**REIMAGINING THE GOOD CITY FROM ENNORE CREEK**

Interview Transcription

**Interview Information**

**Interviewer**/s: Gajendran V

Place of interview: Kattupalli Village – Woman – Dalit Settlement

Date of interview: 7 October 2023

Transcription by: RP

**Interviewee Information**

Name:

Pseudonym: Interviewee, Male Voice, Femail Voice

[NOTE: Other than the interviewer and the interviewee, there were also a male and a female present for the most, if not, for the whole interview. They are marked in this transcript as ‘Male voice’ and ‘Female voice’ respectively]

**(AUDIO BEGINS)**

**[00:00]**

**Interviewer: Yes *amma,* like they have told already; we are working on a research on “How a good city should be”. From Chennai, Ennore – we are researching how we can imagine a good city.**

**I am a post-doctoral researcher at IIT, Hyderabad. Besides that, there are many more educational institutes that are also part of it. A University at England – Westminster University is also part of it. Besides that, in India - IIT Hyderabad.**

**[00:30]**

**Besides that, 2-3 Universities have also joined together to do this research.**

**Particularly, there is a Coastal Resource Centre at Adyar; it is there at Besant Nagar. So, we have all joined together to conduct this research.**

**So, as I said – the region of Ennore is there, right? Ennore means, not just Ennore; adjoining areas of Ennore.**

**Interviewee:** Adjoining areas..

**Interviewer: So particularly. How these areas used to be, how they are now, how people want the tomorrow to be.**

**[01:00]**

**Secondly, in these regions, how these areas originated; Now – if we take Kattupalli; when did Kattupalli originate, for how long the people are here. So, do they continue to live here, what is their livelihood; how things were before – we are doing research relating to these questions.**

**Particularly, in this research, if we are talking to you, we will not release your name or other details.**

**Interviewee:** That is okay, you can..

**Interviewer: No. No. We have to say..**

**[01:30]**

**Interviewee:** We are only telling the truth, are we going to tell anything wrong? As far as I know, I can tell how things used to be, and how things are now..

**Interviewer: No. I have to say this. It is my duty.**

**Interviewee:** Ok. Ok.

**Interviewer: Because, a question of ‘you are interviewing this, what are you going to do with it?’ will arise, right?**

**Interviewee:** My younger brother has brought you here, right? So, how will I question you? Even if it is someone else, I will question them – when my younger brother has brought you, how can I?

**Interviewer: Yes, but I am telling you. This is for – we will publish as research articles. So, we will keep everything safe. So, in that aspect only, we are interviewing you.**

**[02:00]**

**Interviewee:** Ok. Ok (*Sari. Sari.)*

**Interviewer: So, we are just requesting your cooperation.**

**Interviewee:** Ok. Ok.

**Interviewer: So, you are residing at Kattupalli, right?**

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer: So, particularly; do you know how many families are there in this village (*oor)*? Approximately.**

**Interviewee:** Now, there are about 600 and odd families. Now, all are married, and everyone is at their own houses; 4-5 boy-children. Everyone is at their house.

Earlier, there were about 170-180 families only.

**Interviewer:** **Which year was it?**

**[2:30]**

**Interviewee:** That would be the 2000s…. In 2000. Since about 1980.. I would say - 1985 – from whatever I know.

**Another male voice:** She was born in this village. So, she would know.

**Interviewee:** Yes. Have tea. No, it would get cold. You have tea.

**Interviewer: Yes. I will drink. You speak; it is recording.**

**Interviewee:** Now there are about 600 families. Now.

**[3:00]**

Anna nagar there. And Kattupalli here.

(small pause)

**Interviewer:** Yes, you can continue.

**Interviewee:** Now, since we don’t have much space here ; people used to be joint families then – now, everyone has separate families; after their marriage. Each have their separate house.

Below the mound, there was some *porombokke* (common) land. They encroached and built some houses there. Some families went over there.

Before that, only *Irulars* (Tribes) were there.

**[3:30]**

That is Anna Nagar – below the mound there. Only Irulars were there. Our people were only here – these 180 families were only here.

After the children grew up and got married, they joined with the *Irulars* there.

Now they have built at the *porombokke* land there and living there.

Earlier, there was no vehicle availability for us. From here to Ennore, there was a path – called *Pazhaverkattambatta (Unclear. Needs to be confirmed).*

**Interviewer: *Pazhaverkattu?***

**[4:00]**

**Interviewee:** *Pazhaverkattam-batta – they would call it.*

There was a cart (vehicle) track there. Now, that road goes into the oil company. We would walk down that road only.

**Male voice:** The road adjoining the Banyan tree..

**Interviewee:** Yes. We would walk all the way on that path.

Even after this *amma* got married; her sister passed away – we would walk all the way on that path – after returning from the funeral.

Like that, there was no convenience of vehicles then.

Then, carrying wood logs, some vehicles will go to Madras. Wood log vehicles. If they take us in that, we will go in that; and if we have to go somewhere, we go by that.

**[4:30]**

If not, we walk to Ennore through that *Pazhaverkattam-batta* only.

We go there, and near the mouth of the river at Ennore, there will be boats. At the mouth of river at Ennore. We will take the boat, cross the river, we will go – if we have to go to Chennai that way, or go to Minjur this way or wherever we want to go – we will go.

We go that way. Like that.

If not, there will be Bucking canal here.

**Interviewer: Yes**

**Interviewee:** There would be 4 canals. In that, if we want to go this way, we would just walk and go. We would just go by the canal.

We would go, and we would go in both directions.

**[5:00]**

If we were going out somewhere, we would remove clothes, and keep things there. There would be a small pond there, where we would take a bath; then we would change the clothes, and bundle the other clothes over a *veli-katthaan chedi* (fence-protecting plant – usually referred to *Prosopis juliflora*), and we would go.

Like that, while we return, we would get that bundle back. Then we come to this side, and change and come. We used to go like that then. Or we would just walk all the way.

It was like that for some time.

After that, they started the bus service. The bus came here at 2004.

**[5:30]**

The Government sent bus.

There is a bus stand near the oil company; have you seen?

**Male voice: Yes.**

**Interviewee:** We will go and take the bus from there. We would walk all the way and take the bus from there. That was the bus stand. We used to go there and take the bus from there.

They sent the bus at 2004. Government bus.

It came for some days, and they stopped that as well.

After that.. After that, things started to develop a little bit.

At that time, houses were not that good either.

Then, in a charity organization – a madam called Seal madam came (unclear. Need to be reconfirmed); during the time of Tsunami.

**[6:00]**

Then, she came to the *kuppam,* and built houses with proper floors. At that time of building houses with proper floors, a person came and told me at that time – ‘Like this *amma,* your house is in this condition’; a person from the *kuppam* itself told me this – ‘you go and talk to them, *ma.* Madam will do things for you. Do not tell her that I told you.’

Like that, I went to her and spoke to her. After I spoke to her, she sent a supervisor. At that time, there were heavy rains, there was water outsider our house.

**[6:30]**

We were taking a catamaran from our house and going to a shop. That supervisor was looking at that. He saw that, took a photo and sent it to that madam.

‘They are like this madam. They do not have any conveniences. All are only thatched roofs.’

All were thatched roofs. All were. We did not even have the money to buy more straw and stich them together.

We were very poor.

Like that, they saw and what they did was –

We went and spoke. When I spoke, she said

**[7:00]**

‘You could have come and saw me earlier *ma.* Compared to them, people are more poor here. They are a bit better. Since you are in very poor condition, you could have seen me earlier, right? I would have done it first for you. Now I don’t have any funds, how could I do it?’ She said like that.

At that time, what I said was ‘Madam. First come and see the house.’

Like that – there is Sarasu, right? M. Sarasu is there, right?

I took her to her house.

Exactly, at the time we entered her house, a part of the house with worms and dirt just fell with a thud. Just fell.

**[7:30]**

In front of that madam. It just fell – like garbage and dirt.

She saw that and she spoke to another person – at that time itself – in English. She sent it to him saying ‘look at this’.

After she sent it, he said – ‘we can take this roof off, and there is a funds for rupees 1 lakh, 20 thousand (1,20,000). I will see if I can do anything with that.’

