1:** This is not thara (land), all through these years, sediments got accumulated and settled here. As years passed by, the number of prawns started dwindling mainly because of the industries here. Our livelihood has been adversely affected since the industries have come near us. First, we used to catch crabs here. There would be Naatu padagu (native boats), from here till there. Small native boats would be that side, then numbers were low only. Small native boats used for our occupation were few.

**Question**: Hmm

**Respondent 1:** Big native boats would be halted here. When I was a young boy, studying in school, during high tides in the ocean, the raw crabs used to come on this side of the boat. When the ocean turns, the ocean water that fell on the boat would be strained, leaving just the crabs inside the boat. I have also taken some from there. Currently, the crabs have disappeared from this place, and prawns have completely vanished. Even if there are 1-2 prawns, they eventually die because of the toxic waste water and air. We call it sukh yera as it does not get sufficient air to breathe, it perishes. In this zone, all the prawns and fishes have been eradicated because of the stinking water and company water.

[00.00-05.58 min]

**Question:** At what depth do prawns live?

**Respondent 1:** It mostly lives in the ground. Only if the prawns are plenty, it is found during the afternoons. Nowadays, people use grubs (theeni) to catch them, using visuruvela (a type of fishing net). So, to eat the food, it comes out, then it can be seen. Only when the sun sets, the prawns come out of in search of food and also before the sun rises, around 5am, 4am, 3 am, it comes out and looks for food.

**Question:** So, it is found in the morning and at night?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, when the sun sets and before the sun rises, they wander for food. Why so? Because it is nature’s rule. If they come out during afternoons, they start eating the fishes like Koduva, Keleti, Irangkeleti and many more fishes. All the fishes that consume prawns are all food for prawns. Therefore, naturally it is created in such a way so that prawns are seen out only when the sun sets and before the sun rises. This is how it has happened all these years. If I think why this happens, it is a natural process of protecting themselves from any kind of danger, at night looks for food and returns to the sand. The prawns feel safe in the mud and they eat the worms and insects present in the sand.

**Question:** So, it stays in the mud only?

**Respondent 1:** Mud and sand. Recently, there were crows so the prawns didn’t have enough space to stay in the sand, the numbers are declining. Our priority in our business is first the prawns and then comes the fishes and crabs. We go to catch prawns but in the middle of that, if we come across any fishes or crabs, then only we’ll catch them too. But mainly, only prawns. Because of crows and shaaru, our livelihood is affected.

**Question**: Where do you catch prawns?

**Respondent 1**: From Pudunagar bridge to pullicat lake, Sindhamani till Eeswaran Kovil, we do our business there. There is a factory nearby because of which the discharge of toxic wastes, so the prawns that we used to catch here, we go there and catch prawns. We used to earn daily earlier but now mainly because of toxic wastes, these organisms are living in these harmful conditions, they are not able to survive. The main reason for the endangering situation of the prawns is the toxic wastes. I went there at night and I couldn’t get anything. Diesel worth Rs 500, ice worth Rs 100, it was a complete loss for me. It was of no use going there.

[05.59- 09.42]

**Question**: What is the life span of prawns? For example, a dog can live for 10 -15 years. So how long do prawns live?

**Respondent 1:** We don’t know how long do prawns live but they are being killed completely. We have never counted how many days, weeks or years they live but we know that on Amavasya, like the snakes shed their skin, the prawns also shed their skin and their new skin develops in 2-3 days, and it is always bigger in size compared to the previous state.

**Question**: Okay, so you don’t know the life span of prawns?

**Respondent 1:** No, we don’t know.

**Respondent 2:** And earlier, we used to see prawns of a particular size, the same prawn if you see after 2 months, it will be like this, again if you see after 3 months, it will look like this. But when we look at an early stage, a prawn is only this size, only when it is of a certain size, it is visible to our eyes. We just take note of that. After 3 months, it will be of this size,which can be seen. The prawns take 5 months to grow from baby prawns to adult prawns.

**Respondent 1**: The main reason why there is no income in this occupation is essentially because of these toxic wastes. Wastes not only from the factory but also the harmful wastes coming from Chennai through Bukhingham Canal, secondly, we will only get prawns if it is produced, but the place for that is Kurimedu canal, Bodhakaal canal, Kottamalai canal, here itself there are so many canals…

**Respondent 2:** Aatmaan canal

**Respondent 1**: Aatmaan canal…canals like these are joined to the river, going into the mangroves. In the mangroves area, there will be plenty of prawns, they will hatch their eggs and grow there. When they grow big, they will flow down to the river. When they descend towards the river, they get caught in our nets. NCTPS have destroyed all the canals in this area. And the area where prawns were produced, they covered it with soil and built ground there. Due to that, there is no scope for production of prawns, consequently we are unable to get access to prawns which ultimately affects our business. NCTPS have closed the canals. If you see from here, you can see. Kurimedu canal is not a single canal. Kurimedu canal is joined to Kottamalai canal. Jamagara canal and Brijthara canal are all joined to that. All are linked, as a collection. Water used to get distributed to all the canals.

**Respondent 2:** The distance from these two canals is 5 kilometres, and between these 2 canals, there are 3 more canals. There will be a long canal within these 3 canals, that is where the production of prawns is very high. From there only, it descends in the river. They have destroyed that canal.

[09.43-13.40 min]

**Question**: You all don’t catch prawns in that canal?

**Respondent 1&2**: Yes, we do catch prawns there.

**Respondent 1**: This is how we catch prawns from there, we don’t catch the very tiny ones; those will anytime be there. We don’t catch the baby prawns because it will be a waste right, so only when it grows bigger in size and flows down to the river, then using a net we catch them. We don’t go inside the canal.

**Question**: So, you catch them when they reach the river mud?

**Respondent 1:** There will be men standing in a line, using their kutcha valai (a type of fishing net) they catch the prawns. From the start, they have been using this type of fishing net. Keeping the net on the mouth, they collect all the prawns that flow down with the water. All these generations, we had been doing that, but since the company’s wastes discharge has just put an end to the production of prawns. Only if there are canals, there will be prawns, only if prawns exist, we will have our livelihood. Our livelihood has been destroyed.

**Respondent 2:**  Earlier, in the month end, there used to be only white mud, even if someone fell down there, only sand would touch the clothes, no sediments were present. And now, the contaminated water itself is responsible for the growth of toxic sediments. The dirty stinking water coming from Chennai changes the properties of the water. Earlier when we used to walk there, mud would not stick to our feet, the water used to be so clean. Unfortunately, now, however we walk, mud always dirties our legs. Similarly, in the fishing areas, the toxic waste water is just settling down as toxic sediments. Even on sand, the toxic sediments are being accumulated and that gives out a strange bad smell. Earlier the mud did not smell. If you see at home, we wash our hands with soap before eating, now it is the same scenario when we are working here, because of the smell of the contaminated mud. It is so smelly now.

