



CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

VOLUME IX

MADRAS

PART VI

VILLAGE SURVEY MONOGRAPHS

12. ATHANGARAI

P. K. NAMBIAR

OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE
SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, MADRAS

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FOREWORD

Apart from laying the foundations of demography in this sub-continent, a hundred years of the Indian Census has also produced "elaborate and scholarly accounts of the variegated phenomena of Indian life—sometimes with no statistics attached, but usually with just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to their conclusions". In a country, largely illiterate, where statistical or numerical comprehension of even such a simple thing as age was liable to be inaccurate, an understanding of the social structure was essential. It was more necessary to attain a broad understanding of what was happening around oneself than to wrap oneself up in 'statistical ingenuity' or 'mathematical manipulation'. This explains why the Indian Census came to be interested in 'many by-paths' and 'nearly every branch of scholarship, from anthropology and sociology to geography and religion.'

In the last few decades, the Census has increasingly turned its efforts to the presentation of village statistics. This suits the temper of the times as well as our political and economic structure. For even as we have a great deal of centralization on the one hand and decentralization on the other, my colleagues thought it would be a welcome continuation of the Census tradition to try to invest the dry bones of village statistics with flesh-and-blood accounts of social structure and social change. It was accordingly decided to select a few villages in every State for special study, where personal observation would be brought to bear on the interpretation of statistics to find out how much of a village was static and yet changing and how fast the winds of change were blowing and from where.

Randomness of selection was, therefore, eschewed. There was no intention to build up a picture for the whole State in quantitative terms on the basis of villages selected statistically at random. The selection was avowedly purposive: the object being as much to find out what was happening and how fast to those villages which had fewer reasons to choose change and more to remain lodged in the past as to discover how the more 'normal' types of villages were changing. They were to be primarily type-studies which, by virtue of their number and distribution, would also give the reader a 'feel' of what was going on and some kind of a map of the country.

A brief account of the tests of selection will help to explain. A minimum of thirty-five villages was to be chosen with great care to represent adequately geographical, occupational and even ethnic diversity. Of this minimum of thirty-five, the distribution was to be as follows:

(a) At least eight villages were to be so selected that each of them would contain one dominant community with one predominating occupation, e.g. fishermen, forest workers, jhum cultivators, potters, weavers, salt-makers, quarry workers, etc. A village should have a minimum population of 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

(b) At least seven villages were to be of numerically prominent Scheduled Tribes of the State. Each village could represent a particular tribe. The minimum population should be 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

(c) The third group of villages should each be of fair size, of an old and settled character and contain variegated occupations and be, if possible, multi-ethnic in composition. By fair size was meant a population of 500-700 persons or more. The village should mainly depend on agriculture and be sufficiently away from the major sources of modern communication, such as the district administrative headquarters and business centres. It should be roughly a day's journey from the above places. The villages were to be selected with an eye to variation in terms of size, proximity to city and other means of modern communication, nearness to hills, jungles and major rivers. Thus, there was to be a regional distribution throughout the State of this category of villages. If, however, a particular district contained significant ecological variations within its area, more than one village in the district might be selected to study the special adjustments to them.

It is a unique feature of these village surveys that they rapidly outgrew their original terms of reference, as my colleagues warmed up to their work. This proved for them an absorbing voyage of discovery and their infectious enthusiasm compelled me to enlarge the inquiry's scope again and again. It was just as well cautiously to feel one's way about at first and then venture further afield; and although it accounts to some extent for a certain unevenness in the quality and coverage of the monographs, it served to compensate the purely honorary and extra-mural rigours of the task. For, the Survey, along with its many ancillaries like the survey of fairs and festivals, of small and rural industry and others, was an 'extra', over and above the crushing load of the 1961 Census.

It might be of interest to recount briefly the stages by which the Survey enlarged its scope. At the first Census Conference in September 1959, the Survey set itself the task of what might be called a record *in situ* of material traits, like settlement patterns of the village; house types; diet; dress; ornaments and footwear; furniture and storing vessels; common means of transport of goods and passengers; domestication of animals and birds; markets attended; worship of deities; festivals and fairs. There were to be recordings, of course, of cultural and social traits and occupational mobility. This was followed up in March, 1960 by two specimen schedules, one for each household, the other for the village as a whole, which, apart from spelling out the mode of inquiry suggested in the September, 1959 conference, introduced groups of questions aimed at sensing changes in attitude and behaviour in such fields as marriage, inheritance, movable and immovable property, industry, indebtedness, education, community life and collective activity, social disabilities, forums of appeal over disputes, village leadership and organisation of cultural life. It was now plainly the intention to provide adequate statistical support to empirical 'feel', to approach qualitative change through statistical quantities. It had been difficult to give thought to the importance of 'just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to conclusion', at a time when my colleagues were straining themselves to the utmost for the success of the main Census operations, but once the Census count itself was left behind in March, 1961, a series of three regional seminars in Trivandrum [May 1961], Darjeeling and Srinagar [June 1961], restored their attention to this field and the importance of tracing social change through a number of well-devised statistical tables was once again recognised. This itself presupposed a fresh survey of villages already done; but it was worth the trouble in view of the possibilities that a close analysis of statistics offered and also because the 'Consanguinity' Schedule remained to be canvassed. By November 1961, however, more was expected of these surveys than ever before. There was dissatisfaction on the one hand with too many general statements and a growing desire on the other to draw conclusions from statistics, to regard social and economic data as inter-related processes, and finally to examine the social and economic processes set in motion through land-reforms and other laws, legislative and administrative measures, technological and cultural change. Finally, a study-camp was

organised in the last week of December, 1961 when the whole field was carefully gone through over again and a programme worked out closely knitting the various aims of the Survey together. The Social Studies Section of the Census Commission rendered assistance to State Superintendents by way of scrutiny and technical comment on the frame of Survey and presentation of results.

This gradual unfolding of the aims of the Survey prevented my colleagues from adopting as many villages as they had originally intended to. But I believe that what may have been lost in quantity has been more than made up for in quality. This is, perhaps, for the first time that such a Survey has been conducted in any country, and that purely as a labour of love. It has succeeded in attaining what it set out to achieve; to construct a map of village India's social structure. One hopes that the volumes of this Survey will help to retain for the Indian Census its title to 'the most fruitful single source of information about the country'. Apart from other features, it will perhaps be conceded that the Survey has set up a new Census standard in pictorial and graphic documentation. The schedules finally adopted for this monograph have been printed in an appendix.

New Delhi, }
July 30, 1964 }

ASOK MITRA,
Registrar General, India

PREFACE

Sri. A. Mitra has, in his foreword, given a general idea of All-India programme of publishing 400 Village Surveys as a part of the Census programme of 1961. Madras will be publishing 40 such monographs. Eleven reports have so far been presented to the reader and this covers the twelfth village.

This relates to ATHANGARAI, a coastal village in Ramanathapuram District. It was once a sea-port, noted for chank fishery and trade in tobacco. It was also one of the important coastal towns on the traditional pilgrim-route to Rameswaram. It has ceased to be a port; nor does it lie on the present pilgrim-route to Rameswaram. It has become a fishing village which contains fifteen Hindu castes, Muslims and Catholic Christians. Muslims form the dominant community. They are mostly fishermen following age-old methods of fishing with antiquated nets and tackle and country boats. Their life will be of interest to any reader.

The survey was conducted by Sri. S. Dhanasekaran, Tabulation Officer, attached to my office. He has collected a lot of useful data and written a good report, which after a little editing, has been presented to the reader.

Madras,
December 29, 1964. }

P. K. NAMBIAR,
Superintendent of Census Operations.

LIST OF VILLAGES SELECTED FOR THE SURVEY

1. Ayyangarkulam*	...	Chingleput District
2. Sunnambukulam	...	" "
3. Lakkinayakkanpatti	...	South Arcot District
4. Thadagam*	...	" "
5. Arkavadi	...	" "
6. Hasanamapettai	...	North Arcot District
7. Paravakkal	...	" "
8. Arkasanahalli*	...	Salem District
9. Kanakagiri*	...	" "
10. Pappanaickenpatti	...	" "
11. Aladipatti	...	" "
12. Iswaramoorthipalayam	...	" "
13. Kumbalam	...	" "
14. Nellithurai	...	Coimbatore District
15. Hallimoyar	...	Nilgiris District
16. Kinnakorai	...	" "
17. Vilpatti*	...	Madurai District
18. Sirumalai	...	" "
19. Periyur	...	" "
20. Thiruvavayanallur	...	" "
21. Thenbaranadu*	...	Tiruchirapalli District
22. Thiruvellarai*	...	" "
23. Ariyur	...	" "
24. Kadambangudi	...	" "
25. Vilangulam	...	Thanjavur District
26. Kunnalur*	...	" "
27. Kodiakkarai	...	" "
28. Golwarpatti	...	" "
29. Visavanoor	...	Ramanathapuram District
30. Athangaraj**	...	" "
31. Ravanasmudram*	...	" "
32. Pudukulam*	...	Tirunelveli District
33. Alwarkarkulam	...	" "
34. Kilakottai	...	" "
35. Odaimarichan	...	" "
36. Kuvalaikanni	...	" "
37. Koottumangalam*	...	" "
38. Kadathucheri	...	Kanyakumari District
39. Kottuthalazhamkulam	...	" "
40. Kadukkara	...	" "

* Already Published

** The present volume (No. 12 of the series)

VILLAGE SURVEY REPORT
ON
ATHANGARAI

Field Study and }
First Report }

...

...