For us, whatever they did – we just wanted the thatched roof to be taken off.

**Male voice:** After taking, lay tile roof.

**[8:00]**

**Interviewee:** Yes. ‘At that time, and coming times, we cannot even get thatched roofs here, madam. The village has become like that. We will not get thatched roofs here, and we cannot afford it also. If you give us tiled roofs, it is okay.’ I said.

And just like that, she laid a tiled roof for us.

**Interviewer: This tiled roof?**

**Interviewee:** Yes, this tiled roof. All these are made by her.

**Interviewer: Oh, these are made by her.**

**Interviewee**: Yes, she did it for everyone here. She did it for this 170-180 houses here. She did that.

**Male voice:** That’s why all the tiled roofs here are… {unclear. Overlapping voices}

**Interviewee**: Yes. This is made by her.

**[8:30]**

Earlier, there were no job opportunities. When there were no job opportunities, for 500 people, at Athipattu and Pudhu nagar – for these two villages only; Where I am working now, right? At Kamarajar port – they were given jobs there.

Back then, the jobs were given to them through the women self-help groups (*magalir*). At that time, there were no *magalir* also at our village.

There were no job opportunities either. We did not know anything. We were just picking up few things.. People were just scavenging few things, selling them and eating.

**[9:00]**

Bundling up firewood – like that, there were lot of selling. Like catching prawns here – in the river, like that – sales was happening, and things were going on.

Then, yearly, they take cashew nut plantation. In this *porombokke* land, they will take like – for Rs. 1000 or 2000. Like that, time was passing by. The year would go by, just like that.

For a marriage or some other function, they will do it like that. By taking that plantation.

At that time, one person, one *anna* (elder brother) came and said – ‘people are working jobs here from Athipattu and Pudhunagar and all. Our village is just here nearby only. Why can’t you go and ask for those jobs?’

**[9:30]**

‘If you ask, won’t they definitely not do this for us? Instead of us asking – instead of us, men asking’ – he is a *Mudhaliar* only, that *anna.* He had seen them going and coming for their jobs.

‘You go and talk to them, *ma.* Talk to the chairman. There is a chance that we will get those jobs. People are suffering like this – by catching this and that, by catching prawns – they become like something; by picking up these oysters, clams and snails. You go and ask them, *ma*’ – he said like that.

So, when I went and met him, he said –

**[10:00]**

‘Since you do not have a women’s group in your village’..

BDO.. We went to the BDO (Block Development Office) and met.

He said.. like this..

At that time, in this village, people made me a ward member without voting at all – by all the village people coming together. When they made me a ward member.. He said – ‘You can do it, *ma.* You can start a women’s group.’

Since there was no women’s group – for this and that; if bus doesn’t run… (laughs)

You know right?

**[10:30]**

Without an opposition; they said no one should oppose me. All the youngsters and elders, they all joined together and elected me unopposed. When they elected, the BDO called me and spoke to me.

‘If you put your mind to it, you can make a women’s group. When there’s a women’s group everywhere, why is there not one in Kattupalli? Why don’t you start that women’s group? You start a women’s group, *ma.* Through the women’s group only – these jobs were obtained – for Athipattu and Pudhunagar. You prepare for a women’s group.’ He said like that.

**[11:00]**

Then, we started 5 women’s groups. 100 members. 5 women’s groups were started. I made the BDO come, and through him itself – I started the women’s groups.

After starting, I went to Pazhaverkaadu IFDB (unclear. Need to be reconfirmed), I registered in that institution. At Pazhaverkadu. After that, we were there with him for few years. After 2-3 years, what he did was – ‘In Minjur, there is a *sangam* called Guide (unclear. Need to be reconfirmed) They are… our family only. Because it is nearby for you, right; it becomes difficult to come here, *ma.* Therefore you go to the nearby Minjur itself.’

**[11:30]**

So what he did was – he linked us with the Guide institution (Name unclear). He registered us there. After registration, women’s group was started. After starting, I went and told the BDO.

‘Sir, we have started. We are running it – with the group pooling together money and taking some out, and everything.’

Then, the BDO said – ‘You give a request letter (*manu)* at the collector office. After that – at women’s office, there was Indira madam – give a request letter to them. After that – RDO office. Give a request letter to them all, and after that – there is chairman office at Alwarpet. Go to Alwarpet and meet the Chairman.’

**[12:00]**

He gave an idea like that.

**Male voice: (unclear)**

**Interviewee:** Yes, chairman.

At that time – my husband, my *mama….* Only from Deva *Mudaliar’s* house, they were taking contract and working with the chairman. So, I told my husband, and told him to get the address – we would not know the place without the address, right? We cannot search for the place at Madras –

So, we got the address.

**[12:30]**

I, my husband and 5 ladies – we went to Alwarpet. And we spoke to him – we spoke to the Chairman; and at that time IAS – Raman… (name unclear as phone rings)

‘No *ma.* I gave 400 jobs to your village already – at EB.’ He said.

**[13:00]**

I said – ‘It is not our village sir. Like this – Athipattu and Pudhunagar. They have taken a part of Ennore village and entered as Pudhunagar. You have given jobs to only that village. You have removed Ennore village. As it was removed, you have given jobs to them only. You have put that in Pudhunagar. Only they are working at EB.

No ladies or gents are working at Kattupalli, *ayya.* You can come and see directly – is Athipattu a prosperous village or Pudhunagar a prosperous village? Or the neighboring – Vallur, Nandiambakkam… See the adjoining villages also. Also, come and see Kattupalli directly, *ayya.*

**[13:30]**

After seeing directly, based on your conscience, give the jobs to whichever village you want to, *ayya.’ –* I said like that.

He said ok, and he also came. After this – he spoke to me and this *amma* here. He spoke. He made about 7 villages to come – collectors of 7 villages came (unclear).

**Female voice:** Everyone came.

**Interviewee:** He made them come, and he set up a meeting. He set up a meeting, and he directly visited everything. While visiting, he saw Athipattu, he saw Pudhunagar; and while seeing neighboring villages like Vallur – the village that does not have any essential facilities was Kattupalli only.

**[14:00]**

Immediately, he stopped them, and said to give the jobs to ladies of Kattupalli. At that time, the ladies were returning after catching prawns, collecting oysters. They were returning with dirt, and soaked in salt.

Like how very poor people will be – they were returning like that. He saw them. On seeing them, he felt very sad. He realized that ‘what they are telling is the truth. We need to give this job to them as well.’ – what we did was – he terminated those 500 people and gave jobs to them here.

**[14:30]**

He gave them jobs, and… 50 people for 15 days.. because he said ‘At that time, there is not much work. 50 people work for 15 days, and for the other 15 days, the rest 50 people work.’ – like that, he gave jobs to 100 people.

After that Dayanithi Maran and others came. What they did was – they spoke, and made the jobs into a one-month job. Now we are working for one month.

Everyone has joined now. All the 100 people are working for one month now.

So this is what is happening now.

After that, as the companies came, they laid down the roads. Some have taken autos and other things – now we are living. Things are a little better now.

**[15:00]**

Transport facilities are there. We get auto-rickshaws near our house.

**Female voice:** Bus only is not there.

**Interviewee:** Bus only is not there.

**Female voice:** We are going in *kutti yaanai* (used commonly for small 4-wheeler cargo vehicle. Tata Ace Mini Truck).

**Interviewee:** We are going in the *kutti yaanai.* Now small autos are also coming – things are okay. After the companies came, and after the roads were laid – long walks have disappeared for us.

This going by water, and going by walk – these things have changed.

As it changed, with the companies nearby – with contract work or some other work – ladies and gents are going there.. And things are okay now.

**[15:30]**

Things are a little better now.

**Female voice:** Things are better after joining the *sangam.*

**Interviewee:** Things are better after joining the *sangam.* And by the grace of God – after joining the job at Kamarajar port – there was school only till 5th standard at our village.

So, we also thought about it. Since we did not have the facilities, we studied till 5th standard. If the school was available till 10th grade, how it would have been? We would have studied 10th standard, right?

We did not have facilities to go outside and study. We also could not go.