**Respondent 3:** Earlier we used to cook food using this water. If drinking water was not available, we would use this water.

**Respondent 2:**  My father used to drink the water from this river. Can anyone consume this water now? I had seen my father drinking this river water multiple times. Now even to wash our feet with this water, we hesitate.

[13.41- 16.29 min]

**Question**: Yearly, in which months do you get good number of prawns?

**Respondent 1**: In a year, prawns…

**Question**: You can talk about the past also.

**Respondent 1**: Yes, earlier, prawns were loaded in bulk in the native boats.

**Respondent 2**: Aippasi (Mid-October to mid-November) and Karttikai (Mid-November to mid- December)

**Question**: Aippasi, Karttikai?

**Respondent 2**: Aippasi, Karttikai. In Karttikai month, we get in abundance, it is the monsoon season.

**Respondent 3**: The water from the canals flow down to the river, where we catch the prawns.

**Respondent 2**: Water from all the canals would flow down. Because of rain, water reaches the canals, from there we catch prawns.

**Question**: So, during the rainy season, the rainwater from the canal pours down towards the river and it carries the prawns with it, and you all catch them from the river?

**Respondent 2**: Yes, from the river.

**Question**: How many types of prawns are there?

**Respondent 1**: First, the export quality ones are the black prawns which is most commonly known as tiger.

**Respondent 2**: Tiger in English.

**Question**: Black Tiger.

**Respondent 1**: Then there is a type of prawns called Singi iraal (lobsters), which cannot be found in the river, it is found in the ocean. There’s mouth, right?

**Question**: Singu?

**Respondent 1**: Singi iraal. (Lobster)

**Respondent 2**: Earlier, it was found in rivers too.

**Question**: Yes.

**Respondent 1**: Mountain zone. It mainly breeds in the harbours, that is also of export quality. In India it is bought for Rs. 1000 to Rs. 1500.

**Respondent 3**: Penn yera is of heavy rate.

**Question**: Heavy rate?

**Respondent 3**: The price goes up to Rs. 5000 to Rs. 10000 per kg, it depends on the size of the prawns.

**Question**: What do they do with it after buying?

**Respondent 3**: Which one?

**Question**: That Penn yera.

**Respondent 2**: They use it for rearing and breeding. They collect the baby prawns and store.

**Question**: Ohh they collect the baby prawns?

**Respondent 2**: They collect baby prawns, rear and use them for breeding and do business.

**Respondent 1:** then there is Vellai yera, Semakera, Valichu yera (kadumb yera), Valumb yera, and Budra (types of prawns) is very nutritious…

**Respondent 3:** We don’t eat this commonly.

**Respondent 1:** but not easily available. During the rainy season only, we get those. In terms of availability, one Budra prawn is equal to 100 common prawns. It is very rare, and the taste also is good. It is fleshy and tastes better than yera.

**Respondent 2:** Valichu yera is of 2 types- white and red.

**Respondent 2:** White Valichu yera perishes quickly,Red Valichu yera does not perish easily.

**Respondent 1:** It can stay alive for 2-3 days but it has to remain wet, even if it is in the net. There are also more, but we don’t know the exact names. They have not been named by past generations. One kind of prawn is like an insect..

**Respondent 2:** it’s called Aali yera.

**Respondent 1:** it is called Aali yera, it looks like a fiddler crab.

**Respondent 2:** one leg is bigger than the other.

**Respondent 1:** We don’t consume it.

**Question**: Why?

**Respondent 1:** Why because it looks just like an insect. Its legs are like crab’s, one leg will be bigger, it makes sound when its leg hit the ground.

**Respondent 2:** it makes sound with its leg and runs.

**Respondent 1:**  It looks just like an insect, that’s why we don’t eat it, but it is a type of prawn only. There are many more types but we don’t know the names for all.

[16.30- 21.42 min]

**Respondent 2:** There were also many varieties of fishes, when I was a kid, we used to see so many different types of fishes, which we don’t see now days.

**Question**: Is there a categorization of prawns living in good water and those living in saltwater? In what type of environment do they live in?

**Respondent 1:** I talked about Budra, right? It can survive in the good water as well as saltwater. The insect like prawn, Aali yera that exists in normal water. But during monsoon, it lives in the saltwater. It changes its location. It keeps changing during monsoon season. We bring Valichu yera, it survives in the river water however, if we keep them in home water, it dies. This we also don’t understand, why it happens, we haven’t researched about it.

**Respondent 3**: They are able to survive in the natural water but the water in our homes, we don’t know what all chemicals are mixed in the water we get at home. They say that the government adds Chloride in the water.

**Question**: What do prawns consume?

**Respondent 1&2:** They eat tiny insects and worms found in the soil.

**Respondent 1:** It’s not visible to our eyes. They are tiny creatures, right? They eat their kind of food in the river but for rearing they give ‘Speed’ for their growth.

**Question:** Speed is?

**Respondent 1:** Food for prawns.

**Question:** Artificial rearing.

**Respondent 1:** yes, artificially rearing the prawns.

**Respondent 2:** In the river, they eat insects and worms in the mud. There will be insects in the mud, they eat that. They say, prawns consume them.

[21.43- 24.25 min]

**Question**: And prawns are eaten by which organisms?

**Respondent 1 &2**: Prawns are eaten by Keleti, Koduva meenu, Kanavang meenu, crab, Kudi meenu Nalavanga paambu (types of snakes) which stays in the soil, it also eats Kurttapuchi which looks like mountain snake, which stays among stones. Kattuviriyan, this type of snake is found in the river and mangroves which eats many kinds of fishes and prawns. The way Indian Cobra spreads its hood, Kattuviriyan (Indian Krait snake) also does the same.

**Question:** Ohh it attacks?

**Respondent 2**: These snakes are very fast; it is very difficult to get hold of them. When you hold it, it feels slippery and it encircles the hand.

**Respondent 1:** the only minus point is that Nalakoranja paambu does not have teeth, it peels off the prawn’s skin and eats it. It has power, it does not have teeth. Kurttapucchi has tiny teeth, even if it bites us, it won’t be life threatening. When it bites, it leaves its teeth in the body and that spot will swell a little.

**Question:** These 2 snakes are not poisonous right?

**Respondent 1:** yes, not poisonous. The snakes that are found in water are mostly not poisonous. There’s a snake called Sena paambu, it has poisonous teeth, it will bite off the skin. Kuli paambu has a big mouth and teeth, it is dangerous. One man was bitten by this snake on his thigh. He had shown it to me, it had completely swelled up. These 2 snakes bite.