S. DHANASEKARAN, M.A.,
Tabulation Officer

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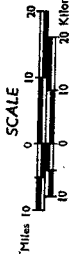
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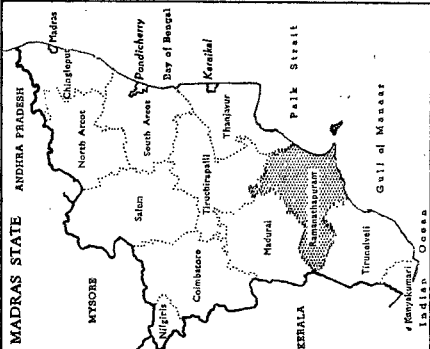
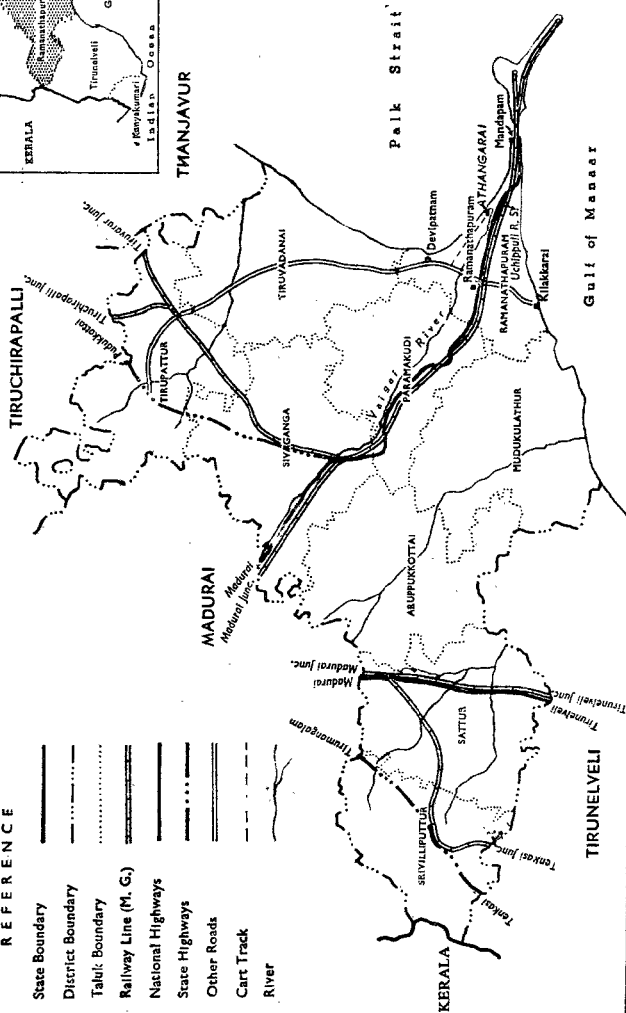
LOCATION MAP
OF

ATHANGARAI
RAMANATHAPURAM TALUK
RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT



REFERENCE

- State Boundary
- District Boundary
- Taluk Boundary
- Railway Line (M. G.)
- National Highways
- State Highways
- Other Roads
- Cart Track
- River



TIANJAVUR

MAP OF
ATHANGARAI VILLAGE
 RAMANATHAPURAM TALUK
 RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT
 [Not to Scale]

PALK BAY

ALAGANKULAM

ATHANGARAI

Mosque

Burial Ground

Munyadi Kovil

Pillayar Kovil

Karuppanasami Kovil

Burial Ground

Ramanathapuram

Servaikara Corani Natham

Mandapam

NAGACHCHI

PERUNGULAM

Servaikara Corani Natham (East)










Annam Kovil

Mandapam

Ramanathapuram

RETTAIYURANI

REFERENCE

Village Boundary	
Railway Line (M. G.)	
Metalled Road	
Earthen Road	
Cart Track	
Foot Path	
Village Site	
River	
Tank	

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introducing the district

MADURAI the second largest city in Madras State which was the cradle of Tamil literature and the historic capital of ancient Pandya dynasty, with the *Meenakshi - Sundareswarar* shrine as its glory, lies some 300 miles south of Madras. Around the City of Madurai, lies the district of Ramanathapuram, skirting on the south and the east. Madurai, besides the capital town of Madurai district, is also the headquarters town of Ramanathapuram district. Lying between Madurai and Tirunelveli districts, Ramanathapuram district is a long stretch of arid plain extending from the Western Ghats on the west to the Bay of Bengal on the east. This district was carved out in the year 1910 with the territories of two great Zamindaris of Ramnad and Sivaganga which formed part of the old Madurai district, and the reconstituted taluks of Srivilliputtur and Sattur of Tirunelveli district. With the exception of these two taluks, the entire district is a vast and barren land sloping down gradually from the Ghats to the sea in the east, the Vaigai river bisecting it. The district, though lying between the mountain and the sea can boast of nothing in the shape of a forest or wood. The terrain is mostly parched and fallow and the most desolate and uninviting area in the State. Due to these natural handicaps, agriculture does not flourish in Ramanathapuram district. It has remained a real gamble depending on the uncertain and capricious monsoon and poor fertility of soil.

East Ramnad

2. While the entire district is dry and backward, the region known as East Ramnad comprising the taluks of Sivaganga, Paramakudi, Mudukulathur and Ramanathapuram is acknowledged as 'most backward'. These areas were formerly under the rule of Zamindars of Sivaganga and Ramnad and this region has all the depressing features such as poor soil, frequent droughts, absence of irrigation systems, precarious farming etc. This area is much more backward and under-developed than West Ramnad. Towards the east of Ramanathapuram town, the seat of the *Sethupathis* or Rajahs of Ramnad, the land runs out to the east in a narrow tongue some fifteen miles long and almost joins

the foot-shaped island of Rameswaram. Mainly a coastal area, the terrain is completely a sandy tract with little scope for agriculture. The coast is lined with blown sand and brackish swamp, diversified only by palmyra palms and some shrubs. The coastal region from Point Calimere to Pamban Pass is called Palk Bay and south of Pamban, the sea is known as the Gulf of Manaar, deriving the name from an island of the same name off the western coast of Ceylon.

Location of Athangarai

3. On the coast of Palk Bay, lies a small village known as Athangarai about 11 miles east of Ramanathapuram town exactly at the mouth of river Vaigai. The Vaigai, having its origin in the Varushanad Hills of Madurai district, flows through the central part of Madurai, enters Ramanathapuram district in Sivaganga taluk and after flowing in south-easterly direction across the taluks of Sivaganga and Paramakudi, empties itself into the Big Tank of Ramanathapuram and the surplus waters flow into the Palk Bay very close to Athangarai. Athangarai was a flourishing sea-port in ancient days and the Gazetteer of Southern India, 1855 describes it as a port "where several vessels frequented at the proper season of the year to receive paddy and chanks for exportation." But, today, no trace of it is found and Athangarai, shorn of its past glory and fame, has now shrunk into a small and silent fishing village! The sea-shore of Athangarai is a busy centre of fishing activity where several boats are engaged in fishing. The predominance of fishermen is the main reason for the selection of this village for Socio Economic Survey.

Poverty - The chief feature

4. The first impression one gets from a casual visit to Athangarai village, is its extreme backwardness and acute poverty of the people. The country around is practically a desert, devoid of any fruit-bearing trees; being a flat sandy tract it presents a dry and monotonous picture, with little vegetation except stunted shrubs and palmyra groves. The lines of a few coconut trees along the bank of Vaigai river offer a happy diversion to the on-looker. One

cannot fail to notice the miserable conditions of people, especially the poor fisherfolk! Two sloping palmyra thatches meeting at an angle about an altitude of a man's height, provide them shelter. Their dress is poor and scanty and their food highly monotonous, fish constituting the chief diet. Fishing is a tough and hard task, requiring strenuous manual labour and fishermen eke out their livelihood by toiling hard under the scorching sun. Somehow they have their simple and unsophisticated ways of life, caring for nothing that goes beyond their own village. Extreme poverty, poor housing, low standard of living, wide-spread illiteracy, bad sanitation, mal-nutrition and a medieval social structure are the chief features of Athangarai village.

Topography

5. At the mouth of the Vaigai river lies the village of Athangarai on the east coast of Palk Bay between Mandapam and Devipatnam. It is 11 miles east of Ramanathapuram, the seat of Sethupathis of Ramnad, which is also a big market town in the region. Athangarai is situated in Ramanathapuram East firka in Ramanathapuram taluk. Ramanathapuram is the taluk headquarters, as well as divisional headquarters. The chief fish marketing centre in this area, Uchipuli is four miles south-east of Athangarai and it is also the nearest railway station through which the dried fish from Athangarai are exported to inland markets. Mandapam, the Panchayat Union headquarters is 15 miles away on the south-east. In ancient days, the famous coastal road from Tanjore to Rameswaram, known as *Mangammal Salai* passed through the coastal villages Devipatnam, Athangarai, Mandapam etc., and choultrys built by ancient Sethupathis in those places still stand as monuments of the past glory. The choultry at Athangarai, though in desolate conditions, still serve the pilgrims or mendicants going to the shrine of Rameswaram. Alagankulam, another important fishing village is two miles north-west of Athangarai and it is the headquarters of the Gramasevak. The village panchayat of Athangarai is one of the constituent units of the Mandapam Panchayat Union formed under the popular scheme of *Panchayat Raj* or 'Democratic Decentralization'. Mandapam is the place where the concerned Police Station is located. During the years of Zamindari rule a Police Station was functioning in Athangarai village, which was later discontinued. This village was formerly the headquarters of a Divisional Inspector, (akin to the present Revenue Inspector)

in charge of collecting kist or Revenue but later it has lost all its importance and significance. Athangarai was bounded by Alagankulam on the north-west, Perungulam on the south-west, Nagachi on the east and the sea borders on the north. Athangarai consists of the main village site on the sea-shore bounded by the river Vaigai on the south and east and a hamlet known as 'Seraikaran Ooran', on the opposite bank of the river, a little removed from the sea.

Climate and rainfall

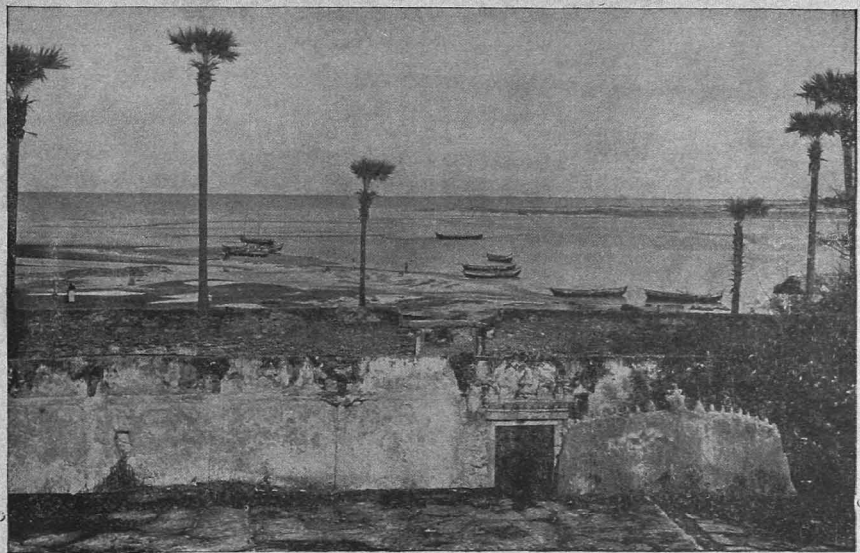
6. The climate is essentially a tropical one but however the heat is not felt as it is mitigated by the sea breeze. The temperature is always kept cooler than the other interior parts such as Ramanathapuram and Paramakudi. The hottest months are May and June. The village gets rain during the north-east monsoon i.e., from October to December. Athangarai receives maximum rainfall from north-east monsoon i.e., during the months of October to December. There is no rain-gauge station at Athangarai and Ramanathapuram is the nearest rain gauge station. The rainfall statistics of Ramanathapuram will help the reader to have an idea of the rainfall in this region. The following statement shows the number of rainy days, yearly rainfall, in respect of each year during the decade 1951 to 1960.