When things are like this, we went and spoke to him – there itself. Who? (Name unclear)

**[16:00]**

We spoke – *‘ayya*, whatever you do, we don’t know. Our children should study till the 10th. And you should build the school till 10th at our village. Please do that, *ayya;* it will be good.’ Like that, I spoke to him. The Kamaraj Port…. Now, there is school till 10th at our village.

**Interviewer: Public exams too, they write it here?**

**Interviewee:** Public exams are not here. Public – they go to Minjur. They go to Minjur.

**[16:30]**

We have asked till +2 (12th) standard here now. They have said that they will do it. It is God’s work only. (laughs)

Because, even people who do not have much facilities, it will be good if they studied till 12th, right? That is why.

**Interviewer: Definitely. Definitely. So, you were saying that there were 170-180 families here in the 1980s; so, traditionally were they here for many generations or they came from somewhere else?**

**Interviewee:** They were here only. Traditionally, they were here only. As far as we know, they have been here only. They have not gone anywhere.

**Male voice:** They won’t marry off their daughters to villages outside. Only inside the village.

**Interviewee:** (laughs) Even if we give like that to outside villages, we will come back.

**[17:00]**

Pazhaverkaadu is all that we have.

**Male voice:** No. Maximum, things are like that here.

**Interviewee:** Because, in the village they go – they don’t get certain things. So what they do is…

**Male voice:** So.. {unclear}.. What they do is – people go out from here. And some brides come to the village too.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Female voice:** They just marry within their relatives. They marry their aunt’s kids (*aththai*).

**Interviewee:** Now, I have four kids. All four kids are married to outside the village. (laughs). No marriages within the village.

**[17:30]**

Then our knowledge increases, right? We go out, we go somewhere, instead of just riding the horse inside the same big jar. (Tamil phrase – *kundu chatti kulla’ye kuthira ottrathu).*

**Interviewere: Ok. So, people have been here traditionally.**

**Interviewee:** Yes. Traditionally.

**Interviewer: So, when you were younger, how was the neighboring environment here? Now it is full of industries.**

**Interviewee:** Yes. Earlier, it was mostly cashews and Casuarina. It was full of *kaadu* (forest) of *savukku (*Casuarina). Palm trees. Like that, it was mostly trees and forest.

**[18:00]**

There were *kaara-chedi (*Maybe *Canthium parviflorum*), *eechcha-maram* (date-palm), *naaga-maram* (Ceylon Ironwood), all were here. All products could be found here.

*Kaara-chedi,* like that, everything were here.

**Interviewer: So, you said about Casuarina plantations, right?**

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer: Are these private lands or?**

**Interviewee:** It was estate owner’s land.

**Interviewer: Is it. Who is that?**

**Interviewee:** There was only one estate owner. Now he is in Mylapore. His father was called Sanmugasundara Mudaliar. I don’t know his ancestors or his father’s name.

**[18:30]**

Them only. Only because of them, everyone worked like slave-work then. They were the richest in the village. He was the boss here. Everyone worked for him.

**Interviewer: So, the slave-method – how is it, *akka?***

**Interviewee:** It is like – only because of him, the whole village worked. Worked for him.

**Male voice:** Only he gave work to everyone here.

**Interviewee:** He had given work. After that, what they did was…

**[19:00]**

The Government gave land to the landless and poor, right? Called ‘Earth-donation’ (*boomi – dhaanam).* So he had given parts of his land – like 1-acre and such to people.

**Interviewer: Is it?**

**Interviewee:** Yeah, for people who worked their lives for him.

**Interviewer: Oh, he has given? Like Vinobha Bhave?**

**Interviewee:** He had given. He had given patta land to them – like 1 acre each. But the people have sold it and eaten it away here – for *1 annas and 2 annas*.

**Male voice:** We should not call that as slavery, *akka.* Slavery is different.

**Interviewee:** Not like slavery, but everyone worked for that family only.

**Male voice:** They were the only one giving job opportunities.

**Interviewee:** Only them. Yes.

**[19:30]**

No one can do anything outside without their permission. They have to work for them only.

**Interviewer: So if people wanted to work somewhere else, they cannot.**

**Interviewee:** No. Because, there were no one else who would give jobs at that time. Besides that, he had also given work to neighboring villages like *Ooranambedu, Sengambedu.*

**Interviewer: What kind of work?**

**Interviewee:** Farming only. They had 2000-3000 acres of farmland alone here.

**Interviewer: In this vicinity.**

**Interviewee:** Yes. In this vicinity. My elder brother had told me. My brother..

**[20:00]**

They had done a survey once. At that time, there were 3000 acres only for farming. Besides Casuarina and Cashewnet, they had 3000 acres of farmland.

**Male voice:** Crop land. Crop land.

**Interviewee:** Yes. Crop land. To grow crops. See, to work on these farms, neighboring villages have come – *Ooranambedu, Sengambedu and Vayalur*  had come. So imagine how much work they would have put in.

Besides this village, he had given work to the neighboring villages too. See.

All these things – I know only as my mother and father told me. Not me personally.

**Interviewer: So, you have seen them when you were young?**

**[20:30]**

**Interviewee:** Yes, I have seen him. I have seen Shanmugasundara Mudaliar.

**Interviewer: He doesn’t have any land right now?**

**Interviewee:** Yes. There is. That is what – all the lands the company has taken. L&T, and everything is their land only. They had given 25 acres to EB. The harbor land also – half of it was the estate’s.

If 25 acres had gone for EB alone, wouldn’t land had gone to them?

**Male voice:** Ok. So, the 3000 acres is starting from EB.

**[21:00]**

**Interviewee:** Which one? Farming?

**Male voice:** I am talking about his land. His land..

**Interviewee:** Yes yes. He had given 25 acres to EB.

**Interviewer: So from there, till here – it was their land.**

**Interviewee:** Yes yes. There is this *Easwaran* temple there, right? Kattur Mudaliar was there only (Name unclear: Needs to be reconfirmed)

**Interviewer: But when people worked for him, were the wages adequate?**

**Interviewee:** I don’t know how much they would have given.

**[21:30]**

**Interviewer: During your time?**

**Interviewee:** From as far as I know, if people work for a full month; ladies would go water the plantation – Casuarina plantation; they would give about 60 rupees as a salary. The women would eat it away (laughs). They would eat it away.

Monthly he would give about 60 rupees.

**Interviewer: That would not have been enough, right?**

**Interviewee:** At that time, I don’t know.

**Interviewer: At that time, there would have been necessities at home. For food necessities and everything. What would people do for that?**

**[22:00]**

**Interviewee:** At that time, people would have half acre or 1 acre of land. That side of the water. They will do farming at that land. And they will eat the rice from there. They would gather some firewood, they would catch some prawns..

I mean, they would not buy many things with cash. It was like – they got everything for free.

**Interviewer: So like, for food, they would just catch prawns and bring home.**

**Interviewee:** Yes. They would sell the prawns.

**[22:30]**

They would either keep it or sell it to buy rice and pulses.

**Interviewer: So at that time, people did not buy things with money.**

**Interviewee:** No. Main things that were bought with money were chill powder and tamarind. That too – some houses would have a tamarind tree. Some houses.

**Male voice:** Natural resources were there.

**Interviewee:** Yes. Natural resources were abundant. So, in my house, tamarind tree used to be there. They would all shake that tree. So, if 10 people shake the tree and collect the tamarind, each would get a basket. So, when people shook the tree, that was how my mother also used to do.

**[23:00]**

She would say – ‘Go and peel them for yourselves’.

**Interviewer: So it is like wages for collecting the tamarind.**

**Interviewee:** Yes. Like wages. Like, if we were doing farming, and people come to our farm for harvesting – we would give them a bag or half a bag of rice. They would have to boil and process them further. They would do it like that.

As I was growing up, they did that. My mother and father also did that. *Kevuru* (Ragi/finger millet) would also be grown. If people come to harvest it, they would be given a basket or two of that.

**Male voice:** So people gave wages as products and things.

**[23:30]**

**Interviewee:** Yes. As products. If they come to harvest chillies, they would give a basket of chillies to them. Like that, they would give.

Like – if we are growing crops, we would not eat it alone. We would also give it to the people who come to work.