**Respondent 1:** After it bites, it does not let go quickly.

**Respondent 1:** Does not let go.

**Question:** So, fishes and snakes eat prawns.

**Respondent 1:** Types of fishes, types of snakes, types of crabs. All of them eat.

**Respondent 2:** For all of them, prawns are food.

**Question**: So, if prawns don’t exist, then these organisms will also not exist?

**Respondent 2:** Yes, snakes eat prawns, but I don’t know for prawns because it is always living in the mud, it eats organisms living in the soil.

**Respondent 1:** Food for prawn is mostly insects, redworms. the people who are rearing prawns, they collect the insects from the river and feed them.

**Question:** Are there insects in the river now?

**Respondent 2:** They are taking from this dirty water; they cannot pick from the good water. That is a village rule.

**Question:** Can’t take fromclean water.

**Respondent 1:** We can’t take insects from the place where prawns are living. They need food, right?

**Respondent 2:** Places where fishing nets are tied, they must not take from there.

[24.26- 28.18 min]

**Question:** From when have they been doing this business?

**Respondent 2:** 6 years.

**Question:** For 6 years, insects’ business is there.

**Respondent 2:** Used to be there, but it does not exist at present.

**Question:** So, have you also taken insects from there?

**Respondent 2:** yes, we all used to but not now.

**Question**: The rule that you talked about of not catching insects where prawns live, this rule you all have made?

**Respondent 2:** yes, we made it ourselves.

**Respondent 3:** Everyone needs crabs, fishes and prawns.

**Respondent 2:** Therefore, we only made up this rule.

**Question**: When was this rule made?

**Respondent 2:** Since the beginning, it has been there.

**Question:** So, the places where prawns exist, you can’t pick insects from there?

**Respondent 2:** yes, it is a village rule.

**Question:** Village rule. And if these insects are removed from there, the prawns won’t survive there.

**Respondent 2:** Prawns won’t exist there.

**Question**: What kind of plants do they reside around? Plants in the river, mangroves or any other?

**Respondent 1:** yes, in the mangroves, they find it cooling and natural there. It is also safe for the baby prawns; it would be difficult for fishes to catch them as they are very tiny.

**Respondent 2:** No fish can catch the prawns there. The eggs are hatched near the plants and it live there.

**Respondent 1:** Cooling and safety. The baby prawns do not hide in the soil, it will just live alongside the plants. It does not know right what to eat. The eggs are hatched there and they live there till they grow bigger.

**Question**: So, like you said, the prawns come out at night and in the morning?

**Respondent 1:** When the sun sets, around 6-7 pm. From 6 pm starting we can find prawns. As the sun rises at 4-5 am, it hides.

**Respondent 3:** 6 pm evening to morning 6 am.

**Question**: From 6 pm evening to morning 6 am you can catch prawns.

**Respondent 3:** We come here by 4- 5 pm to catch them.

**Question**: Do you find prawns during full moon days?

**Respondent 2:** The prawns are abundantly found during Amavasya (no moon) and Pournami (full moon) but some occasions, there won’t be any

**Question**: Do you think there is a connection here?

**Respondent 2:** There is a connection because on those days, we’ve been told that we can expect plenty of prawns on Amavasya and Pournami. It’s just a mental calculation.

**Respondent 1:** If it was just the Natural elements, we would have anticipated things well and handled it but now if we plan something, the crows have their own plan.

**Respondent 2:** We can’t even calculate anything nowadays. First, we used to plan and calculate our work, now we can’t do that. We don’t know what to do now, we can’t even plan and be sure of anything, we are just going and taking chances.

**Question**: Earlier you would know that prawns will be there, so you can go at a specific time.

**Respondent 2:** Earlier, we would just lie at home and randomly we would decide to go and we could find prawns there at any point of time but now the whole scenario has changed.

[28.19- 32.10 min]

**Question**: Do crows create problems?

**Respondent 1,2,3:**  Yes, definitely.

**Respondent 1**: If a fish can see very clearly, it will go and eat the prawns wherever they are. When there’s wind, in the corners, the air mixed with water, oxygen is produced which is fit for fishes and prawns. Crows filter the dirty water which makes the water super clean and transparent, because of which the prawns are unable to hide, as a result, fishes can easily locate and eat them. Fishes are the main enemies of prawns.

**Question**: So, you are saying that…

**Respondent 2**: No place to hide.

**Question**: There’s no place to hide.

**Respondent 2**: There’s no mud, if there’s mud, they are able to hide.

**Question**: So, you are saying that when mud mixes with water so fishes can’t see them. Because of crows, fishes can see clearly.

**Respondent 1**: Shark and crows are the main rivals of prawns.

**Question**: In this zone, like you said, do you only catch prawns from the creek, from Mugathuvara zone or somewhere else also?

**Respondent 1:** We don’t catch from Mugathuvara zone, it is coming from the ocean, so the prawns flow towards the ocean, so along that path only, we put our nets to catch. If the water comes like this, the prawns come along that path, to go to the ocean and we catch them in between. We don’t go to the mouth. People from other villages work in the mouth. We only catch from places that have been assigned to us.

**Question**: Where is your paadu assigned?

**Respondent 1:** We have paadu this side also, since there are many people, we are not able to do our work here. However, even if there are many people, we divide the paadu on rotation basis.

**Question**: Paadu is one area only, but it is given on rotation basis.

**Respondent 1:** If there are 20 people, for 20 people, there will be 20 paadu. If I am tying the paadu first today, then next day I’ll tie the paadu second. If he ties the 20th paadu today, next day he would tie the paadu first. You didn’t understand right?

**Question**: No, I didn’t understand. Could you explain?

**Respondent 1:** wait, I’ll explain clearly. 1 to 20. If today I am in the 1st paadu, tomorrow I’ll go to the 2nd paadu. If he on the 20th paadu, he’ll come to the first paadu tomorrow.

**Question**: Rotation.

**Respondent 1:** Rotation basis.like this, the one who is on the 2nd paadu would go to the 3rd paadu , the one who is on the 3rd paadu would go to the 4th paadu, if I am in the 1st paadu,I would then go to the 2nd paadu. Like this rotation, changing; because we don’t want any conflicts within ourselves.

**Respondent 2**: On January 1st, the first paadu was done, now it’s the third month, we have reached here.

**Question**: So, when the year ends, you’ll divide the paadu?

**Respondent 2**: January 1, we divide.

**Respondent 1:** This year, when the rotation ends, we do a new lucky draw, and whoever gets whatever paadu, we stick to that.

**Question**: So, at the end of the year, you all divide the paadu by lucky draw and whatever you get, you follow that.

[32.11- 36.50 min]

**Question**: You are distributing the paadu, what problems do you face when you don’t get prawns? Like you said earlier, the neighbouring village told you not to come there, so do you face any problems like this when you don’t get prawns?