RAINFALL STATISTICS

Year	No. of rainy days	Yearly rainfall (inches)
1951	39	38.47
1952	28	17.40
1953	48	32.70
1954	47	32.79
1955	51	65.96
1956	43	28.61
1957	55	36.77
1958	34	17.49
1959	44	35.03
1960	36	36.67



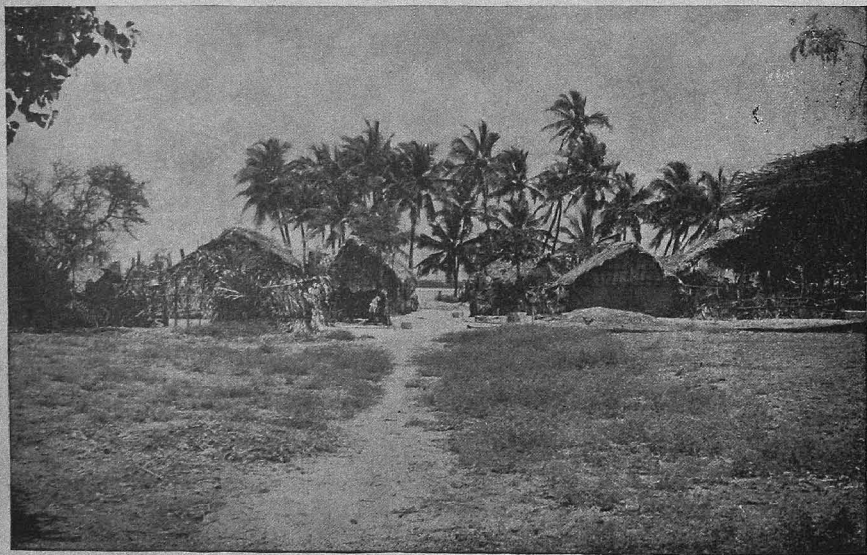
A distant view of Athangarai village amidst coconut groves



The sea-shore of Athangarai where the Vaigai river joins the sea.



Being a sandy tract, the village presents a dry and monotonous picture, with little vegetation except stunted shrubs and palmyra groves.



Settlement of Paravas

From the above data, it is quite clear that this region receives only scanty rainfall and there is much variation in the amount of rainfall from year to year. November is the month of optimum rains almost in all the years of the decade, with the exceptions of 1954 and 1959 in which years highest rainfall was recorded in October. The number of rainy days is also uniformly high in November. Little or occasional rain has been recorded during the months of January to March in several years. Only in 1954 some rains were recorded in the months of January and March and in the remaining years, very poor rains were observed. There is much variation in annual rainfall from year to year, as may be seen from the figures given above. Rainfall was poor throughout the decade, except in the year 1955, when the amount of rainfall had reached the maximum viz., 65.96 inches. The year 1952 saw the lowest rainfall of 17.40 inches. The average annual rainfall for the decade 1951-60 works out to 34.19 inches only.

Soil

7. Being the coastal region, the soil is arenaceous and red loamy soil is also present on the outskirts. Swamps are found to some extent, a little farther from the main village site. The terrain can well be identified with *Neithal* land (நெய்தல்), one of the four types of land as classified by the ancient Tamilians.

Flora

8. The country around the village is a barren tract, consisting of poor sandy soil covered with little growth beyond the stunted shrubs and palmyra palms. Palmyra trees are seen everywhere and coconut palms are found on the bank of Vaigai river and some parts of sea coast, where water is found within an easy depth. There are some jungles, 4 or 5 furlongs south-east of the main village, which consist of nothing but 'Odoi' trees and thorny shrubs. Neem trees are found scattered here and there inside the village and planting of casuarina has come to stay on the outskirts of the village. Fruit bearing trees such as mango, jack etc., are totally unknown to this coastal region; papaya is grown at some places inside the main village; murungai, betel vines are found commonly on the northern part of the village site. Plantain is quite common and is grown in kitchen gardens. Kolinji, a manure plant *Tephrosia purpurea* is found everywhere in the hamlet of Servaikaran Orani, besides the palmyra palms. The following

description of chief trees found in and around Athangarai will be interesting.

Odoi Tree : *Acacia planifrons*

This is a stunted thorn tree generally growing in large numbers and clusters on the outskirts of the main village site north and west of the river Vaigai. It ensures supply of fuel to the villagers. Odoi spreads itself quickly and requires no water. This wood is also used for building purposes and the fruits form favourite food for cattle. Of late, these trees fetch a good income to the land owners, as the wood is largely sent to interior markets where they are in heavy demand.

Palmyra : *Borassus flabelliformis*

Palmyra palms grow well on the sandy plains, and they require no water. This is an useful tree; its stem supplies timber for house building and its leaves thatch for the dwellings of a vast majority of villagers and mats, baskets etc., are also made out of palmyra leaves. There are two varieties of palmyra, viz., male and female varieties and female trees alone bear fruit, which is eaten by villagers and is esteemed wholesome. Toddy was the well-known produce of this palm; due to prohibition policy of Government, toddy-tapping has ceased. *Paihaneeer* or Neera is a favourite drink among the villagers. The use of palmyra leaves for writing was common in olden days and it is now out of practice.

Coconut : *Cocos nucifera*

Coconut is one of the most useful palms, the products of which find an important place in the daily life of villagers as well as their social, domestic and religious functions. The sandy soil in Athangarai is best suited to the growth of this palm. Planting of coconuts is increasingly resorted to in recent years and a number of coconut thopes have sprung up on some parts of sea coast and on the Devipatnam Road. The fruit is generally eaten by all classes of people and is also used in culinary preparations. The wood is strong and durable and is used for rafters in construction of houses. Coconut leaves are used for thatching purposes and oil is used for lamps as well as for cooking, just as gingelly oil. Coconut oil is used in making plasters and is considered to possess healing virtue. No part of the coconut is wasted.

Fauna

9. The study of village flora naturally leads one to think of fauna of the village. No special types of

animals are found in Athangarai. Jackals are, of course, seen in the Odai jungles on the outskirts of village. Hares and rabbits are also met with. Snakes, frogs, lizards are also found in abundance. Being a sea-shore village, fishes of several varieties, crabs, oysters are the chief species found in the sea. Sharks, rays, pomfrets, cat fish, mackerel, prawns are the important fishes found here. Chank fishery was once a flourishing industry in Athangarai. Oysters are in abundance on the reefs of the sea coast.

Transport and communications

10. Athangarai is connected by a motorable road; buses began plying from Ramanathapuram to Athangarai, from the middle of 1961, but the frequency of bus service is quite inadequate. On the Ramanathapuram Devipatnam Road, an eleven-mile gravelled road, known as Athangarai Road, branches off at the sixth mile from Ramanathapuram and buses ply on this road. Prior to the opening of this bus route, people of Athangarai used to cross the river by boat and take buses plying along the Ramanathapuram-Mandapam Road, which is the nearest National Highway running between the main village and the hamlet. This National Highway known as Madurai-Dhanuskodi Road runs almost parallel to the Vaigai river, on its southern side. As there is no bridge or causeway across the river near Athangarai, people use country boats; even now the ferry service is much used by the villagers. This ferry service was provided, by the former District Board for a long time and now it is carried on by the newly constituted Panchayat Union. The boat service is available throughout the day and it is free of charge and this is very useful, especially to the people of Servaikaran Oorani hamlet going for work to the main hamlet. Even now, people bound for Ramanathapuram prefer to cross the river and hitch-hike for buses running to Ramanathapuram from Uchipuli or Mandapam on the Highway. Of course, there is another bridge across Vaigai river between the villages of Alagankulam and Panaikulam connecting the Athangarai Road and Highways Road and buses ply on it, touching Alagankulam village; but villagers of Athangarai do not take those buses. Private cars, carts etc., coming from Ramanathapuram prefer that route, as it is a short cut to reach Athangarai. The nearest railway station is Uchipuli, at a distance of 4 miles. Athangarai is served by an experimental Post Office, functioning from 3rd August 1962. Prior to that date, the Postman from the Alagankulam Post Office used to visit Athangarai every day for delivery of letters

and clearing of the post box, which was usually kept in the Muslim Street. The present Post Office is manned by a local Naidu youth as a part time worker; letters are delivered and despatched everyday. The nearest Telegraph Office is at Panaikulam, three and half miles away. Newspapers are not popular among the villagers and according to the socio-economic enquiry only 52 persons have the reading habit. The village panchayat is maintaining a small reading room; still the reading of daily newspapers and magazines has not gained ground among the people. A public radio has recently been put up in the Panchayat Office and this is increasingly used by the villagers. Apart from this radio, no other individuals own radio set.