**Interviewer: So there was some land with your family..**

**Interviewee:** Some land, yes.

**Interviewer: How much land was there?**

**Interviewee:** Some 7 acres were there.

**Interviewer: 7 acres. Where was this land, *ma?***

**Interviewee:** There were some 6 acres of land the other side of the water. 6.5 acres. And some half an acre near the house.

**Interviewer: So, that 6 acre was there, right.. That..**

**Interviewee:** That TIDCO people took it. TIDCO… Government only took it.

**[24:00]**

It took for Rs.15,000 per acre.

**Interviewer: Rs. 15,000**

**Interviewee:** Rs. 15,000

**Interviewer: It was patta land..**

**Interviewee:** Yes, patta land. Only for Rs.15,000 per acre, when I knew things only – my dad gave it. Per acre – Rs.15,000

**Interviewer: Rs. 15,000. Who…**

**Interviewee:** TIDCO, TIDCO.

**Interviewer: What is there at that place now?**

**Interviewee:** There is only *veli-katthaan-chedi* there. Empty place only there.

**Male voice:** Empty place only there. They occupied that place and bought it then itself.

**Interviewee:** They bought it then itself. They bought it and….

**Male voice:** That area is coming under Special Economic Zone only (*Sirappu porulathara mandalam).*

**[24:30]**

**Interviewee:** They gave it for prawn pond; that one. A doctor – Senjezhiyan or someone – he took it, and took it for lease or something; I do not know; but they placed a prawn pond there. Fully, they kept a prawn pond.

**Interviewer: So, TIDCO institution only took that land..**

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer: At that time, did you not voice any opposition?**

**Interviewee:** People would not have opposed. I was very young back then, so I do not know.

**Interviewer: Which year.. Approximately, which year it would have been?**

**Interviewee:** At that time they gave it, I would have been 7 or 8 years old. Right now, I am 49 years old (laughs).

**Interviewer: 40 years back.**

**[25:00]**

**Interviewee:** Yes, 40 years back – they gave it.

**Interviewer: 40 years back, they took that land. Ok..**

**Interviewer: You have some tea?**

**Interviewee: (laughs)** it had become cold.

**Interviewer: No. Please drink.**

**Interviewee:** It is okay. I will heat it up and drink it.

**Interviewer: So, that land was taken, right? So with the money they gave, did they try to buy any new land?**

**Interviewee:** No. At that time… In our family – we were all girls only. 6 girls… 5 girls and 2 boys.

**[25:30]**

At that time, father would have married off my sisters, right? They might have got some loan or something. What they did – I do not know. I do not know.

**Interviewer: So, land was gone then, but father had to work right?**

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer: Because, the family needs to be survived. So, did he go for any other work?**

**Interviewee:** There was half an acre of land near our house, right? Father would grow something or another at all times there. Greens, this… watermelon, cucumber, like this, anything..

**Male voice:** Crop based on the season.

**Interviewee:** Crop based on the season. Now, in the month of *purattasi* (mid-September to mid-October), he would plant seedlings of rice. Rice.

**[26:00]**

After *purattasi* season is over, they would harvest it, and plant *kevuru* (Finger millet) – during the summer season. *Kevuru* and chilli plants. Half of it. And half would be watermelon and cucumber.

Like this they were doing. But, without farming, the land would never be fallow. There will be always some crop there.

Brinjal or ladies finger – something or other he would grow there. He would keep growing them, farming and eating..

**Interviewer: Do you have that land now?**

**Interviewee:** That is what – TIDCO took that.

**[26:30]**

**Interviewer: That half an acre?**

**Interviewee:** That half an acre too – TIDCO took it. That is where the wall has been raised – the 6 feet wall. That is coming in our land only.

**Male voice:** Which place?

**Interviewee:** Here, nearby.

**Female voice:** L & T wall.

**Interviewee:** L & T wall. L & T only took it.

**Female voice:** There is a wall coming here, right?

**Male voice:** Yes.

**Female voice:** Near the *Perumal* temple.

**Male voice:** Yes yes.

**Interviewee:** That is our *kazhani (*or *kayani –* farm). From the temple, till the last place is there, right? That is also our land only.

**Interviewer: So, the land which gave you revenue – they took it.**

**Interviewee:** Yes. It had been taken.

**Interviewer: Now, they had taken your land, right ma?**

**[27:00]**

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer: They had taken your land. They gave money from TIDCO – that is okay. Did they say anything about jobs?**

**Interviewee:** They said they will give jobs. One job for each house. But it has not come yet. A case has been filed.

**Interviewer: Case has been filed. Who is running the case?**

**Interviewee:** That case? I do not know who is running that case. They filed a case then itself.

**Interviewer: Oh, then itself? Ok. Ok.**

**Interviewee:** Yes… Some money alone they gave. Since TIDCO took it. And then, a case was filed… Some 20 years back – the money came.

**[27:30]**

When I had to marry off my daughter, father gave me some money and said – ‘this is land money, *ma.* Take it’; and he gave it to me. So, half of the money came then.

**Interviewer: So, they had filed a case asking for compensation?**

**Interviewee:** Yes.. I do not know. I do not know.

**Interviewer: Who will know?**

**Interviewee:** I do not know. People here…

**Male voice:** We will ask him – Gajendran. Anna… when will he come??

**Female voice:** Phone him, *ma.*

**Interviewer: So, for men and women.. For men.. What kind of work was there? Farming work only?**

**[28:00]**

**Interviewee:** When?

**Interviewer: In your father’s times, it was farming. How about during your time?**

**Interviewee:** In my time – I am going to work at Kamarajar port. And people go to L&T; they have been going for contract work only.

**Interviewer: Contract work only.**

**Interviewee**: Yes, contract work only.

**Interviewer: So, from what I know… Do you think the farming work that was being done – was good?**

**Interviewee:** Yes, farming only!

**Interviewer: Or the industries that had come here.**

**Interviewee:** *Ayyayyo.* Doing farming only really good for me.

**Interviewer: Really good.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Really good. Yes, everything was good. All natural goods. Sweet rice. Ragi.

**[28:30]**

Like this, everything was available then.

**Interviewer**: **Everything was available..**

**Interviewee**: Everything was available. They did farming without any chemicals back then. They only use manure.

**Interviewer**: **Only manure.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Only manure. Only when the grains start to sprout, they spray some very little urea. That was it.

For the grain to sprout and mature.

They would not use much chemicals.

**Interviewer**: **They would not use much chemicals.**

**Interviewee**: No, they would not.

**Interviewer:** **Ok. Ok. Ok. So, back then, they were doing natural farming.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer: So you were telling earlier that – when you were younger, there were only thatched roofs.**

**[29:00]**

**Interviewee**: Yes, only thatched roofs.

**Interviewer**: **But, people were looking after farming**.

**Interviewee**: Yes, people were farming.

**Interviewer**: **So back then, though people did farming, they could not build a good house.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Yes. Could not build.

**Interviewer**: **Now – the industries have come.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **Some people come here and help. Houses have been built. So, you think the industries have not given you development?**

**Interviewee**: Cannot think that it has not given development. In one way, it is giving development. But.. Water.. I mean, water used to be good. Water facilities are not here now.

**[29:30]**

Since there were lot of trees back then, there was good air circulation. We do not have it now – after they have raised these walls. Feels like.. somewhere at a corner…

But, we lived inside a *kaadu* (forest) only. But we would not be afraid. We would not even get the thought that we were inside a forest.

Even alone – like for cashew plantation, we went here and there.

But now – after sunset, there is fear to even come out.

**Interviewer**: **Like there is fear..**

**Interviewee**: As development happens, we develop fear only; we do not get the feeling that we are good.

**Interviewer**: **Why?**

**Interviewee**: Back then, even if we were inside a forest, we would feel jolly. Like that.

**[30:00]**

**Interviewer**: **Why you feel afraid now? Why fear?**

**Interviewee**: Because of.. Theft. Murders… Like this, we are afraid now – when we think of it.

**Interviewer**: **Has theft happened in your village?**

**Interviewee**: Not here. But when we get to hear from happenings in the neighborhood, we become very afraid.

**Interviewer**: **You feel afraid.**

**Interviewee**: We feel afraid. One time, at the road turning there, someone snatched the *thaali* (*mangalsutra*) chain of a girl. Around 7 o clock.