**Respondent 1:** If we do get prawns, we are happy and if we don’t get any, although we feel bad but we still have to accept it, because our occupation is like that. Earlier, the toxic wastes coming from the industry brought in many problems and now nature…I won’t say nature but the corporate companies, crows are very problematic. Now, providing education to our kids or getting medical treatment is so difficult for us. We struggle to provide ourselves food every day, we just manage with what we have or take loans from others.

**Question**: you are dividing the paadu by yourselves and following that, like that the neighbouring village fishermen will also come or is it just your village?

**Respondent 1:** No, one day we go for work, next day Mugathuvara will work there.

**Question**: In the paadu, all villages will be there?

**Respondent 2:** Two villages only.

**Respondent 1:** Only 2 villages, Kaatukuppam and Mugathuvara Kuppam , with this net, through paadu, we are doing work by rotation, people from Sivanpadavithu use visuruvalai (type of fishing net), kattavalai is our work. Since we don’t want any sort of conflict, we have decided to do it alternatively. Through rotation basis we are tying and also because we don’t want any conflict between the 2 villages, we are doing it alternatively.

**Question**: If someone from your village has paadu, then tomorrow no one will have paadu?

**Respondent 1:** Muguthvara fishermen will work next day. Then after that, it will be our turn, so we will follow the same rotation routine.

**Question**: Paadu is shared by both the villages?

**Respondent 1:** Sharing.

**Question**: One day, your paadu will come; next day their paadu. Similarly, here also within yourselves, you only divide. One day you will go, next day someone else will go, like this it happens. Between this, people who use visuruvalai (a type of fishing net) to catch are also there. Can they catch at any time?

**Respondent 1:** They can work at any time. They don’t have paadu. Although they don’t have paadu, they work with us.

**Question**: This is called Kattavalai (type of fishing net), Anna?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, this is called Sutthuvalai. If you go towards Arambakkam, they will call it Kattavalai.

**Question**: What is the difference between Sutthuvalai and Kattuvalai?

**Respondent 1**: Both are same. We call it Sutthvalai, they call it Kattuvalai, same thing.

**Question**: What is Visuruvalai? (a type of fishing net)

**Respondent 2:** you throw into the river and pull it when it catches any fishes; it will be round.

**Question**: Do you place this in the river?

**Respondent 1:** (drawing) here will be one stick, here another, around 8,9, depending on how many sticks we have. If we have many sticks then we’ll tie 9, if less then we’ll tie 7. We tie the net to the sticks. We tie one stick here, another there, when it floods, so we keep mud this side, prawns stick to the mud.

[36.51- 42.26 min]

**Question**: So, you are catching the prawns right, so what do you do after that? Do you share?

**Respondent 1:** When we catch the prawns, there only we clean it and then separate it according to the types of prawns and keep it in ice. We take it home and the ladies at home are the ones who do the most of the remaining work. Our work finishes with catching the prawns, they sell in the market directly or sell it to the traders after discussing the price.

**Question**: Do you cook at home? If yes, what kind of food do you make?

**Respondent 1:** At home, if wife is not well, I cook. But I don’t know to make curry. Along with my friends, I fry Budra prawns. I can make omelette, fry fish and also, I can prepare prawn gravy. One day I tried making curry but I myself didn’t like it. I do some household chores when members at home are not well.

**Question**: I cook well, Anna. When you come to Chennai, you have to cook, there’s no other option.

**Respondent 2:** My brother who lives abroad, he had come here for my uncle’s funeral. One day, she washed the clothes, one day I washed, once she cooked food, another day I cooked food. I asked him how? He replied that when he goes for work, she will be at home, when she goes for work, he happens to be at home, so then who will do it.

**Respondent 1:** Here I work only when someone is not well. My house work I will only do, other ladies give me a look for that. I wipe the veranda, when I bring the prawns home and they go by auto or bus, so the box and the place where prawns were kept, it will smell so using phenyl I clean the place. I also sweep the floor; neighbours will look at all this. Our house work we will only do. Also, utensils that the kids would leave after dinner, I wash the utensils. All this I’ll do. My wife is not able to, she often gets sick. So, I help with her work.

**Question**: Do you use prawns as food for some other purposes too?

**Respondent 1:** Prawns are food for us. For something else…

**Question**: to catch fish?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, to catch fishes. Valichu yera are used to catch fishes. A hook is attached to the tail of Valichu yera, then food is given, it will keep swimming here and there. During that time fishes like Koduva, Keleti catch the prawns and eat, the hook gets stuck in it throat when the fish eats the prawn, ultimately, we get the fishes. Dead prawns are also a bait for fishes. Living prawns lead us to big fishes and dead prawns lead us to small fishes.

**Question**: Why is it like that?

**Respondent 1:** Dead prawns are eaten by small fishes, Keleti, Irangkeleti. Big fishes love to eat alive prawns. Big fishes eat fishes and prawns that are alive. They enjoy eating the living prawns.

[42.27- 46.47 min]

**Question**: You said the thorn is big, Valichu yera, they get caught in this?

**Respondent 1:** It does not die even if the thorn pokes. Valera is kept for long using motor, but Valichu yera does not need motor, it only needs to be in a wet place to stay alive. If you take it out in the morning, it will be alive till evening if kept wet. It will stay alive like this at the fishing area also.

**Question**: Motor?

**Respondent 1:** Air motor. To keep Valera fish alive, motor has to be kept or else it will die soon. As soon as it is caught, it should be kept inside a utensil filled with river water and air motor should be placed.

**Question**: Or else it will die?

**Respondent 1:** Then it is attached to a fishing stick and big fishes get caught.

**Question**: Due to the pollution and contamination of the river, how are the prawns being affected?

**Respondent 1**: All the contamination because of toxic wastes, harmful chemicals, industrial wastes, oils lead to spread of diseases not only among prawns, but also the fishes, prawns are being infected.

**Question**: Prawns, fishes, crabs are also getting infected with diseases?

**Respondent 1**: Yes. There are people who have taken pictures of prawns to publish in newspapers. Approximately 5 kilometres from here, there’s a place full of ashes. Prawns living there, due to the dumping of ashes, they are infected with various kinds of diseases. One can know just by looking, that it is infected.

**Question**: How to you identify that?

**Respondent 1**: By looking at it, I can identify. Like we can distinguish between a healthy person and an unhealthy person, similarly we can identify them too. It has been 30-35 years now, that I have seen prawns closely so I can distinguish good prawns to ill prawns. So even if one of the ill prawns is eaten, then health is affected. In this area, cancer is very high, it makes us feel guilty sometimes wondering if it is happening because of us, therefore we avoid catching fishes from here. We only catch when the ash wastes, toxic wastes go far, then only we eat. We don’t eat the fishes from here, mostly we don’t catch fishes from here. We can catch only if we put our nets here, we don’t place our nets here. Even if someone catches from there, we don’t cook them.