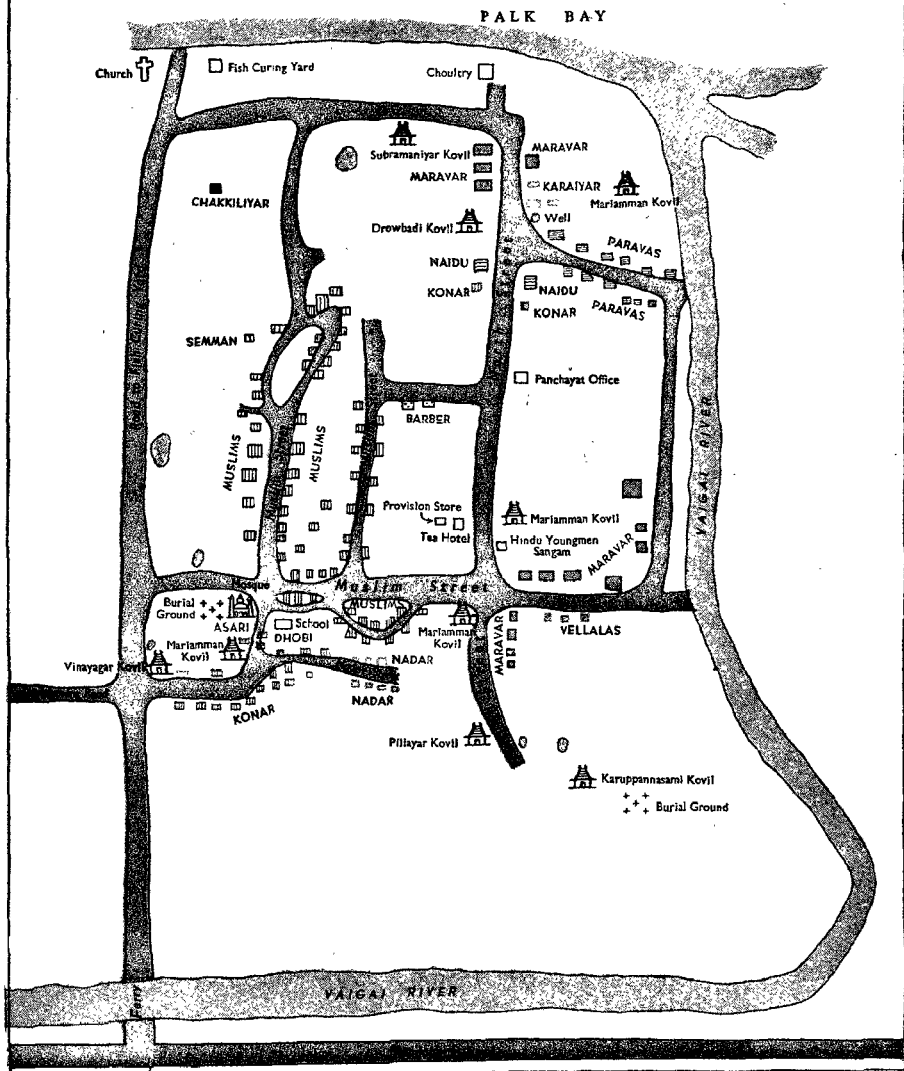
Proximity to pilgrim centres

11. Athangarai lies 25 miles away from Rameswaram, the famous pilgrim centre of the South. It is said that Athangarai was one of the chief coastal towns on the traditional route to Rameswaram. Prior to the introduction of railways, pilgrims to Rameswaram used to traverse on foot the dry Ramnad country. There were several traditional routes. One route is known as the 'Mangammal Salai' (named after the famous queen Mangammal of Madurai Naick dynasty) passing along the east-coast from Chola country. The choultry at Athangarai was said to be one of the several choultries on this route. These choultries were built by ancient Pandya Kings and Sethupathis, and they were sufficiently endowed with *inam* or gift lands. Pilgrims were provided with shelter and food and even to this day, the choultry of Athangarai serves the needs of pedestrian pilgrims and religious mendicants. The railway was introduced to Madurai in the year 1875 and from Madurai a branch line was built to Mandapam in 1902, on the neck of land which runs out to meet the island of Rameswaram and later railway was extended to Rameswaram, after the construction of Pamban bridge. Prior to the introduction of railways, devotees had to foot the entire country, from one place to another. Athangarai lies between Devipatnam and Mandapam along this ancient route. It is said that even after the advent of railways, religious mendicants and sanniyasis used to stay in these choultries on their pilgrimage to Rameswaram. Feeding is done even to this day in the choultry of Athangarai.

Rameswaram

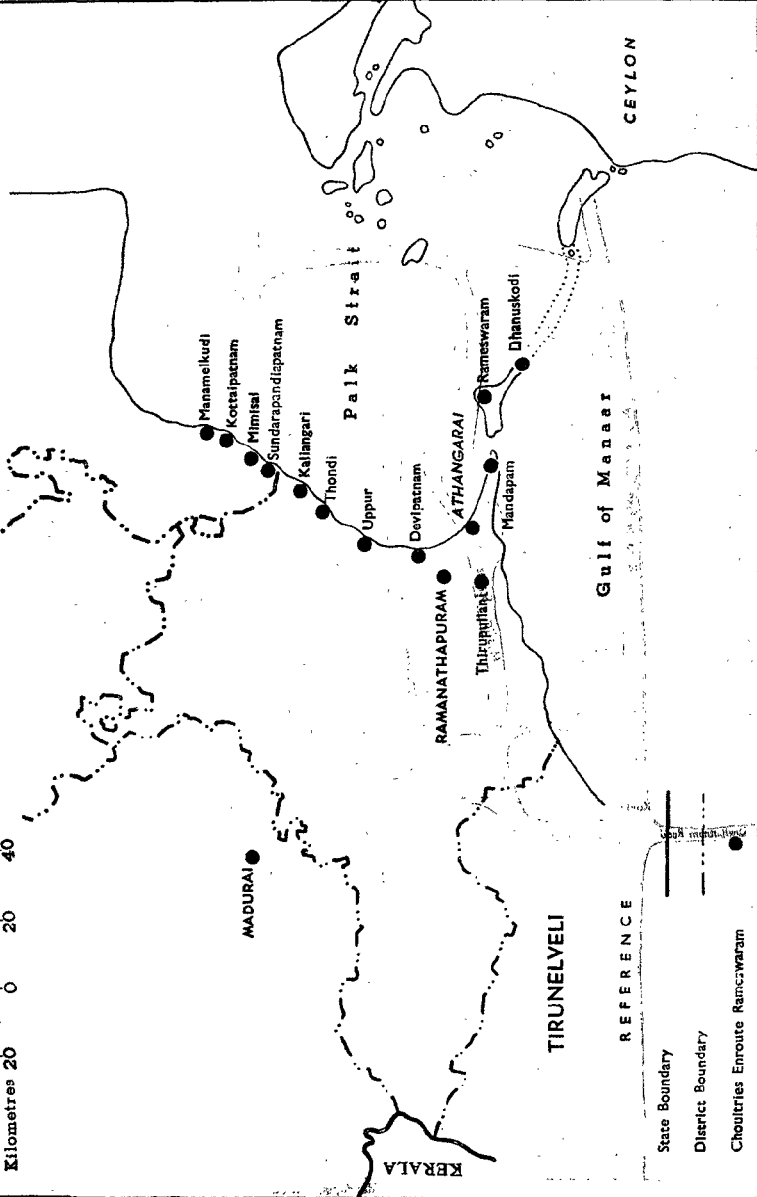
12. The temple of Rameswaram is one of the most venerated Hindu shrines in India; for centuries, this shrine has been the resort of pilgrims from all parts

RESIDENTIAL PATTERN
OF
ATHANGARAI MAIN VILLAGE
RAMANATHAPURAM TALUK
RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT
[Not to Scale]



LOCATION MAP OF
ATHANGARAI & PILGRIM CENTRES

TIRUCHIRAPALLI
SCALE



REFERENCE

- State Boundary
- District Boundary
- Choultries Enroute Rameswaram

of India, especially from North India. A pilgrimage to Rameswaram is the life's ambition of devout Hindus all over India and on an average nearly a thousand devotees visit Rameswaram island every day for performance of religious rites and to bathe in the *Theertham* or holy water here. The island of Rameswaram lies between the main land of Ramanathapuram district on the west and Ceylon on the east, being separated from the main land only by the narrow passage of Pamban Channel which opens on the north into the waters of Palk Strait and on the south into the Gulf of Manaar. Tradition has it that the Zamindars of Ramnad are called Sethupathis or Lords of the Causeway. When Sri Rama crossed to the island from Ceylon by way of Adam's Bridge and founded the temple in Rameswaram, he also appointed the first Sethupathi to protect the pilgrims who should traverse the causeway to visit it. According to Hindu tradition this bridge of rock (later known as Adam's bridge) was made by Hanuman, the Monkey-god and his army of monkeys, to convey Sri Rama across to Lanka (Ceylon) in his expedition to recover his wife, Sita from Ravana, the king of Lanka. The legend connected with Ramayana runs as follows : Lord Rama while returning from Lanka after vanquishing Ravana was said to have halted at a place known as Kandamadhanam in Rameswaram Island and the sages who followed Rama advised him that he should worship Lord Siva to get absolved of the sin of *Brahmahatya* committed by him in slaying Ravana, and other Rakshasas. Hanuman was, therefore, sent to Mount Kailash to fetch a lingam, but by the time Hanuman could return from Kailash, the auspicious moment for *Linga Prathista* or dedication of Linga was about to lapse and so Sita, the consort of Rama, made a lingam out of sand which was worshipped by Sri Rama. Hanuman came with the Viswalingam from Mount Kailash and he got enraged on seeing that Rama had already dedicated one lingam. Hanuman tried to remove this lingam with his tail but his tail snapped, in this attempt. However Lord Rama dedicated the Viswalingam also and gave prominence to it and appeased the anger of Hanuman. The lingam made by Sita is called *Ramalingam* and the other one brought by Hanuman is known as *Viswalingam* or Viswanathar. Even to-day the Viswalingam is kept prominently beside the Ramalingam and it is said that the trace of Hanuman's tail round the Ramalingam can still be seen. It is believed by the research scholars that Parakramabahu, the king of Ceylon would have built the original structure of the temple in

1173 A. D. when he conquered Pandya kingdom. Before that one sanniyasi was said to be worshipping Ramalingam and Viswalingam by erecting a hut over them. Later on the Sethupathis of Ramnad and Viswanathana Naick improved the temple to such an extent that to-day the magnificent corridor of this temple measuring 4,000 feet in length is the largest one in the world. The Sethupathis of Ramnad are the hereditary guardians of this temple. The other important and sacred pilgrim centres in the region are Devipatnam, Thirupullani besides Dhanuskodi. The pilgrimage to Rameswaram will never be a complete one without the holy bath in Dhanuskodi, the land's end.

Devipatnam

13. Devipatnam or Navapashanam is another holy place connected with the Ramayana, which lies on the east coast of Palk Bay, 14 miles north of Athangarai. The legendary tradition goes that Lord Rama while attempting to construct the 'Sethu' bridge, he wanted the help of the *Navagraha* or nine planets. Lord Vishnu had promised the Navagrahas that He would give them a permanent habitation during his avatar as Rama. Accordingly Sri Rama dedicated the Navagrahas, made of sand at this place and on seeing that they were washed away by sea, Rama was distressed and prayed to Lord Jagannadha who helped Rama in keeping the Navagraha statues without being washed off by seawaters. These statues still exist and they are called *Nava Pashanams*.

Thirupullani

14. *Thirupullani* or Darbha Sayanam, six miles south of Ramanathapuram is another chief pilgrim centre, hallowed by legendary associations with the epic war of Sri Rama with Ravana. Sri Rama, while he was searching for his consort Sita, was confronted at this place by the vast expanse of sea that checked his further progress to Lanka and so Rama laid himself on the bed of sacred grass fasting for three days and nights immersed deep in meditation. That is why this place is known by the name Darbha Sayanam. It was here again that Adhi Jagannadha appeared to Sri Rama and gave him the weapon of victory called Divya Chapa and blessed him with success. These sacred places are invariably visited by the pilgrims to Rameswaram. The location of Athangarai amidst these *Sthalas* (pilgrim centres) gave prominence to the village. The grand old choultry of Athangarai still stands as 'a relic of the past'; the dilapidated walls and huge pillars remain witness to the glory that has departed.