**Interviewer**: **Around 7 o clock.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Like that… After they have placed police here, there is no fear.

**[30:30]**

Earlier, when there were no police, there was fear.

**Interviewer**: **Fear.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Earlier, one *Hindi-kaaran (*Hindi speaking person) cut the hands in many layers, and snatched a phone. Here, at this turning. At the corner turn.

**Interviewer**: **At the turning.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

That is the fear. So, when we were living in a forest, we did not feel afraid. Now, after the roads and facilities have come – we feel afraid.

**Interviewer**: **Feel afraid.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. What will happen – will something happen (Tamil phrase: *Enna nadakkumo, ethu nadakkumo),* after sunset – like that, there is a fear.

**Interviewer**: **Ok. Now.. People are working in Kamarajar port, right?**

**[31:00]**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **Since which year, they got work there.**

**Interviewee**: 2004.

**Interviewer: 2004.**

**Interviewee**: 2004. 4th month.

**Interviewer**: **4th month. Since then, till now, people are working.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. We are working.

**Interviewer**: **Kamarajar port. So, what other places are people working at – from here.**

**Interviewee**: Who?

**Interviewer**: **The people in the village. They are working at Kamarajar port. They are working at L & T.**

**Interviewee**: They are working at L & T. After that, there is a company called CPCL (Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited), near the water can company. People are working there.

**Interviewer**: **Working there.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. People are working there.

**[31:30]**

**Interviewer**: **So, here – everyone is working; So, for the kids to study, there is school till 10th here.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **So, after completing 10th, where are they going?**

**Interviewee**: After finishing 10th, they go to Minjur, Ponneri.. Wherever they want to study – then Ennore. Like this, wherever they want to study, they are joined there.

**Interviewer**: **They are joined there.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **So, are kids going to study in college?**

**Interviewee**: Yes. They are going to college.

**Interviewer**: **Going.**

**Interviewee**: Now even, girl children are going.

**Interviewer**: **Ladies are going.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Earlier, only gents would go to college. They would not send the ladies. Now, even the ladies are going to college.

**Interviewer**: **Which college are they going to?**

**[32:00]**

**Interviewee**: Whichever college – they are studying in Madras.

**Male voice**: They are going somewhere else.

**Female voice**: Arts college is here, right?

**Interviewee**: Arts college here. They are studying in different places.

But, when I think about these things, I feel proud only.

**Female voice**: What is that college *pa*; that is at Arumbakkam?

**Interviewee**: At Sri Devi. At Ponneri.

**Male voice**: (unclear) Jain. Minjur (unclear) Jain college. After that.. What is that – L and G college.

**Interviewee**: They are studying at L and G college, also. Yes.

They go to different places, the children. They are going to Madras and coming back.

**[32:30]**

**Male voice**: This person’s daughter is studying somewhere no…

Where is Angamuthu’s daughter studying?

**Interviewee**: At Kancheepuram?

**Male voice**: No no no.

**Female voice**: Here, in Chennai only.

**Male voice**: At Vanarpettai (Washermenpet). She studied nursing, *akka?*

**Interviewee**: Nursing she did at another place, right? She said a place…

**Male voice**: Madurai.

**Interviewee**: Madurai. Madurai. She did it at Madurai. She went to Madurai and studied.

**Male voice**: But I think she works here.

**Interviewee**: Now she is working in this hospital – Aakaash hospital.

**[33:00]**

She is working in Aakaash hospital. Now things are okay. Children are doing well. Thinking about that, I feel proud.

But the water wealth and this air wealth (laughs).. Air and water. There is no good water – drinking water now. That is why.

Water used to be really good here for drinking. Water has become something.

Using these diggers and all – the water has become something now.

**Interviewer**: **What is the difference between water back then and water now?**

**Interviewee**: Water used to be really good for drinking. Sweet to drink.

**[33:30]**

**Female voice**: Like tender coconut water.

**Interviewee**: Like tender coconut water. But the color alone looks a bit different.

**Female voice**: It would be like the color of milk. It would be good.

**Interviewee**: If you drink it, it will be really good. Water would run; near the bucking canal – where we would dig a ditch, and drink water. Drinking water would be good.

There is a temple there – *Kanniyamma* temple. I will show it to you, younger brother, when I go.

Near there, near the river bank itself, we will dig a small ditch and drink water from there. Earlier, it used to be cashewnut plantation there – along the way.

**Interviewer**: **Along the way.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **Now the water has changed.**

**[34:00]**

**Interviewee**: Now the water has changed. Now the water is not good at all to drink.

**Interviewer**: **How is the water now?**

**Interviewee**: Water has become saline (sour). If you mix salt water and good water, how it would be – it has become like that.

**Male voice**: Another thing is – water at Athipattu, Pudhunagar and all – they get their water from the borewells here.

**Interviewer**: **Is it? It goes from here?**

**Male voice**: It would be more saline. We are using that only.

**Interviewee**: (laughs) it would be so saline.

**Male voice**: For drinking alone, we use can water. Other than that, the borewell water only – from Kattupalli.

**Female voice**: Is that too salty?

**Male voice**: Which one, *akka?*

**Female voice**: The water from here.

**Male voice**: This water will not be too salty. It will be a little sour and saline.

**[34:30]**

**Male voice**: For cooking we use this only. For drinking alone – it is can water.

**Interviewer**: **Ok. In this village, you were the head… you were a ward member, right?**

**Interviewee**: Ward member, yes.

**Interviewer**: **So when you were a ward member, there would have been other ward members also, right? So, when you were a ward member, what kind of efforts did you take? One – you took effort for the jobs.**

**Interviewee**: We took efforts for the jobs. After that, I told you about CPCL company right? We put in efforts for that, and they did that..

**[35:00]**

The water plant came then only. We did all these things. When I was a ward member.

**Interviewer**: **Ok. As far as you know, your lands were taken, right? Did you, or from your village, tell anything like – the industries should not come here?**

**Male voice**: Voiced an opposition?

**Interviewee**: We voiced our opposition. We did. At the beginning itself, we did. As we did, what he said – the company management came and said – ‘as the company is coming here, many people will get many job opportunities, and you can become developed, right?’

**[35:30]**

‘That is why, *ma.* As the company is coming here, we will give job opportunities to every one of you, *ma.*

**Interviewer**: **Who spoke?**

**Interviewee**: I spoke, and then..

**Male voice**: No. Like who replied to you?

**Interviewee**: The person who replied was a person named Dakshinamoorthy.

**Interviewer**: **To which company did he belong to?**

**Interviewee**: hmm. At L&T.

**Interviewer**: **Oh, at L&T.**

**Interviewee**: I think he was with the management.

**Interviewer**: **Oh, so, your village lands had gone to L&T?**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Our lands had gone to L&T. L&T is at our village only now.

**Interviewer**: **It is at your village only.**

**Interviewee**: Yes, it is very nearby right? L&T?

**[36:00]**

**Male voice**: They asked her to vacate.

**Interviewee**: We said we will not vacate.

**Male voice**: As they did not vacate, they raised a compound wall around their village.

**Interviewee**: Raised a wall.

**Interviewer**: **Is it?**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Male voice**: Like that, Kattupalli *kuppam* people said they will vacate. So, they vacated them…

**Interviewee**: They wanted us to vacate and…..

**Male voice**: They arranged it for them.. and they built a separate quarters for them. Whatever is needed for a colony – like that, from a *mandapam,* to a meeting hall – everything they set up for them.

**Interviewee**: They were near the sea..

(unclear. overlapping **Interviewee** and the **female voice**)

In that place only, they have set up this….

**Male voice**: Even then, since they accepted to go – they made that arrangement.

**[36:30]**

Since you said you would not vacate, they left you like this.