[46.48 – 50.12 min]

**Respondent 1:** There was an old man here last time, right? He is also suffering from cancer, intestine cancer. Even my 17-year-old son passed away due to cancer. the reason is mainly because of the industries surrounded here; all kinds of pollution has led to spread of many diseases. And this boy is suffering from brain development disorder. One of my sons has brain development disorder and the other had cancer.

**Question:** When did this happen?

**Respondent 1:** It has been 3 years since my son passed away, if he was alive, he would have been 21 years old now. Here 80% children are suffering from asthma, and people above 40 years of age experience attacks. Even after you handle all this, there’s cancer.

**Question**: So, all this because of pollution….?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, because of air pollution and the toxic wastes from the factories. The fishes consume the toxicity of the sea, then the fishes are eaten by us, then we get infected by various diseases. All this just leads to one big source of problem that are the industries here. The company, NTPC burn coals, right? In the morning from the west, if cool wind flows, there would be something covered, I used to wonder what that is. The company has kept a coal yard, storing all the required ash there. The company’s stock of coal would be covered, it would start burning and cover the area with smoke.

**Question**: So, you think all these wastes are going inside prawns and fishes?

**Respondent 1:** The ashes in the air, when we breath, we inhale it therefore leading to diseases. The food that we eat also contains the toxicity as well as the air we breathe. When I was young, I used to drink only pump water, nowadays everyone is drinking can water. Every household is drinking can water. When I wake up from sleep, my legs pain so much. People would say that when you reach the age of 40-50, you will not be able to walk, your knees will become weak; like that I feel excruciating pain in my legs, there’s no strength in my knees. Maybe it’s because of the water we consume daily, it does not provide the necessary nutrients for healthy bones. It’s difficult to get grip also, my bones and knees are paining. To avoid the bad water, I had installed RO (Reverse Osmosis) water filter at home as I considered it better than can water as I didn’t want to use the water coming from ground or from well at home. Then I was told that RO water is not good, gradually stopped drinking that. I again switched to can water, but it is more problematic than RO water.

**Question**: In this circumstance, how are you handling all this? So, you said that you don’t catch fishes from this area because it is not clean, so like this are there any other things that you are doing to manage the situation?

**Respondent 1:** Even if we catch fishes from the places where there are no industries, the fishes from here also swim there. They don’t just stay at on place, they keep swimming from here and there. Even if we catch fishes from other places, the bad smell is still there, so only after eating you can identify whether the fish is actually healthy. So, the toxicity enters our bodies too. We are just going with the thought that this too shall pass.

[50.13- 56.24 min]

**Question**: Are you hoping that the situation will change?

**Respondent 1:** One person cannot do anything; how is it even possible? Even if the person changes, it will not change. The political authority are the ones who can change it. Whether it is air pollution or water pollution, if they look into these matters then there won’t be any problems like this. It will be beneficial for the people and the industry workers too. Unfortunately, no one is addressing these issues that is why the situation has worsened.

**Question**: Hmm

**Respondent 1:** But what other people say is that it is important for the country’s development, I understand that it is important, I won’t deny that but for one person’s growth, 10 people should not be killed. For the growth of corporate companies, 100 people are being killed. Even if 1000 people need electricity, for the sake of that you can’t kill 100 people. If you kill 10 people also, murder is a murder. People are like government’s children. If people live well then only government will be. In a nation with no people, government is of no use. If people are not there, nation also does not exist, it will look like a forest. People are most important. If people are facing any difficulty, it can be any country, the government is supposed to solve it in a right way, that is my opinion.

**Question**: Do you have any experiences or stories related to prawns?

**Respondent 1:**  First, along with my father, I had gone to Kurimedu canal, kotamman canal. My father did not have any boat or any net. My father till the very end, did not do this business. He had a big native boat, 10 tonne, 15 tonne, 20 tonne. It will be useful during the summers. White sand from the ocean would be carried to the place where salt is prepared, they will level the surface equally with the white sand. Then they will take the water that is heated under the sun and put it in the motor. They will pour the heated water on the white sand. After 2-3 days, the water will transform into salt. My father then would transport the sacks of salt here using the boat, and by lorries it would be exported. For the preparation of salt, white sand is required right? Like how white sand is brought to build a house, similarly he would transport the white sand from the ocean to the salt basin. During the summers, he did this work. After that, if there’s any other work also, he’ll do.

[56.25- 60.34 min]

**Respondent 1:**  When Ennore’s natural environment was untouched by industries, it was so beautiful, there would be trees everywhere, coconut groves, mangroves, bamboo groves. Then there, we call it Banglavaasal, there would be just trees.

**Question**: Hmm

**Respondent 1:** On the opposite side there would be mangroves. Then that side VGP is located and from there we can see the mouth of the ocean. of the forest there are coconut groves, there would be groves surrounding Ennore. Then that side there is VGP If you see, in Ennore and there have been more than 1000 movies shot here during that time, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil and Telegu movies, I had witnessed some of the shootings. there are agricultural lands to the west side of VGP wonderland. If you go a little further, there is a river and there many places where salt is prepared. All natural green areas only. There would be not thorny plants, no industries, no pollution or any during those days.

**Question**: Hmm.

**Respondent 1:** In 1995, when NCTPS was first opened, since then they said due to ash discharge from the company, the salt wouldn’t be pure and clean, therefore all the salt mines were closed. So, salt totally finished. VGP Wonderland used to be there, to build Thermal power plant in that area, they closed VGP. They closed VGP and the salt basins. Fishing area was left that also because of accumulation of ashes, it has been closed. Whether it is the nature or the people in Ennore, everything is gradually being destroyed. Now the fishes and people dependent on nature, with no livelihood are still struggling.

**Question**: Hmm

**Respondent 1:** When we used to go to work, there would be cashew trees, blackberry, kattukalaka, sulaparam, wood apples (type of fruits). Mostly iccham param, we used to pluck all these fruits when we passed through the Buckingham Canal. We used to pluck and eat them on the way during our childhood days. When I was a kid, people would not tie this net, they would use thookuvala (a type of fishing net).

**Question**: Hmm

**Respondent 1:** It used to be blue in colour, there would be a bag, 4 fingers would go inside it. It would be tied, called thadagu (barrier). Earlier, 4 fingers would go into the barrier and the fishes, black prawns and prawns would get stuck there. We would tie the net on both the sides of the river, so fishes and prawns would try jumping to cross that barrier, during that process, they would fall into the net. We would tie it like a cradle, earlier this net was not there. Like this we would tie the cradle, fishes and prawns that jump over the barrier would fall into the cradle. We used to catch prawns like this only. After that we started using this net. When the sun is setting, exactly when it is orange in colour and reaches that pole, if we tie this net, plenty of fishes and prawns would jump and get caught. We would struggle to load it in the vehicle, because there would be so many prawns and fishes. This river was called Gingee River.