Ancient monuments

15. On the sea shore just close to the mouth of Vaigai river, stands a grand old choultry called 'Raja Chatram' built by one of the ancient Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram Zamindari. The massive pillars with the artistic carvings of varied ornamental designs, the huge corridors, big stone walls, the spacious halls, small apartments etc., stand desolate to-day. The walls of brick and stone remain to witness to the glory that has departed. Poor feeding is carried on even to this day. The choultry was founded by Muthuramalinga Sethupathi, a former Zamindar of Ramnad and endowed with a village known as 'Nagarikathan' in the neighbouring taluk of Tiruvadanaï. This village was a gift to this Chatram by the Sethupathi and on 1st October, 1951 the State Government took over the village under the Estates Abolition Act and 'Dastic allowance' is now granted by the Government and with that small fund, the upkeep and maintenance of choultry is looked after. A Brahmin 'Kamastar' or inn-keeper living in the choultry itself looks after the maintenance of choultry and poor feeding. He cooks food daily once and the pilgrims and religious mendicants are fed with. The Kamastar is employed and paid by Ramnad Samasthanam. It is said that the choultry of Athangarai was one in the series of choultries built on the east coast from Thanjavur to Rameswaram and these choultries served the pilgrims to Rameswaram who had to walk in olden days prior to introduction of train service. These choultries are located along what is called 'Mangamal Salai' (a coastal road). The other choultries from Manalmekkudi in Thanjavur to Rameswaram are as follows :

Place	Name of donor by whom choultry is maintained
Manalmekkudi, Kottaipattinam, Mimisal, Vikramapandiapuram, Uppur, Devipatnam, Athangarai, Mandapam, Rameswaram, and Dhanuskodi	} Raja of Ramnad

Place	Name of donor by whom choultry is maintained
Sundara Pandia Patnam & Kalianagarai	} Raja of Sivaganga
Thondi	Chettiers of Devakottai

Pilgrims used to stay in these choultries while they travel to Rameswaram by foot and they are freely fed by the inn-keepers. The choultry of Athangarai still does useful service and mendicants and pilgrims come over here on their way to Rameswaram. Rice to the value of Rs. 2 and other provisions are supplied daily by the Samasthanam Office and with these, the inn-keeper cooks food and feeds the sannyasis and pilgrims, besides himself. Some poorest natives also chiefly depend on the free food supplied here, for their sustenance. This choultry stands as a relic of the past.

Settlement History

16. The fishermen of the land viz., Muslims, Karayars and Paravas and Maravars are the 'natives of soil'. Valayans, Nadars, Vellalas are also said to be living here for several generations; Brahmin, Naidu, Vannan families have settled only in the present generation. The ancillary data gathered during the survey reveal that out of the 357 households, 114 households are reported to be living in Athangarai for six generations or more and 172 households have settled between four and five generations. Thirty-three families have migrated during the present generation, most of them being Catholic Paravas, Valayars, Nadars and Vellalas. Paravas and Valayars have come down to this village from other coastal villages of Ramanathapuram taluk and Kanyakumari district. The settlement history of the various communities is shown in Table No. I

TABLE No. I
Settlement History

Community	Total No. of households	No. of households settled												Remarks.			
		Before 5 generations			Between 4-5 generations			Between 2-3 generations			One generation				Present generation		
		H.	M.	F.	H.	M.	F.	H.	M.	F.	H.	M.	F.				
Maravar	119	29	68	75	69	181	166	14	33	42	...	...	...	7	24	16	Mandapam, Nagachi, Devipatnam, Perungulam Agathiarkottam, Sadayanvalasai and Vattan valasai, Ramnad taluk, Ramnad district.
Idayar	19	8	17	13	6	17	18	5	11	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	9	1	1	1	7	19	19	1	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Valayar	18	3	6	6	5	16	8	2	5	4	...	...	...	8	23	26	Ragunathapuram, Vannangunda, Tirupullani, Vairavankoil Mukarapillaiyarkoil valasai, Ramnad taluk, Ramnad district.
Vellala	7	3	3	8	1	3	3	1	1	1	...	...	...	2	2	3	Kerala State, Pudukottai village, Pudukottai taluk, Tiruchi district.
Nadar	11	1	2	3	4	8	11	3	6	6	...	...	...	3	5	6	Palayampatti village, Aruppukottai taluk, Ramanathapuram district. Ananthankottai, Urunukudi, Tiruvadana taluk, Ramanathapuram district.
Karayar	3	2	6	5	1	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	1	3	4	...	...	...	1	4	1	...	...	...	1	3	2	Virudhunagar, Sattur taluk, Ramanathapuram district.
Asari	3	1	4	3	1	1	3	1	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	4	6	...	...	...	1	3	...	Ramanathapuram town, Ramanathapuram district
Pandithar	2	1	3	2	1	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	5	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	Ramnad town, Ramnad district,
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	1	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	136	62	150	150	70	144	184	3	5	8	...	...	...	1	1	3	Alagankulam, Muthupettai, Ramnad taluk, Ramnad district.
Catholic Paravas	20	2	7	6	6	20	12	20	3	6	3	...	...	9	16	18	Muttam village, Kanyakumari district. Ceylon, Olaiguda, Ramnad taluk, Ramnad district. Chippikulam Kovilpatti taluk, Tirunelveli district.
Total	357	114	270	276	172	412	432	38	86	92	...	...	...	33	78	75	

H: Households M: Males F: Females

CHAPTER II

PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL CULTURE

Ethnic character

17. Athangarai presents a picture of several communities living together; persons professing three religions viz., Hinduism, Islam and Christianity live together, with good deal of unity despite diversity in faith, manners, customs etc. In the main village Muslims form the bulk of the population, a vast majority of them being fishermen. In the hamlet of

Servaikaran Oorani, only Hindus are living, Maravars being the predominant caste and Valayars and Chakkiliyans being the other castes. Paravas, the traditional sea-faring community who are Christian converts live in the main hamlet. The relative strength of the three religious groups and of the various castes within Hindu community will be seen from the table below.

TABLE No. II

Ethnic Composition

Religion	Community	Sub-caste/ Sub-sect	Number of households	Persons	Males	Females	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
Hindu	Maravar	Semmanattu	119	605	306	299	
		Idayar	Thalappakatti	11	54	29	25
			Siruthalikatti	3	12	6	6
			...	5	21	10	11
	Valayar	Vadakathi	8	36	22	14	
		Thalappakatti	3	15	9	6	
		Therkathi	1	5	3	2	
			...	6	38	16	22
	Nadar	Shanar	7	33	16	17	
		Pettaikarar	1	5	2	3	
			...	3	9	3	6
		Chakkiliyar (S.C)	...	9	44	22	22
		Vellala	Karakattu	7	24	9	15
		Karayar	...	3	15	8	7
		Naidu	Gavara	3	17	10	7
		Asari	Thacha	3	16	8	8
		Vannan	...	2	14	7	7
		Pandithar	...	2	9	3	6
		Agamudiyar	Rajakulam	2	10	5	5
		Brahmin	Iyer	1	1	1	...
	Pandaram	Sangama	1	3	1	2	
	Semman (S.C.)	...	1	2	1	1	
Islam	Muslim	Hanafi	81	366	175	191	
		Shafi	55	279	125	154	
Christian	Catholic	...	20	88	49	39	
		Paravas	.	.	.	.
Total			357	1,721	846	875	

S. C.: Scheduled Caste



A Muslim cooly fisherman's family — The children are half clothed and half starved.



Karayars, the traditional Hindu fishermen.



A Nadar's household



The village barber — Ambattans are the traditional barbers.

Major castes

18. Muslims form the bulk of the population, the percentage to total families being 38; Maravars come next in rank and their families are roughly one-third of the total households. Catholic Paravas, the sea-faring community rank third, their proportion being only 5.6 per cent. Among the Hindus, Idayars or Konars come next to Maravars, most of them being small cultivators. The number of Valayan families is 18 i.e., 5 per cent of total families. There are eleven Nadar households, the traditional toddy-tappers, who have taken up small trade, mat-weaving etc. Vellalas or Pillais who claim superiority over other Non-brahmin castes are numerically a small group, consisting of seven households. Karayans, the traditional Hindu fishing caste form a minority caste, having three households. All the three sea-faring communities viz., Hindu Karayans, Christian Paravas and Muslims live in the main village only and the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani is occupied by Maravars, Valayans and Chakkiliyans; Maravars fully predominate in this hamlet, all of them being small cultivators clinging to some little bits of land, inherited from their fore-fathers. Muslims being the powerful master-fishermen or boat-owning fishermen, command the entire fishing industry and they also own lands; they are economically better off than other ethnic groups, besides their numerical superiority and it is but natural that they wield so much influence in the affairs of the village. The Presidents of Village Panchayat and Co-operative Society belong to Muslim community. Maravars, the natives of soil, have their own social precedence and in economic sphere, they are somewhat behind. They are either cultivators or agricultural labourers; they never go in for fishing as they consider it below their dignity. They treat the Karayans and Valayans of Hindu religion doing fishing as inferior castes. Valayans, the poorest class in the village are generally agricultural labourers or tied servants to some wealthy Muslim landlords; some do fishing for wages. There are three Gavara Naidu families, who are only a minor caste exercising little influence over the village affairs. Apart from these communal groups, there are the usual 'Service Castes', viz., Ambattans, the barbers and Vannans, the washermen; Kammalans or Asaris are the artisans and their strength is relatively small. The entire fishing industry is in the hands of a few Muslim fishermen; they are, of course, 'master fishermen', who employ several coolies for fishing. Paravas are only a minority section of the village society and they are not economically well off. On the other hand, Muslims are economically superior to all other communities.

Maravars have their own social precedence and economic stability; they wield more influence in village affairs than any other Hindu caste. Idayars better known as Konars, are traditionally shepherds or cowherds and they are chiefly agricultural labourers with a few exceptions of seven small cultivators. Vellalas are generally cultivators by tradition and two families are petty traders. They assume social superiority; both the Village Head man and Karnam belong to this caste. Valayans are the poorest of the lot; only one of them owns a bit of land and they are all agricultural coolies. The distribution of households, males and females are shown in Table No. II. Vannan and Pandithar are found only in small numbers, just like in any other South Indian village and they do their traditional services to the community. Vannans attend to washing of clothes and Pandithar or Ambattan are the barbers. Semman is the traditional leather worker and he also owns a petty lime kiln near his hut. Agamudiyar, Brahmin and Naidu are the other minor castes; the one Brahmin is a migrant who is the care-taker of the choultry of Athangarai.