**Interviewee**: Do you know which alternate land they showed to us? Listen to this, *pa.*

**Female voice**: This place will not vacate. They did not take this place.

**Male voice**: They asked for this land.

**Female voice**: (not clear)

**Interviewee**: *Ayyayyo,* they asked for it, *ma.* But they filed a case.

**Male voice**: They asked for this place. After telling that the people here will not give it only, they left it.

**Interviewee**: They got a stay order, *pa.*

**Female voice**: It happened because of them.. (unclear. Who? Overlapping voices with the **Interviewee**)

**Interviewee**: Deva Mudaliar’s family got a stay order.

**Female voice**: They should not take away this land. They only did it like this.

**Interviewee**: That boss’ (*Muthalaali)* family only got the stay order.

**Interviewer: Oh the boss. Who is the *muthalaali?***

**[37:00]**

**Interviewee**: That was what I told you, right? About the estate.

(overlapping **male voice**)

**Interviewer**: **That Mudaliar you were talking about..**

**Interviewee**: He only got the stay order.

**Interviewer: Oh, he got a stay order.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. That they should not take our land. The alternate land to us – near the water, the path to the *mugaththu-medu* is there, right? They showed the land at *adaar* (unclear)to us. Compared to being there, we said we will be here itself, and we did not go.

**Male voice**: Ok. *Mugaththu-medu* is – our (unclear) is there, right?

**Interviewer**: **Yes. Yes.**

**Male voice**: At that place. But that place is too much *kaadu* (forest).

**Interviewee**: (overlapping voices) There is *porompokke* land there. Water will not be good water there.

**Male voice**: Yes, there will not be good water there. Also, the ash pond is there.

**[37:30]**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Yes.

**Male voice**: Ash fully will fly there. Even for them here.. things are a bit..

**Interviewee**: (laughs) That was what we had told them – compared to us going there and dying unfairly, we will just die here. So, we will not go away from our village. Like that, we had told them.

**Interviewer**: **Oh, they took you and showed you the land?**

**Interviewee**: They had told us about it. They had told someone that – this would be your land. As we came to hear about it, what we did was – we said like that. We said we would not go.

**Interviewer: Ok. Who came for talks with you?**

**Interviewee**: Where?

**Interviewer: Now, people came to take the land right? Who came to ask about the land? Did people from the Government come?**

**[38:00]**

**Male voice**: Did people from L&T come?

**Interviewee**: People from L&T came. Government would have also had come, but I do not know. My elder brother. My elder brother would have spoken to them.

**Interviewer: Ok. So, they asked you, and they asked you to go from this place to another place.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **So, that *porombokke* land is not good, that was why..**

**Interviewee**: Yes, no facilities there.

**Interviewer**: **So, compared to there…**

**Interviewee**: So, compared to there.. we said we will be here itself. We told them like that.

**Interviewer: But, they did not apply pressure? Since he filed a case, things stopped like that?**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**[38:30]**

**Interviewer**: **Ok. Now.. So, if you are given a choice to move to another place, would you go?**

**Interviewee**: It will be a bit sad for the mind only (laughs). I have formed a habit of being here..

**Interviewer: Would you go or not go?**

**Interviewee**: (laughs)…

**Female voice**: If there are good facilities, then we can go.

**Interviewee**: If there are better facilities than here, then yes. Now, it is convenient for us to go to work from here. If they relocate us somewhere far away, that will not be possible, right? That is why.

If there is a correct place, then…

**[39:00]**

**Male voice**: Now, we heard like – Adani was talking about building a quarters.

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Male voice**: Did they not say that some 2 years back? 5 years back?

**Interviewee**: Yes. Yes. Yes.

**Female voice**: If they build a quarters, people will go.

**Interviewee**: At Kalpakkam. They are now talking about Kalpakkam – that quarters is being built at Kalpakkam – for Kattupalli.

(Unclear. **Male voice** and **Interviewee** voice overlapping)

**Male voice**: But, people have voiced their objection and said no.

**Interviewee**: We said no.

**Female voice**: Because, there is our land here; and we can build above it also. If we go to a quarters, people will be living one above the other…. And… we have to leave it.

**Interviewee**: That is it.

**Interviewer**: **So you do not like the quarters.**

**Interviewee**: We do not.

**Interviewer**: **Why?**

**[39:30]**

**Interviewee**: Now, we are living in quite an open space (laughs). If it was quarters, there will be very small rooms.

**Female voice**: Now, this house is big. The rooms they build will be small.

**Interviewee**: There will be small rooms. So, it will not be set for us.

**Interviewer**: **So, for you – you want separate, individual houses.**

**Interviewee**: Yes, separate houses. It is quite open here.

**Interviewer**: **Ok. Have people from outside have settled in this village? From other villages, have anyone moved and staying here?**

**Interviewee**: Yes. One or two families have come.

**[40:00]**

**Interviewer**: **One or two families. From where did they come?**

**Interviewee**: They have come from Edur. 2 people have come from there.. Younger sister.. And one family had come from Kaniyambakkam.

**Male voice**: Nemilicherry….

**Interviewee**: That is what – Kaniyambakkam. After that..

**Female voice**: Paneer…

**Interviewee**: Paneer is from..

**Female voice**: The Paneer who is working at the court.

**Interviewee**: What village did they say?

**Male voice**: Gnayiru. Gnayiru.

**Interviewee**: Not Gnayiru, *pa.* Sadayakuppam or something, they said right?

**Male voice**: No no. The person who is working at court – he is from Gnyairu.

**Interviewee**: Gnayiru only.

**Female voice**: Mugil’s father had bought a land from there. (unclear if land was bought at Gnayiru or at Kattupalli)

**[40:30]**

**Male voice**: Bought a place there.

**Interviewer**: **He has bought a land here?**

**Female voice**: Yes. He had bought a place. He had bought a house that was already built.

**Interviewee**: That Paneer? He is from Melur. I thought she was telling about Devi’s husband.

**Male voice**: The person who is working at the Harbour.. as a carpenter, right? His native is Gnayiru, *ka.*

**Interviewee**: Native is Gnayiru, is it?

**Male voice**: Yes. He is near the BDO office now.

**Interviewee**: Is it? Ok.

**Interviewer**: **So, have people moved from here to other places?**

**Male voice**: Yes, many people have gone. For their children’s education, they had moved.

**[41:00]**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Male voice**: But their houses are here only.

**Interviewee**: Their houses are here. For studying, they would take a rent outside.

(overlapping voices)

**Male voice**: Some people have built a house outside. That situation is there, too.

**Interviewee**: It is there.

**Male voice**: But they did not sell their houses here.

**Interviewee**: Did not sell. They are just remaining there.

**Interviewer**: **So, if they move there, they would be doing some other work, right? Other than the port work.**

**Interviewee**: No. No. They are working here only.

**Female voice**: Their work is here only.

(overlapping voices)

**Interviewee**: They will come and go.

**Female voice**: Since they are in contract, they do like this.

**[41:30]**

**Interviewer**: **So, if they are outside; how far they had moved?**

**Interviewee**: To minjur only.

(overlapping voices)

**Interviewee**: They have not gone very far. Minjur. Ponneri. Not beyond that. They have not gone very far. Nearby only.

Because they too have to come and go for work here right? So, that is why. Nearby only.

**Interviewer**: **So, they are working here, but moved to nearby areas. But they have not sold their houses here.**

**Interviewee**: They have not sold their houses here.

**Interviewer**: **Because of their children’s education.**

**Interviewee**: For their education. Mainly for their children’s education, they are moving.

**Interviewer**: **Like that, how many people would have moved?**

**[42:00]**

**Male voice**: As far as I know, some 10 people. 15 or 10 people. Not many. You can count them on your fingers.

**Interviewee**: Not many. Not even 15. Maybe 10 families. That is it. If we count, there would be only 10 or so.

**Interviewer**: **From your perspective, what is a house for you? What do you think?**

**Interviewee**: We consider house to be temple only. Family is.. (laughs)

**Interviewer**: **No, how it should be? For you.**

**Interviewee**: How do I answer this…?

**Male voice**: No *ka.* What is your wish? How do you like to build your house in the future? Like that – he is telling. Now, like how *akka’s* house there is double… Like that?

**[42:30]**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Like that. Like that, there is a wish only. Good house. Should build it big – with floors.

**Female voice**: It should be good. The kitchen should be big.

**Interviewee**: The kitchen should be good. There should be 4-5 rooms.

**Female voice**: Since I do not have space, I had built it small.

**Interviewee**: Rooms should be there – 4 or 5.

**Female voice**: It is a very small kitchen. Hall is also small…

(overlapping voices)

**Interviewee**: Like that, there is a wish.

**Male voice**: But, they have given patta at this place?

**Interviewee**: Patta is there. Everyone has patta.

**Male voice**: Similarly, people who are at the Anna Nagar – that *porombokke* area?

**[43:00]**

**Interviewee**: They also got it. Yes.

They got it during *amma’s* (Jayalalitha) rule.