[60.35- 65.50 min]

**Respondent 1:**  Those times, there would never be a time where prawns could not be found in this river. You could go anytime of the day, and would find plenty of prawns. The same river now has become so empty, it has lost its nature of fertility because the companies have completely destroyed it with its toxic wastes.

**Question**: infertility.

**Respondent 1:**  They have demolished the canals. Like these canals, and mangroves cannot be seen anywhere else. Mangroves, small canals, river, salt basins, mouth, VGP, ocean, agricultural lands, forests in this area, everything together cannot be seen anywhere else.

**Question**: Hmmm

**Respondent 1:** A super natural tourist place, the companies have totally destroyed it. Today I get only 5% of what I used to earn back then. If this situation continues to be like this, then this 5% will also be gone. It would be 0 in total. The fishermen who are solely dependent on this river, what will they do? We have done many strikes, protests but it has reached deaf ears. We have met the collector, MLA and everyone, but they always tell us to wait for a month, but nothing was done, sent letters, met the authority, but no steps have been taken yet. The government should look into this matter and probe the situation. We are also living in India, but the government has erased our work, where should we ask, we can ask the government only. If the government had taken the right decisions, we wouldn’t be stuck in this situation. Before the industries were built here, we were all doing well. Either you give us another job or stop the activities that our hampering our lives.

**Question**: Hmm.

**Respondent 1:** On the other hand, the state of the river**.** 56 metric tonnes of ash are in the river, tahsildar told us; imagine how it must be affecting the aquatic life. When ash is accumulated at a place, plants do not grow there, similarly, even in the aquatic bodies, the presence of ash disturbs the ecosystem and affects the fishes and prawns there. Then how will the fishermen do their job? The government does not understand this, and even those who understand, they are not willing to take the next step to help. They just say that nothing is in our hands, it is all upon the higher authority. Compared to us taking the matter to the higher authority, if these officials take the step, it would be more effective and then only the higher authorities will pay attention to the problem but no one is ready to do that. They only do their assigned work but no one is willing to take an extra step. They will say that they have talked to the Chairman, they have done their part. That’s it. This is the situation nowadays.

[65.51 – 70.44 min]

**Question**: Where can we find fiddler crabs in this area?

**Respondent 1:** Fiddler crabs used to be present in this whole area. With the accumulation of sediments, the natural sand started receding. There is a blue bridge, right? We can find it under the blue bridge, in the corners. they had constructed a road here which eliminated around 1000 fiddler crabs. This place only, now there is not a single crab here. It could not survive because of the wastes of toxic chemicals.

**Question**: Where are they produced?

**Respondent 1:** They are very tiny;it will keep moving one of its hands.

**Question**: No, like you said that prawns mostly live in mud and sand, likewise where do fiddler crabs live?

**Respondent 1:** Fiddler crabs live alongside the ground. It keeps moving its hand and if we go near, it gets into the small burrows. I just know this; I don’t know how it is produced.

**Question**: So, it mostly stays along the ground, is it?

**Respondent 1:** Alongside the land, not in the water. it does not stay in water. Alongside the land, there will be little burrows. If you want to see, you can either go there or to the fishing area where the nets are tied.

**Question**: Are they still being caught?

**Respondent 1:** Children catch them for fun and leave it there only.

**Question**: For cooking?

**Respondent 1:** For cooking it has not been used yet. Once for a lab test or for medicinal purpose, they had caught and carried it with them.

**Question**: But it is not eaten?

**Respondent 1:** Neither do we catch nor eat them. Till now, we haven’t.

**Question**: What is their life expectancy?

**Respondent 1:** As far as we know, it lives for a number of months. From birth, we don’t know right, they are very tiny, we don’t know when it took birth exactly. We don’t know when exactly it dies, we killing it is one side, we don’t know when they die naturally.

**Question**: In which months are fiddler crabs found abundantly?

**Respondent 1:** It is usually seen during the summers, from Jan till monsoon.

**Question**: Monsoon?

**Respondent 1:** The numbers decline when it rains. It hides inside the holes and covers with mud so that rain water does not enter. When it hides, we are not able to see those times. Other times, they are visible.

**Question**: Are there different types of fiddler crabs?

**Respondent 1:** As far as I know, there is only one type, however the colours may vary. Some are white, some red. Colour change depends on the place they are living.

**Question**: One crab changes different colours or are there crabs of different colours?

**Respondent 1:** In this area, it will be a little white; and in a greener area, it will be red.

**Question**: But not like a chameleon, right? But the crabs can be found in different colours.

**Respondent 1:** Hmmm

[70.45 -75.10 min]

**Question**: Is a fiddler crab important for the river? For the ecosystem?

**Respondent 1:** Yes. Because of the toxic sediments, it does not exist here but if the nature is good, then it will stay right?

**Question**: no, I am not asking that. How is fiddler crab’s role contributing to the ecosystem?

**Respondent 1:** All organisms created by God are important right? For them, the atmosphere where nature is being destroyed, does not suit them. Crabs could not survive the toxic mud; therefore, it declined but if the environment was healthy, it would still be present here. So, its important right? Because of sediments and chemicals, this zone is being destroyed, but if this was not the case, crabs would still be existing. Crabs had been living in their natural habitat, so nature is closely linked them.

**Question:** Oh, you are saying, you don’t how it will affect the ecosystem but you are saying in form of an advice.

**Respondent 1:** Yes, nature in this area has been damaged therefore they do not exist here; when the nature is good, they exist. Henceforth, they are united with nature.

**Question**: that you are saying like an advice.

**Respondent 1:** if we look at it from one perspective, crabs are not there because of toxic water and chemicals, if it was not there, crabs would exist. So, it is united with nature. If it is united with nature, then it is good for us also. If it is not compatible with the nature and if the nature itself is getting affected by it, then those effects are bad for us.

**Question**: Are fiddler crabs eaten by fishes or anything else?

**Respondent 1:** No, fishes don’t come on land and fiddler crabs do not go into the water, it stays on land. However, birds consume fiddler crabs. Birds like crows, cranes poke them and eat.

**Question**: So, fishes do not eat it as it does not enter the water. It stays on land so it is consumed by birds. So, fiddler crab is food for birds.

**Respondent 1:** Yes, if it is caught, then only food. In case it does not reach its burrow, then fiddler crab is food for birds, including all birds like crows, cranes, everyone. If it does not get caught, it will go inside its burrow and be safe there.

**Question**: And what does fiddler crab eat?

**Respondent 1:** It is a small creature; it stays in the mud only. It goes into the small burrows and comes out. It keeps moving its hand, that’s all we know. What is exactly eats, that we don’t know. There would be muddy area, where clay and sand are present. It is a natural habitat where they would roll the mud balls into the burrow. Good clay and mud.