Muslims

19. Muslims of Athangarai are believed to be converts from Hindu Tamil castes. The period of conversion is not known. The sub-divisions are Marakkayars and Rowthers, the former following the Shafi sect while the latter come under Hanafi sect. There are no major differences between these two groups. Rowthers and Marakkayars inter-dine and inter-marry. When one man belonging to Hanafi sect marries a girl of Shafi sect, the family members come under Hanafi sect only. The sect is transmitted along 'male-line' i.e., a son inherits the sect of father and not mother and a woman also loses the sect of her father and takes up the sect of her husband. The Mohammedans are sub-divided into two major divisions known as 'Sunnies' and 'Shiahs' and Muslims of Athangarai and the neighbouring areas belong to the former division. Among Sunnies, there are four different schools of thought viz., Hanafi, Shafi, Maliki and Hambali. While the Shiahs do not have belief in saints, the Sunnies consider that the time for changing spiritual laws of Islam was over with the periods of four 'Imams' or spiritual leaders, Abu Hanifa, Shafai, Malik and Hambal and this is the cause behind the formation of the above four sub-groups among the Sunnies

Sects

20. The Muslims of this village, locally called 'Rowthers' and 'Marakkayars' are probably the

descendants either of Hindus of this region who were forcibly converted to Islam, or of Mussalman fathers by the women of this region. They say that they are not migrants to this village and they are the natives of soil for about seven generations or more. It is said that Muslims of this region are having many sub-divisions which are endogamous in character and usually territorial in origin. Instances of these are 'Puliangudiyar', the men of Puliangudi town in Tirunelveli district, the 'Elaiyangudiyar', the men of Elaiyangudi in Paramakudi taluk, Ramanathapuram district, the 'Musiriar', the men of Musiri in Tiruchirappalli district, the 'Vaigaikarayar', the men of the Vaigai banks and the 'Eruthukarar' or bullock men, those who used to trade with pack bullocks. It is believed that Muslims of Athangarai belong to 'Vaigaikarayar'. The Muslims of this village had settled here long back and of the 136 households as many as 62 households are reported to have settled before five generations or more, 70 households between four and five generations and 3 households during the last two to three generations. Only one household had migrated two years ago from the neighbouring village of Alagankulam.

21. All of them speak Tamil only and Urdu or Hindustani is not the mother tongue in any household. Though they read 'Koran' in Arabi, they are not conversant in Arabi and they use only Tamil in talking with others. They have no caste divisions or distinctions; though all of them are converts from Hinduism, nobody ever remembers the name of the caste from which his fore-fathers were drawn. They think themselves more in terms of Mohammedans than by the various sub-divisions. The religion of the Prophet has inculcated a sense of solidarity and brotherhood, with no barriers of caste or sub-caste. However, we notice that both Marakkayars and Rowthers will not have marital alliance with the Labbais who are considered inferior. But Labbais are much revered by the people for their immense knowledge of Koran and religious teachings.

Rowthers and Marakkayars

22. There are no major variations in customs and manners of Rowthers and Marakkayars, except a few. One such difference found in Athangarai is in regard to form of worship. While Rowthers place their hands on their abdomen while worshipping, Marakkayars put them on their hearts. But, however, they have common worship in the same mosque and the timings of the prayer are the same. In regard to dietary habits, Marakkayars who acknowledge Imam Shafi as their leader, eat crabs, while the other sect, the Hanafi forbids the eating of those animals

not explicitly demonstrated as edible by the Prophet Mohammed. The Rowthers of Athangarai do not generally eat crabs. According to the present survey, out of 136 households of Muslim community, 81 belong to Hanafi sect and the rest are Marakkayars of Shafi sect. It is commonly said that the term 'Marakkayar' is derived from the Arabic word 'Markab' which means a boat. The etymology of the name 'Rowther' is not clearly known.

Dress

23. The dress and ornaments of Muslims vary from those of Hindus in some respects. Men among them mostly wear lungis and dhoties are not common. Sarees of Hindu women are not popular among Muslim women, who wear an ornamental lungi, 'Kuppayam' or loose bodice and an upper cloth of three yards or so. Muslim males are distinguishable by their beard and shaven head; they have completely a distinct appearance from the other religious groups.

Hindus

24. Out of 201 households coming under 'Hindus' there is only one Brahmin family and 190 households belong to different Non-Brahmin castes and ten households are Scheduled Castes or what is popularly known as 'Harijans'. Maravars and Vellalas (Pillais) are the prominent castes among Hindus. They have dominant influence over the village affairs. Semmanattu Maravars are found in large numbers in the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani. Valayans, who are mostly immigrants are agricultural labourers or tied servants. Chakkiliyans and Semmans are the only Scheduled Castes living in Athangarai.

Maravars

25. Out of 201 Hindu households, 119 households come under Maravars. Maravars are perhaps the old settlers of this region and 29 households reported to be living in the village for more than five generations and only seven households have migrated to Athangarai in the present generation. Maravars are strong and sturdy people and their physique, both among males and females, is good. According to Castes and Tribes of Southern India, the Maravars are "of strong limbs and hardy frames, and fierce looking as tigers, wearing long and curled locks of hair." It is said that Maravars are generally a virile community endowed with conspicuous traits and the region they occupy are, more or less, of 'Palai' variety and they have been notorious for the 'Palai' mode of living i.e., robbery and



A Muslim woman



Sembunattu Maravar family

theft. Mr. Edgar Thurston writes, "The Maravars must have been one of the first of the Dravidian tribes that penetrated to the south of the peninsula, and like the Kallans, they have been but little affected by brahminical influence. There exists among them a picturesque tradition to the effect, that in consequent of their assisting Rama in his war against Ravana, Rama gratefully exclaimed in good Tamil 'Maraven' or 'I will never forget,' and that they have ever since been called Maravans. But, with more probability, the name may be connected with the word 'Maram' which means killing, ferocity, bravery and the like, as pointing clearly to their unpleasant profession, that of robbing and slaying their neighbours".

26. It must be said that they are much the same as other caste people, and almost all of them now live on agriculture. In olden days, Maravars were 'a fierce and turbulent race famous for their military prowess'. It is also said that the Maravars are the descendants of Guha, Rama's boat man, who rowed him across to Lanka (Ceylon). The legend says that 'Rama promised Guha that he would come back at a fixed time and when he failed to return, Guha made a fire, whereon to burn himself to death. Hanuman, however, prevented him from committing suicide, and assured him that Rama would shortly return. This come to pass and Rama, on learning what Guha had done called him 'Maravan' a brave and reckless fellow. The Zamindars of Ramanathapuram territory belong to this community and they bear the title of *Sethupathi* or 'Lord of the causeway'. This causeway is the ridge of rock which used to connect the tongue of the main land running out into the Gulf of Manaar with the Rameswaram Island, and tradition has it that when Rama crossed to the Island from Ceylon by way of Adam's bridge and founded the sacred temple as-a thanks - offering for his victory over Ravana, the King of Lanka, he also appointed the first Sethupathi to protect the pilgrims who should traverse the causeway to visit it.

27. It is commonly said that Maravans are one of the 'group of three very proud communities' or three clans, the others being 'Kallars' and 'Agamudiyars'. 'Thevar' is the caste title for all the three clans. Among Maravans, there are seven endogamous sub-divisions respectively denominated Sembunattu, Agatha, Oru-nattu, Upukatti and Kurichikattu and Sembunattu Maravans are the principal sub-division and Maravans of Athangarai belong to this sub-division. Maravans have exogamous

septs or Kilais and the following septs are recorded among the Sembunattu Maravars of this village.

(i) Marikka, (ii) Picha, (iii) Thondaman, (iv) Karupatha, (v) Sitrama,

A man or woman should marry with one of a 'Kilai' other than his or her own; his or her Kilai being that of his or her mother and not of father unlike 'Gotram' of Brahmin community.

28. Divorce is easily granted among them on payment of usual fines; the divorce is settled by the 'Panchayatdars' of their own caste. Should it so happen that the husband dislikes the object of his former choice, he complains to the Panchayatdars, who assemble together and settle the affair; the woman is conducted back to her mother's home, the ornaments, utensils, sheep etc., and whatever else she may have brought with her from her mother's house, are returned to her and the 'Thali' is taken away. If the wife claims divorce from her husband, then the 'Parisam' paid by the husband and the expenses incurred for the wedding, the 'Thali' which he caused to be bound on her, are restored to him and the wife, taking the jewels and other articles brought from her mother's house, returns to her mother's home and marries again at her pleasure.

Valayans

29. Valayans, having the titles of 'Ambalam' or 'Moopan' are poor agricultural labourers and servants of some wealthy Muslims. They are considered as a low and debased tribe. Their name is supposed to be derived from the Tamil word 'Valai' a net and in some other parts, they are a 'Shikari' caste constantly employed in netting game in the jungles. It is said that 'the tradition to the effect that a Valaya woman was the mother of the Vallambans seems to show that the Valayans must be one of the most ancient castes in the country'. The legend connected to their origin goes that once their God Mahadeva presented them with the first net ever invented in the world to catch a fish which had swallowed the God's ring. Ever since, they and their descendants have gone on fishing as a means of livelihood, the God having persuaded all people to freely partake of fish diet. They were originally hunters but now they have taken up different occupations such as fishing, cultivation and menial services. They are divided into endogamous sects called Veljar, Sulundukkarar and Ambalakarar; the first are hunters, the second are torch-bearers and the third are cultivators. The honorific title of Valayans is

'Ambalam' meaning apparently 'Owners of temple.' There is a tradition that originally the famous Temple of Rameswaram was theirs both as regards proprietorship and as regards the performance of the religious rites, but it was handed over later to the Brahmia priests on condition of their using as sacred threads, the threads of fishing nets. Mr. E. H. Thurston opines that, "There is some connection between Ambalakkarans, Muttiriyan, Muthurajas, Uralis, Vedans, Valayans and Vettuvans." However, the Valayans in this village do not have any idea about the Muthurajas or Muttiriyan of Tiruchirappalli district and they have their relatives only in Ramana-thapuram taluk, mostly in coastal areas, such as Vairavankoil, Mookarapillaiyarkoilvalasai, Tirupullani, Mundal and Rameswaram. Of the 18 Valayan families of Athangarai, eight families are migrants from the above places in the present generation and the other families had also settled down in this village in previous generations. They have still marital ties with the Valayans of those places. In Pamban and neighbouring coastal villages, some Valayans are well-to-do fishermen owning canoes and nets but mostly they are employed by rich Marakkayars at fixed monthly wages to catch fish for them. In Athangarai, none of the Valayans owns net or boat and some people are employed either as agricultural cooly or occasionally as cooly fishermen by Muslim 'Samatys' or master fishermen. They are mostly landless labourers and watchmen in coconut thopes and plantain gardens. Some rich Muslims employ them as servants for watching their fields far off the village and those Valayans live in thatched huts amidst the fields. They do not own the houses or huts in which they live and the land seldom belongs to them. They are at any time, likely to be evicted from their huts by the landlords. When he changes his master, he moves to another hut in the new place; he constructs with palmyra leaves, available free of cost. Valayans' houses are so scattered all over the area, amidst the thopes and fields on the outskirts, or on the extreme south of the Servaikaran Oorani hamlet. They are too poor to have huts even of mud walls. As mud is not available in this sandy area, it involves some cost to bring mud from neighbouring places and being the poorest class, they use palmyra leaves for walls too and mostly their houses are without any door or door-step.