**Interviewer**: **Oh, they gave it.**

**Interviewee**: During *amma’s* rule, they gave it for everyone.

(overlapping voices)

Which one? That is *porombokke* land only.

**Interviewer**: **Natham *porombokke?***

**Interviewee**: Natham *porombokke.*

**Interviewer**: **So, now there is a compound wall around your village.**

**Interviewee**: Compound wall is there.

**Male voice**: After finishing, I will show you.

**Interviewee**: Brother will show.

**[43:30]**

**Female voice**: If you come during the day time…

**Male voice**: Need to take into consideration his situation also..

**Interviewer**: **So, earlier, there were open places around you, right?**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **Now, it feels like you are within a compound.**

**Interviewee**: Now it feels like we are within a compound.

**Interviewer**: **So, don’t you feel alone? Earlier, you were alone; but you could go anywhere.**

**Interviewee**: We would go anywhere.

**Interviewer**: **Now, the neighboring areas are closed – like, it had become like you cannot go to those areas anymore. So, what do you think about that?**

**[44:00]**

**Interviewee**: First, I was worried. Now, we have demolished some of the walls, and we are going now (laughs).

**Interviewer**: **Is it?**

**Female voice**: We demolished it ourselves.

**Interviewee**: We demolished it ourselves. Police came and went. But, we still demolished it. We need it. We need to go outside – for that.

We used to go outside only. Back then, there would be no toilets in many houses. So, we need it. Like that – we demolished it. We broke the wall ourselves.

The company people did not do anything to us. They did not do anything (laughs).

**Female voice**: There was a burial ground here, they changed that too.

**[44:30]**

**Interviewee**: Earlier, the burial ground used to be at the eastern side.

**Female voice**: Now, it is not there.

**Interviewee**: As far as we know, the burial ground was there at the east.

(overlapping voices)

They have changed it to the western side. Changed to the western side. Earlier, it was at the eastern site.

**Interviewer**: **But they had told you earlier that you should not go that way?**

**Interviewee**: Yes. They had told us not to go that way and built it here.

(overlapping voices)

**Interviewer**: **So, you had demolished these walls, and going outside right?**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer: Are they still like *kaadu* (forest) or being used?**

**Interviewee**: There is some forest. The company is below that. There is only some forest. Rest is just the company.

**[45:00]**

**Female voice**: There is also a temple there.

**Interviewee**: A temple is also there. *Pangalaththamman* temple. That too, is theirs only – I told you about the boss, right?

**Interviewer**: **Yes. Yes.**

**Interviewee**: Estate owner. That is their temple only.

**Interviewer**: **What *amman* (female deity) is there?**

**Interviewee**: *Pangalaththamman.*

**Male voice**: *Panan-gaalathu-amman.*

**Interviewee**: *Panan-gaalathu-amman.*

**Interviewer**: ***Panan-gaalathu-amman.* Ok. Ok. So, people are going to that temple?**

**Interviewee**: Yes, we do festival also.

**Interviewer**: **Is it?**

**Interviewee**: Yes. *Aadi* month (mid-July to mid-August) – 5th week, we will do a festival there.

**Interviewer**: ***Aadi* month – 5th week.**

**Interviewee**: 5th week. Next year (laughs). Next year, I will ask my younger brother to bring you there.

**Interviewer**: **Definitely. Definitely.**

**Interviewee**: It will happen very well.

**[45:30]**

**Interviewer**: **I came – there is a temple here, right? *Ellai-amman* temple.**

**Interviewee**: Yes, *ellai-amman* temple is there, right? For this festival, many people will come. People from neighboring areas – Kalanji, with Kuppam here – we will do fire-walking; thousands of people will come.

**Interviewer**: **This temple…**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Neighboring area people and relatives - all will come, and it will be really good. Fire-walking festival.

**Female voice**: Definitely – do come. Next year.

**Interviewee**: Yes. (laughs) Next year – we will be there. You should also be there.

**Interviewer**: **Definitely. Definitely. Now, there is *Pangalatththu-amman*, right? Do you have any temple? For your village people?**

**[46:00]**

**Interviewee**: That only. That is only *grama-devi* (village Goddess). *Grama-devi.*

**Interviewer**: **Can you tell a bit about that *amman?***

**Interviewee**: I do not know.

**Female voice**: He will know..

**Interviewer**: **Ok…. It is *grama-devi.***

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Male voice**: They call as *grama-devathai* (Village angel)

**Interviewee**: Yes. Correct. *Grama-devi.*

**Interviewer**: **Now. The situation is like – you have to buy everything with money?**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Everything we have to buy with money. Yes. Even water – we have to buy with money now.

**Interviewer**: **Can water?**

**Interviewee**: Have to buy can water.

**Female voice**: In those days, we would buy fish for 50 rupees.

**[46:30]**

**Interviewee**: We will buy for 50 rupees, or we will just go and scavenge it. We will catch with a net.

**Interviewer**: **With a net.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. You see, at that time – every house would have a catamaran and a net.

**Interviewer**: **Catamaran and a net.**

**Interviewee**: They would be there. And they call this – black-prawn right, called *kot-era.* They will go and catch it. Every house will have a catamaran and net.

That is what I am telling – when it was a forest back then, we did not know any difficulty.

**Interviewer**: **Did not know.**

**Interviewee**: Difficulty – we did not know.

**Interviewer**: **But now…**

**Interviewee**: Fish will be there. And we will take the prawns to sell them – the big prawns.

**[47:00]**

Crabs will be available. All these things – all the food items we can eat, we would go and catch them with our nets. It was available like that.

**Interviewer**: **Now you cannot go and catch them at the Buckingham canal?**

**Interviewee**: No. We cannot. There is nothing available now.

**Interviewer**: **Not available.**

**Interviewee**: Not available. It had become completely dry – it used to be very deep. As much as I know – they would take wood boats; boats with wood logs, they will take it to Madras. In big boats.

All these things. It will go here also – to places like Moolakadai.

**Interviewer**: **Now..**

**Interviewee**: It was that deep. That deep canal itself has become dry now.

**[47:30]**

**Interviewer**: **Now, you told about the catamaran, right? That every house will have catamaran.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **So, what would they do with that? Do they go to the Buckingham canal or to the river?**

**Interviewee**: They would go to Buckingham canal only. We call this as *Odan-gaal* right? They will go.. and..

**Female voice**: How will they go till Moolakadai?

**Interviewee**: The boat will go, *ma.* Yes. They would say – it goes to Moolakadai – at that time.

**Interviewer**: **It would go beyond that.**

**Interviewee**: It would go beyond that it seems.

**Interviewer**: **It will go beyond Pondicherry.**

**Interviewee**: To the Flower Bazaar (*pookkadai)* itself, dad will roast some cashewnuts and go in his boat only. Mom used to say.

**[48:00]**

**Male voice**: Since they could not trade in the sea, they cut up the river and…

(Unclear. Overlapping voices)

**Interviewee**: That is why… Have you seen the locks?

(overlapping voices)

**Interviewee**: As far as I know, as we would go to our farm, there would be a lock there. We used to feel afraid on seeing that.

When I asked my mother what it was – back then; when boats go… How do I say this..?

There would be people there.. At the locks. They would stop the boats and see what is taken in the boats.

**[48:30]**

If there is any stolen items going in there…

**Male voice**: Like a tollgate.

**Interviewee**: Like a tollgate. Yes. Now, it is also at *thoni-rauv* (name unclear). That lock. Here it is broken at our village.

**Female voice**: I had seen it.

**Interviewee**: It used to be there.

**Female voice**: It used be made of iron.

**Interviewee**: Yes, made of iron. Back then, they would go by boats only. If they had to go to Madras, to Flower Bazaar, or Kothavalchaavadi – they would go by boats; and buy goods back for marriage and other purposes – by the boats.