**Question**: Is fiddler crab useful for the local people?

**Respondent 1:** It was taken once for a lab for some test. We only showed them. They had asked for fiddler crab, we said we don’t know, we have not heard of it. They described the crab and told us that it keeps moving his hand. So, I myself once showed them. When I asked for what they were looking for fiddler crab, they said that it is for lab test. They told us to catch 1-2 crabs, so we caught and gave them. Another time, it was asked by someone and they said that it should be mixed with native medicines and consumed. After giving 5-6 crabs, I asked for what it is used, he replied that it can be grinded and used as native medicine. However, we haven’t tried it yet nor have I seen anyone consume it.

**Question**: you have not seen.

**Respondent 1:** Haven’t seen anyone use it or give to others. One said like this other one said it was for lab test. I have given to two people only.

[75.11- 80.54 min]

**Question**: So, you had said that prawns mainly live in saltwater, so what about fiddler crab?

**Respondent 1:** It would stay in the corners of the floor and it is also produced in the mangroves. It stays where there is nature. Where there is nature, there will be lots of them, sometime it seems to decline but when the season comes, there will be many of them.

**Question**: Which season?

**Respondent 1:** In the summer, in the mornings, it will be spread everywhere shaking its hand. It is mostly found in the clay zones; it would be found on land shaking its one hand. Mainly clay areas, they make their burrows and live there. Clay and sand areas.

**Question**: Does fiddler crab have other names?

**Respondent 1:**  We call it Otha kaal nandu, we discovered the term fiddler crab from people like you. Earlier we just called it otha kaal nandu (One-legged crab), pee nandu, Crabs that we don’t eat, we call it Pee nandu. See here’s a crab (pointing to a crab), that we call it pee nandu. Some do consume it though, they call it kalani nandu.

**Question**: you have it here?

**Respondent 1:** There are girls near the boat, right? They have crabs of this type. I can show...

**Question:** It’s okay, no problem.

**Respondent 1:** you must have seen it.

**Question**: Are fiddler crabs of different sizes?

**Respondent 1:** No, all are of the same size.

**Question**: How big?

**Respondent 1:** A crab will be just this big.

**Question**: Half of one finger size.

**Respondent 1:** Yes,ithas a tiny hand that does not move, the other big hand keeps swinging.

**Respondent 1:** You have seen fiddler crab, right?

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

**Question**: After all this pollution, has it declined significantly?

**Respondent 1**: I’m rather saying it is completely absent. There will be hardly 1 in 100 that can be seen, like looking through a magnifying glass.

**Question**: Do you know any stories of fiddler crab?

**Respondent 1:** - No, I don’t know.

**Question**: So, there’s nothing about them. Birds eat them, they stay in the side, in those times…

**Respondent 1:** A fiddler crab is of no use to fishermen. At the same time, we don’t disturb them or rear them. They mind their own business, we mind ours. They live amongst nature and we also lived in a natural environment. Now nature is changing because of contaminated wastes. We are still here, but those crabs have gone.

[80.55- 84.20 min]

**Question**: The soil that you see now, how has the quality of soil transformed through these years?

**Respondent 1:** Here?

**Question**: How is the colour, smell and form of the sand in the river, changed in these 15-20 years?

**Respondent 1**- Because of the wastes from the Buckingham Canal, the discharge of toxic waste sediments, the areas that were filled with sand are now completely settled with contaminated sediments. In the land areas also, toxic mud has settled down. As for the water bodies, everything gets mixed up, it becomes swampy and with the passage of time, it becomes very thick and steady like land transforming to absolute toxic and pathogenic wastes land. It becomes steady and thick after it dries up under the sunlight. When water from other areas get mixed with this, this water stinks a lot wherever it flows to. As a result, the fishes and prawns are not able to survive wherever this water gets mixed with. If this water is mixed in the ocean, the effects and problems due to that will be known to the fishermen working there. We are working in the river so we know how many problems are created because of this but we don’t know about the effects it has on the ocean. Toxic sediments leave its traces wherever it goes. Around 10 feet ground, the sediments easily cover 8 feet, remaining only 2 feet depth.

**Question**: So, 10 feet depth is now only 2 feet deep?

**Respondent 1**: In the remaining 2 feet, toxic waste sediments have settled and become acidic. Toxic waste sediments have turned acidic and foggy.

**Question**: like fermentation.

**Respondent 1:** like gas, acidic.

**Question:** So earlier, there was sand and mud; now it has changed to sewage mud.

**Respondent 1:** It has completely turned to sewage.

**Question**: What about the colour?

**Respondent 1:** Before 25 years, it was very clear. Now all toxic. The total sewage from Chennai is coming through the Buckingham Canal, getting mixed with the river and destroying our livelihood.

**Question**: Like anna said, when you touch it, there is a particular smell….

**Respondent 1:** You touch and see then only you’ll know. Because the fact that fire burns, that you and I know very well; similarly, this smell, I know but only if you touch and see, you’ll really understand its effects. I’m not teasing..

**Question**: no, it’s true.

**Respondent 1:** this water is so powerful and has many toxic elements because of which, there are so many problems.

**Question**: Yes, we shall go. While passing the river, ill touch and see.

**Respondent 1:** to the river…

**Question**: yes, we shall go. There are mangroves right, place where you catch prawns, I need to take some pictures.

**Respondent 1:** I have told Raju to arrange a camera, one day we’ll go.

**Question**: I’ll arrange a camera, will call you. One day we shall go.

**Question**:So, you are saying that the soil sediments here is toxic? It is poisonous here and it is a problem for everyone?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, we can say that a drop of poison was dropped here and with time, it is just spreading everywhere. People who live and work here, everyone faces difficulty.

[84.21- 89.07 min]

**Question**: Does the scenario change with seasons?

**Respondent 1:** Earlier, when it rained, initially it would be clean during light rains. It would be clean. When it continued to rain for longer periods, then toxic waste sediments would slowly accumulate. First 10% -15% would come, that time all the wastes would be washed away and reach the ocean. Now 100% comes, bringing in extra 50% waste amount, till the end there’s waste flowing and it does not end there, some percent remain constantly there too. Extra percent of wastes arrive here.

**Question**: So, all through the year, the presence of toxic wastes is still present?

**Respondent 1:** Yes

**Question:** Even when it rains, it does not go away?

**Respondent 1:** yes, it does not go away.

**Question**: When it rains, the wastes rather increase?

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Question**: So how are lives of people living in this area affected?

**Respondent 1:** It has given birth to many new and serious diseases from cancer to skin diseases. Numerous illnesses like these which people in Ennore have never got, people are now experiencing the brunt of these diseases. Pollution has produced all these diseases. In the area of livelihood, fishermen in this area, because of the toxic wastes, there is no source of income for us, in today’s time, we have zero earnings. 100% earnings have now become 0. How to change this and how will we, who are dependent on nature, survive this. We are unsure of our future.