Education

30. They are educationally backward and they do not appear to be intelligent. Of the 94 persons among them, only four in the whole village are able to read Tamil and to do simple arithmetic and one Valayan boy has passed fifth standard. Even the school-age

children are not sent to school and they assist their parents in farm work. Out of 20 boys and girls between the ages of five and fourteen, only one is educated and some others are either attending to mat-weaving, or agricultural cooly or shepherd and most of them are simply playing or whiling away their time. Valayar women have learnt mat-weaving from the Nadars in recent years and through this household industry they add some additional income to their meagre earnings. Only two Valayar men do lease cultivation and nobody possesses sufficient land for own-cultivation. Of the 26 male workers among them, 23 are working as agricultural coolies getting wages and one is a shepherd, two persons being lease cultivators.

Social status

31. Valayans are by nature timid and unintelligent; before the advent of prohibition, they were said to be inveterate drunkards. They are dark and of medium height and though capable of doing hard work they are not very muscular and Valaya women appear to possess better physique. Valayans are among the lower classes but not so low down the scale as the Chakkiliyan and they have free access to all roads. They are served by the washermen also. In the presence of their landlords and high caste Hindus they remove their upper garments for reverence. They are not allowed to enter the tea shops and they confine themselves outside, taking tea or coffee in vessels kept separately for them. Valayans are Hindu saivites but they are really devil worshippers. The tribal Gods are chiefly Singa Pidari (Ayyanar), Karuppan, Munisamy, Irulan, Iulayee and Kadaikanni Ayyanar. Animal sacrifice is practised. Valayans of Athangarai belong to the sub-castes called Vadakkathi Valayar and Thalappakkatti Valayar.

Marriage customs

32. Both the divisions employ Brahmia priests in their weddings and a bride price or 'Parisam' of Rs. two and annas two is paid usually. Betrothal is held a few days prior to wedding. They have exogamous septs or 'Kilais' e.g., 'Pucha Kilai', 'Pattankatti Kilai.' Usually a man claims the hands of the daughter of paternal aunt or maternal uncle. On an enquiry relating to consanguinity of marriages among them, it was found that out of nine marriages, two men had married the daughter of their father's sister, three had married maternal uncle's daughter and in the remaining cases bride and groom were not closely related. They allow widow re-marriage and it is said that pre-marital unions are condoned on payment of fines. They follow other Non-brahmian castes in their marriage customs

and tying of 'Thali' string in a yellow thread is always done by the sister of the bridegroom. Divorce is easy to obtain, the husband or wife having to pay the usual fines. Divorce is settled by the 'Panchayatdars' or elders of the caste.

Death customs

33. Mostly they bury the dead. One of the funeral ceremonies is peculiar among them; when the heir departs to the burial or burning ground on the second day, a mortar is placed near the outer door of the house and a lamp is lit inside the hut. On his return he has to upset the mortar and worship the lamp.

Diet

34. As regards their food, nothing seems to come amiss to them. All kinds of flesh, fishes, crabs, flesh of molluscs such as Nathai, (Turbo) kovanji (Oliva), rats, etc., are taken by them. Valayans name their children after their 'Kula deivams' or caste Gods, chief of them are Periyakaruppan, Kadaikanni Ayyanar, Muniyandi, Irulan, Irulayee; the popular names among women are Karuppayee, Muniyayee; Rakkayee, Kathayee, Muthammal, and Veeramakali. The name 'Karupayee' has no reference to the dark colour of the individual so named, but it is the name of the consort of the God Karuppan. Among men, the names Karuppiyah, Muniyandi, Periyakaruppan, Chelliah, Amavasai, Katturaja are common, mostly named after the village gods.

Vannans

35. Vannans are the washermen of the village community. Only two families of Vannans are living in Athangarai; one is the native of this village and another is the migrant from Ramanathapuram town who is a teacher in the local school. Like in every other village, they form a negligible minority caste and the only Vannan does washing for all the families except the Chakkiliyans and Semman. The name of the caste is rather an occupational term than a caste title and Vannans take the title of 'Ekali'. There are different sub-divisions known as Pandya Vannans, Vaduga Vannans, Northern Washerman or Tsakalas of the Telugu country and the Palla, Pudara and Tulukka Vannans, who wash for the Pallans, Parayans and Muslims respectively. The Pudara Vannans are of lower status as they wash for Parayans and other low castes. The caste god of Vannans is said to be Gurunathan; Maduraveeran, Kaliyamman, Mariamman etc., are the other local deities worshipped by them. They are non-vegetarians but they avoid beef. They speak Tamil and in general, they are illiterates. In the post-Independence period they are getting Government's scholarship,

being a socially backward community and education is spreading slowly among the younger generation. In the dhobi family, the head and his wife attend to their traditional calling and their son has school education upto VIII Standard. Another Vannan family being a teacher from Ramanathapuram does not follow the hereditary occupation. With the spread of education, the Vannans slowly forsake their hereditary occupation, only the illiterates continuing it. A man usually claims the hands of the daughter of his maternal uncle or paternal aunt. Divorce is easy to obtain and both the parties are free to remarry. Widow re-marriage is permitted.

Paravas

36. The Paravas, the sea-faring community are the natives of soil and everywhere they live in coastal villages like Athangarai. There are 20 families all of them being Christian converts. Their houses are concentrated very close to the sea shore, just at the point where the river Vaigai joins the sea. Their dwellings are small huts with palmyra leaves as roof. It is said that these catholic Paravas were converted to the new faith by the Portuguese missionary. Mr. S. P. Rice describes the Paravans of east coast as "the fishermen who are devout catholics and they have preserved the Portuguese names by which their fore-fathers were baptized into the church, so that incongruous as it sound, Jose Fernandez and Maria Santiago are but humble folk, catching fish in a primitive way, with no more clothing on than a small loin cloth and a picture of the Virgin". The origin of the term 'Paravan' is traced to the Tamil word 'Paravai' meaning the ocean and being the traditional sea-faring caste, they have acquired this name. In the strict sense of the term, they are not 'natives of soil' but they would have migrated to this village from their original home of Tuticorin. Still they make marital alliance with their fellow caste men in their "native villages." From the present enquiry, it is ascertained that two families had settled in Athangarai before five generations or more, six families settled in four and five generations and three families between two and three generations. In the present generation, nine households have migrated from the coastal villages such as Muthupettai, Chippikulam of Tirunelveli district, Muttam of Kanyakumari district etc.

37. Paravas are divided into thirteen sub-classes and they follow the 'Makkathayam' system of inheritance, unlike their brethren (Malayala Paravans) in the west coast following the Marumakkathayam. The marriage ceremony is performed according to the Christian rites but, however, several Hindu customs and manners have been

adopted by them. The bride and the bridegroom are led in a procession from the church to the house and just among Hindus, the string of 'Thali' is tied around the neck of the bride. Puberty ceremony is not common among Paravas and girls are usually married after puberty. Widow re-marriage is tolerated, but divorce is not permitted. Paravas consider themselves superior to Karayars and Nadars and do not accept food from them. Their dress and ornaments resemble those of Hindus; Parava women invariably stretch the lobes of their ears, for wearing the antiquated heavy ear-ornament of 'Thandatti'. Their neck ornaments have dollars with Holy Cross inscribed therein. Paravas of Athangarai are mostly poor cooly fishermen. Only three persons have small canoes and fishing nets of their own. Two families depend on farm cooly and one is selling fish and another person is a teacher.

Chakkiliyans

38. Chakkiliyans, the traditional leather workers of Tamilnad are in the lowest rung of social ladder and the Pallans and the Parayans do not take water from the hands of a Chakkiliyan. Nine families of Chakkiliyans are living in this village, eight of them in the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani. The only Chakkiliyan in the main village is doing the work of cleaning the streets and he is paid by the Village Panchayat. The Chakkiliyans in the hamlet are not following their traditional job of making and mending chappals and four of them are agricultural labourers and the other four subsist by making some coarse palmyra mats. They live in small huts with palmyra thatches. They are socially handicapped and economically serfs of the Maravars and other caste Hindus. They are not free to move through the streets of high castes and to enter restaurants or tea hotels and coffee or tea is served in coconut shells or some tin vessels.

39. Educationally they were backward and due to the grant of Government's aid and scholarships the younger generation among them are now better educated and boys who are studying in the Secondary Schools and College, are getting the Harijan Welfare Scholarships. As a rule, Chakkiliyans everywhere own no land and they are landless coolies depending on their masters. Caste restrictions prevent them from quitting the toilsome, uncertain and undignified means of subsistence to which customs and traditions have condemned them, and taking some dignified career. But with the spread of education among the boys and girls and the influence of urbanism, the outlook among them is liable to change and they will

have better chances to get varied employment. Before the introduction of prohibition, they were said to be men of indescribably drunken and their morals were very bad. Curiously enough, Chakkiliya women are held to be the 'Padmani' kind, that is to say of peculiar beauty of face and form; it is said that Zamindars and rich men were fond of intriguing with them.

40. Chakkiliyans are devil-worshippers and their family Gods or '*Kula devams*' are Karuppusamy, Mariamman and Kalliamman. They take the title of 'Pagadai' and they have exogamous 'septs' or 'Kilais'. Payment of dowry is not common but recently dowry is paid by the parents of bride. Four families are in the habit of giving dowry to the bridegroom as ascertained from the present survey. Divorce is readily permitted and it is decided by elders of the community. A divorcee is free to re-marry at his or her own choice. Widow re-marriage is also practised. Chakkiliyans speak Telugu, but nobody among them is able to read or write the language.