**[49:00]**

**Interviewee**: For the hospitals too; for Stanley hospital and other places – father had gone by boat only, you see.

**Male voice**: This river goes along the central (station) right?

**Interviewer**: **Yes.**

**Female voice**: That is Cooum river only right?

**Interviewer**: **That is the Cooum river.**

**Male voice**: No. No. Along Central, Korukkupettai – what is that?

**Interviewee**: After that – it became Cooum river or something; whatever, we do not know.

**Male voice**: Along basin bridge..

**Interviewer**: **Yes, along basin bridge. That is the Buckingham canal.**

**Female voice**: That is what, *pa.* That is Cooum river only right?

**Male voice**: Cooum river is on the other side.

**Interviewee**: Dad would buy shirts, and take it to Moolakkadai – in boat itself.

**[49:30]**

**Interviewer**: **Ok.**

**Interviewee**: They would take it there by boat and unload it.

**Interviewer**: **Ok. In the future, how do you want this place to be?**

**Interviewee**: How.. Means.. We want it to be beautiful (laughs). With all facilities and everything.. Our life went just like that – but the children’s livelihoods should be good and beautiful.

With good wealth…

**Interviewer**: **By ‘beautiful’ what do you mean?**

**Interviewee**: I mean, they should have all facilities and opportunities.

**Female voice**: Like, how things are like at Madras.

**Interviewee**: (laughs) The bus should come. Transportation should be good. Buses should come and go.

**[50:00]**

**Female voice**: With festivals and everything, only if an autorickshaw comes here..

(overlapping voices)

**Male voice**: Now, with respect to the roads; we came by, right?

**Interviewer**: **Yes.**

**Male voice**: With respect to the roads, we only did a sit-in blockade (*mariyal)* on the road.

**Interviewee**: We did a sit-in blockade.

**Male voice:** The ladies and all did it; and at that time, they formed a peace committee and said; when we asked about a bus route here, they said that – from Pazhaverkadu to the EB gate – the Highways department is taking that road. They said that the process of taking land for that is on-going. Once they finish that, a road will be laid.

**Interviewee**: Bus will come.

**[50:30]**

**Male voice**: From Pazhaverkadu.. to.. to Broadway – they are planning a bus route. That is also in the future plans.

**Interviewer**: **It is in the plans.**

**Male voice**: If it comes, it will be an improvement for them here.

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **So, to move from one place to another…. Now, there is more of a need like that? To go from one place to another. Earlier you used to be just here; now, is there a new need arisen like that?**

**Interviewee**: Yes. It seems like they want us to vacate only…

**Male voice**: No no. He is not asking like that..

**Interviewee**: By ‘need’ what do you mean?

**Male voice**: To go from one place to another. You have to go see relatives – you have given brides outside, and taken brides from outside.

**[51:00]**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **Now, you had asked for a bus, right? Earlier, you did not have to go anywhere, you could just be at your village.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **Now, is there a new need to go to another place?**

**Female voice**: So, when the need comes, we would go out and get it.

**Interviewee**: Yes, yes. We would go to Minjur. We would go and come back from Minjur, Pudhunagar. Like that.

**Male voice**: Wait a minute. Her husband – instead of coming back home after work duty, had gone shopping at Pudhunagar.

**Interviewee**: (laughs) Yes.

**Male voice**: He has to bring them home now.

**Interviewee**: Yes. For everything, we have to go to Pudhunagar and Minjur.

**Interviewer**: **You have to go to Minjur. So, for transportation – you need facilities.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **Ok. What else do you need?**

**[51:30]**

**Interviewee**: Now, the transportation only is the biggest problem. If a bus route comes here, it would be good. For going to Chennai… If we have to go to Pazhaverkadu, we could go; if we have to go to Chennai, we could go. If the bus route comes, it would be good. That is a wish.

**Interviewer**: **Wish.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Wish only.

**Interviewer**: **Ok. What other facilities? Transportation is one..**

**Interviewee**: Hmmm.. No other thing. By grace of God, we are working hard, we have a job, we get salary..

**Male voice**: Job opportunity. You do not have a permanent job, tell that.

**Interviewee**: There is no permanent job though.

**[52:00]**

There is no permanent job.

**Male voice**: All the workers here are on contract only.

**Interviewee**: Everyone is on contract only. No one has a permanent job. Everyone is on contract.

**Female voice**: Salary is also lesser for the gents. For him it is Rs.15,000. After leaves, it is only Rs.13,000.

**Interviewer**: **Only 13,000.**

**Interviewee**: Compared to what the ladies get, the gents get lesser.

**Male voice**: The ladies get central government minimum wages. So, they get higher wages. For this, it is state government. Here too, they rob some and give only.

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Male voice**: Even if they give state government wages, the contractor will take a commission, and they get the rest.

**[52:30]**

All the village heads that come do not come to serve the people. They come only to go to the company and get the contracts. That is what.

**Interviewer**: **By village head, whom do you mean?**

**Male voice**: The leader elected by the people here.

**Interviewee**: By voting.

**Male voice**: Both the ward members, and the village panchayat president. Because, one election after another – all the presidents have been like that only.

**Interviewee**: Everyone is like that.

**Male voice**: The current president is also like that.

**Interviewee**: They want to earn. That is it.

**Female voice**: That itself gives us sadness. If the gents earn well, then the family can be..

**Interviewee**: Rs. 12,000; Rs.11,000 – salary for them.

**[53:00]**

**Interviewer**: **Now, what would be your salary?**

**Interviewee**: For us… Rs. 19,500. After PF is taken away.

**Male voice**: Rs. 19,500. After PF, remaining they get is Rs.16,700. So, if two people work in a family, they earn only around Rs.25,000.

**Interviewer**: **So, in this village, you are not able to manage with that.**

**Interviewee**: We are not able to.

**[53:30]**

**Interviewer**: **But, if you see – earlier, you had all the facilities.**

**Interviewee**: They were there.

**Interviewer: And now, as industrial development had happened, we are going to work at companies. Are you not seeing this as development? Are you able to see this as development?**

**Interviewee**: For that level, prices are also very high. Our family needs more – compared to the salary we get. When things are like this, it is a bit uncomfortable.

Back then, even if we got only Rs.5 as wages, after expenses, there would be Re.1 remaining. Expenses would be only for Rs.4.

**[54:00]**

Now, things are not like that. Now, even if we get Rs.50,000, expenses seem to be at Rs.60,000. That is how it is now.

**Interviewer**: **That is how it is now.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. Whatever we get, the prices are also high.

**Interviewer**: **They are high. Now, since, price levels are high, the salary you get is not enough.**

**Interviewee**: Yes. It is not enough.

**Interviewer**: **Now, the children are studying right? Where do they go for work? After they finish studying?**

**Female voice**: Here only – within the village.

**Interviewee**: They work within the village.. Or somewhere outside..

**Interviewer**: **By – within the village, where do you mean?**

**[54:30]**

**Female voice**: Same place only. At the harbor.

**Male voice**: Same thing. Wherever they are working, the children work.

**Interviewee**: Same place only. Kamarajar port. L&T.

**Male voice**: Here only, nowhere else. They are also coolie workers only. Contract workers only.

**Interviewee**: Yes (laughs). There is no permanent job. No one has. Not for gents. Not for ladies.

**Interviewer**: **Not for gents. Not for ladies also.**

**Interviewee**: Yes, no one does permanent work here.

**Interviewer**: **So, earlier, you could depend on your land; that was taken away by them.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **Now, if you leave the company, there is no other opportunity.**

**Interviewee**: There is no other opportunity – yes. That is it.

**[55:00]**

**Interviewee**: If we do not have this job, then we would not have a way for food also. There would be no other way. We have to give up our life only. That is it.

**Interviewer**: **So, you have to go to the company.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **In this village, everyone had farmland?**

**Interviewee**: At that time, everyone had it. Everyone did. Everyone had at least half an acre or one acre of land. Everyone had it.

**Interviewer**: **Everyone had it.**

**Interviewee**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: **But everything was taken over the company.**

**Interviewee**: Yes, the company took it.

**[55:30]**

**Interviewer**: **Ok *ma.* I will go, and ask; and if there are any other questions, I will come back.**

**Interviewee**: Ok (laughs). While talking, I was rambling a bit.

**(AUDIO ENDS)**

**[55:38]**