**Question**: So, there will be complete sewage, nothing else.

**Respondent 2:** Yes, complete sewage.

**Respondent 2:** All the grounds are just wastes and mud that has thickened.

**Question**: Now mud looks black in colour, it is always like this?

**Respondent 2:** Black colour, red colour, yellow colour, the number of colours that the sky can be seen in, that many colours can be seen. If it continues like this, how will Ennore ever be clean?

**Question**: How come different colours?

**Respondent 2:** The toxic wastes coming from the industries. Oil discharge, wastes from Stanley hospital, operation wastes, packing, needles all these come here. A boy from this place, a needle from the wastes poked his heart and his leg is gone, it has been removed.

**Question**: When did this happen?

**Respondent 2 & 1:** 3 years back.

**Question**: How did that happen?

**Respondent 1:** He had gone to work one day, a needle in the mud poked his heart. He went straight to the hospital and took injection. After staying inside for long, the leg’s form changed. When he was admitted in the hospital, they said that there is an infection, so the leg has to be removed in order to save the boy’s life or else he won’t live. Hence, the leg was removed.

**Question**: Leg was removed.

**Respondent 2:** My son also died by cancer.

**Question**: Where did this happen? In this river?

**Respondent 1:** yes, there’s a bridge right, within this zone only, he worked.

**Question**: Like this, any other incidents that have taken place?

**Respondent 1:** There was a man who was working in the water, his brain nerves malfunctioned, from there only something started happening to him but he kept on holding the engine without leaving the land, and fell in the boat. He was carried and taken to the hospital. Went to 1 hospital, 2 hospitals, 3 hospitals, eventually he passed away. Many people have passed away like this. In this area, more than 50% - 60% population have died in a similar way.

[89.08- 94.50 min]

**Respondent 2:** There was a man who was just sitting after returning from work. He was just sitting and talking, he slanted a little and passed away there.

**Question**: How old was he?

**Respondent 2:** He was 50-years-old.

**Respondent 1:** He was 50 years old, the previous one was 31. There was another person who passed away while working

**Respondent 2:** Two persons died while working. When they were in the water.

**Question**: hmmm

**Respondent 1:** There are many young children who have passed away, in this place you won’t find any old person because no one is able to survive till then. If you search well, you’ll find hardly 10 people, above 50 years old. That’s it. Remaining die at a young age, they don’t cross 50 years.

**Question**: It was not the same 25 years back?

**Respondent 1:** no, it was not like this.

**Respondent 2:** 25 years back, there won’t be sediments on the ground, there would be oysters and clams here. If you throw an oyster from here and if it lands in the water near the boat, you could still spot the oyster from here, the sea water would be blue in colour then, it would be so clear. You could run here and there, no sediments were there, we would joyously take bath there. After 25 years, the waste water from Buckingham canal started coming. This area used to be the habitat of oysters.

**Respondent 1:** aali, kilinjal, pakkil (type of oysters)

**Respondent 2:** the place where they were grown, they would be very fresh.

**Respondent 1:** That one also got wiped out, oyster that is related to coral reefs. All vanished.

**Question**: Did oysters live here?

**Respondent 1:**  Yes, oyster is a type of coral reef. All of them have been wiped out.

**Respondent 1:**  If you take this toxic water and keep watering a plant with it, the plant will die. Then how will the creatures inside the water survive? You see around, there won’t be a single fish here.

**Respondent 2:** If you eat a fish from here, your life would be in danger. It would smell of contaminated waste. We are catching and selling. We don’t have any other occupation. We are only catching and we are only dying. We are dying eating this. We don’t have an alternate occupation. Till now, the government, without being concerned has just carelessly left the problem.

[94.51- 98.18 min]

**Respondent 1:** See, look at the water there.

**Question:** its black…

**Respondent 1:** It’s not black, it has all toxic elements and it has layers of different colours. Yellow water will come, then there’s red, another chemical water. All types of toxic wastes,so fishes and prawns cannot be depended on firstly. On the other hand, the ecosystem is being affected. One side, people’s health is deteriorating. There’s a saying right, either you kill us with poison or kill us after giving good food or kill us by making us breathe toxic air. Like this only, eating food and breathing the smoke, we are dying. After some time, smoke will be released from the company. In the morning, they we

**Respondent 2:** We must not inhale this toxic air, however there will be ash flying everywhere. In the morning, there is an intense smell of burnt ash everywhere and it is bad for health.

**Question:** so, the whole surrounding…

**Respondent 2:** All the factories around Ennore are affecting us gravely. They don’t build a factory that does not harm the people. Everyone needs electricity, how do they need electricity, by killing people living here so that the remaining people get electricity?

**Respondent 1:** Like the way they generate electricitythrough wind**,** the space is all vacant, if the government installed wind mills, we wouldn’t have any problem.

**Question:** Ohh, you are saying that wind mills should be installed here?

**Respondent 2:** They could have installed the wind mills here like they have done in Thoothukudi. Electricity cannot be generated here?

**Respondent 1:** Compared to that place,here wind is greater. It always remains here as it is near the ocean. If they keep it in these empty spaces, there would be wind always, It won’t be hot here. How much ever sunlight is present, wind is still there.

**Respondent 2:** It is not like, only if there’s wind, the fan will move. They will have a separate machine right; with that they do.

**Question:** Initially, it is turned manually and eventually it runs by wind only. It is possible to generate electricity with wind.

**Respondent 1:** Yes, if it is done this way there would be no pollution, there would be no problem.

**Respondent 2:** andwe would not fear of the electrical tower falling in the river.

**Question:** Has electrical towers fallen anywhere?

**Respondent 2:** Near ETS (Ennore Thermal Station).

**Respondent 1:** Many places, it had fallen in NCTPS, electrical transmission towers have also fallen many times.

**Respondent 2:** Even in rivers.

**Respondent 1:** Yes,4-5 electrical poles have dropped in the river, after which we were afraid to go for work also.

**Question:** Incidents like this have happened?

**Respondent 1:** Incidents like this have happened several times.

**Question:** When did this happen?

**Respondent 1:** After 2000, when there’s storm, it falls. It is not one time, two times, it has happened many times. I’ll say it is not life threatening, however, it has instilled fear in us. We go for work feeling apprehensive that the pole will fall, or be in water, always afraid of that. It has fallen more than 10 times. It has happened in 2003,2005,2006, like these many times.

**Question:** Did it happen on normal days or during cyclones?

**Respondent 1:** It has happened on ordinary days too, like winds during cyclones, then also it has happened.

**Question:** Which major cyclones have fallen here?

**Respondent 1:** Vardha cyclone, before that Laila cyclone, then there was another cyclone without storm, 2003 also, punja machine tower had also fallen in 2003, more than 10 times electrical poles have fallen.

**[98.19- 103.52 min]**

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