Semmans

41. There is one family of Semman, living a little removed from the residential quarters of Muslims and Hindus. Semmans are said to be the original Tamil leather workers found in Pandya country. They are a sub-division of Paraya caste; the occupation of Chakkiliyans is also leather-work and making of chappals. But they are the immigrants from Telugu country; Tamil is the mother-tongue of Semmans. They do not inter-marry, nor they inter-dine. Semmans claim to be superior to Chakkiliya caste. The only Semman in Athangarai attends making of lime, in addition to leather work.

Marriage customs

42. Marriage customs of people differ from community to community. While the Hindu marriage ceremony is one of multifarious religious observances, the wedding among Marakkayars and Rowthers seem to be a much simpler affair. Catholic Paravas have their weddings in the Church and the rituals are much the same observed by the Catholics everywhere. Among Hindu Non-brahmin castes such as Maravars, Idayars, Valayars, Nadars etc., weddings are generally officiated by the priests of their own caste and among Nadars, the presence of barber is considered essential for conducting the proceedings. Bride's house is the usual venue of marriage, but among Naidus, Nadars, Chakkiliyans, weddings are celebrated in bridegroom's residence.



A Catholic Parava family



Thamaraikulam, the bathing tank.



A closer view of the tank

43. Marriages are negotiated by the parents of the bridegroom and the bride; ordinarily the young people have little choice. There have been some cases of elopements, but they are always regarded as breaches of the established rules. Normally the boy's father usually begins negotiations, but among Brahmins and Vellalas, it is common that the bride's parent makes their offer first. Among Maravars, and Agamudiyars offers for matrimonial alliance never emanate from bride's parents, as it is considered to be derogatory on their part,

Exogamous septs

44. The Hindu castes of Maravars, Idayars (Konars), Nadars, Valayans have exogamous septs known as 'Kilai' similar to 'Gotra', among Brahmins; but unlike the case of Gotra, 'Kilai' runs on female line i.e., one's Kilai is the same as that of his or her mother and Kilai is passed on to successive generations through the maternal side. Within the caste, there are a number of 'out-marrying' or exogamous Kilais bearing distinctive names and governed by the rule that a person of one Kilai could under no circumstances marry a girl of the same Kilai. In theory, each group would be regarded as a circle of blood-kindred and would

trace its descent from one ancestor in the forgotten past and so alliance within the same Kilai would be deemed incestuous, however remote may be the actual relationship between the concerned parties. From the genetic point of view, it is considered that the endogamous caste system with such exogamous Kilais or Gotras is a perfect method of preserving what is called 'Pure line'. It is said that endogamy prevents external hybridization while the exogamy prevents the possibility of a fresh pure line arising within the old one by the isolation of any character not common to the whole line.

Kilai

45. Maravars of Athangarai come under the sub-division 'Sembunattu Maravars' and the following Kilais have been recorded among Sembunattu Maravars: Marikka, Thondaman, Sitrama, Picha, Thaninja and Karuppatha. Among Nadars, people belong to three different Kilais known as 'Karuppa', 'Nanniyar' and 'Senkalai'. Similarly Valayans have their own septs such as 'Pattamkatti' Kilai, 'Padayan' etc., and Kilais among 'Idayars' are recorded as 'Agasthiyar', 'Paniyar' etc.,

TABLE No. III.

Consanguineous Marriages

Community	No. of households enquired	No. of marriages	No. of consanguineous marriages					
			Own sister's daughter	Mother's brother's daughter	Father's sister's daughter	Mother's sister's daughter	Father's brother's daughter	Step sister's daughter
Pandaram	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	3	...	1	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ambattan	2	2	1	...	...	...	...	1
Thevar	3	3	...	1	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	3	...	...	1	...	...	1
Karayar	3	4	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	3	4	...	1	1	...	...	...
Valayar	7	9	...	3	2	...	...	...
Pillai	6	11	4	2	1	...	...	...
Nadar	11	13	...	3	1	...	...	...
Konar	19	27	2	3	4	...	...	...
Catholic Paravas	19	30	...	2	2	...	...	...
Maravar	33	40	...	10	6	...	...	2
Muslim	134	195	...	32	34	4	5	6
Total	251	352	8	58	53	4	5	10

Consanguinity of marriages

46. Generally, a person among these castes never marries the daughter of his own sister, since the Kilai of the girl happens to be the same. On the other hand, Vellalas, Pandarams and Asaris prefer such alliance as they have no Kilais of maternal side. Among Idayars, there is, of late, some deviation from this rule and a Konar youth has married his own sister's daughter, even though the Kilais are one and the same. Elders of this community do not, of course, favour such a marital alliance within one's own Kilai. But among Maravars and Valayans, no departure from the traditional laws is noticed and alliance is said to depend entirely on consanguinity. The different types of consanguineous marriage relationships among the communities will be seen from the Table No. III

Cross cousins

47. The preferred marriages among Hindu castes, are generally 'cross cousins', particularly with the daughter of either father's sister or mother's brother. But the preferred Islamic marriage is among 'parallel-cousins' i.e., with daughter of father's brother or mother's sister. It is a common belief among Muslims, that paternal-parallel-cousin marriage has a stabilizing effect on the society and patri-lineal lineages would tend to maintain the original economic resources and social status. However, it is seen that now-a-days the actual choice of bride depends more on the possible economic advantages of a particular alliance between families. In making alliance, the customs of Muslims are, in a way influenced by those of Hindus and marital alliance with one's paternal aunt's daughter or maternal uncle's daughter are on the increase among the Muslims too.

48. Among the Hindu castes, a boy should not marry the daughter of his paternal uncle or maternal aunt. On the other hand, among Maravars and Valayans a boy is held to possess an actual right to the hands of his paternal aunt's daughter, to the exclusion of all other suitors. If an individual has such a cousin, he must marry her, whatever disparity there may be between their respective ages. For example, a Marava boy of fifteen should marry such a cousin, even if she be thirty or so, if her father insists upon him so doing. Failing to marry a cousin of this sort he may marry the daughter of that cousin, if the ages agree somewhat. The proverb current among them is "மச்சி இல்கூயல், மச்சி வயற்றுப் பிள்ளையை கட்டிக்கொள்ள" which denotes the type

of alliance admissible among Maravars. Marrying one's own sister's daughter is the custom prevalent among Pillais and Pandarams. There is no objection for such type of alliance, among Asaris and Naidus.

49. Now-a-days, people prefer marital alliance with families outside the circle of close relations and the more the transport facilities increase, such alliances are also on the increase. Weddings are, of course, a matter of negotiation between the families concerned especially among upper castes. 'Family status' which depends on a number of complex factors and indicates the traditional position of the family, is quite often the important factor, in choosing the bride. In the choice of the bridegroom, more emphasis is now being placed on the economic conditions. Money and property are also important considerations in settling the marriages, especially among Muslims, Vellalas and Maravars. Marriage among near relations is quite often motivated by *property considerations*. Other things remaining the same, money, ornaments etc., are the major deciding factors in the contraction of the marriage. Education of the bridegroom is not probably a significant consideration in this village. 'Mahr', similar to 'Parisam' or bride price, has to be paid by the bridegroom's party to the bride, under the law of Islam. In practice, apart from 'Mahr', the bride's parents now pay some amount, 'Kaikooli' to the groom (similar to dowry) and these things are the prime consideration while settling the marriages. Such details of 'Mahr' etc., are also recorded in the 'Nikha Book' or marriage register, kept in the mosque. It is said that 'Mahr' is payable only if demanded by the bride and in some cases is not paid at all. Among Hindu castes Vellalas, Kammalans etc., dowry is offered by the bride's party. Among Maravars and Agamudiyars, dowry is quite an unknown phenomenon and on the contrary, the bride's price or 'Mulaipal Kooli' should be paid by the bridegroom to the bride's mother. Among Valayans and Nadars also, bride price is paid by the bridegroom and it is said that the amount of bride price to be paid is increasing in recent years.

50. The following table indicates the various type of marital alliance viz., marriages within the village, within the taluk or within the district etc., among the different ethnic groups; The general tendency among the people of Athangarai is to seek alliance within the village or in the nearby villages. Only Brahmin, Naidu and Catholic Parava families had marital alliances outside the district. Maravars, Konars, Kammalans (Asari) and Valayans arrange weddings with their kinsmen in the surrounding

TABLE No. IV

Type of marital alliance

Community	Total No. of marriages	Within the village	In other villages within the taluk	Outside the taluk	Outside the district	Outside the state
Muslims	195	164	29	2	...	...
Catholic Paravas	30	12	13	1	4	...
Brahmin	2	...	...	...	2	...
Naidu	3	...	...	2	1	...
Pillai	11	5	5	1	...	...
Maravar	52	31	21	...	...	...
Nadar	13	3	7	3	...	...
Idayar	27	13	14	...	...	...
Karayar	4	1	2	1	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	1	...	...
Ambattan	2	1	...	1	...	...
Asari	4	1	3	...	...	...
Valayan	9	1	8	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	1	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	2	...	...	...
Vannan	3	1	2	...	...	...
Chakkiliyan	2	2	...	...	...	...
Total	361	235	106	13	7	...

villages within Ramanathapuram taluk itself and not even a single marital alliance has been made outside the taluk. Chakkiliyan marriages are settled within the village itself. With the increased transport facilities and spread of education, this trend is liable to change.

Rituals

51. The rituals of wedding ceremony vary greatly from community to community even among the Hindus. Generally, the bride and bridegroom are seated together and 'Thali' is tied around the neck of the bride, which is the 'sacred symbol' of wedlock. In respect of Maravars, Valayans, Idayars etc., bride's house is the usual venue of marriage and among Nadars, Naidus and Chakkiliyans, weddings are celebrated in the bridegroom's residence. On an auspicious day fixed for the wedding, bridegroom's party proceeds to the bride's house, taking with them turmeric, coconuts, plantains, betel leaves, flowers etc., with the Thali, an yellow thread dyed with turmeric. The marriage 'pandal' (booth) is erected inside the bride's house. The bride and the bridegroom, dressed in new clothes are seated side by side facing east. Coconuts are broken and prayers are made to the gods and goddesses. The 'Thali' string is kept on a plate and circulated among the guests, for being blessed by the parents of bridal pair, 'Nattanmaikkarar' (elders of the community)

and other guests. The groom ties the 'Thali' around the neck of the bride; his sister assists in tying the Thali. At this juncture the conch-shell is blown or women raise some kind of shrill voice, what is popularly known as *Kulavi Idal*. In the weddings of some well-to-do people, they employ 'Nathaswaram' and 'Melam', and these musicians raise tremendous din of sounds in high pitch with 'Kottu Melam'. These kinds of sounds or voice are raised just to draw any noise of sneezing or weeping at the time of tying the 'Thali', which are regarded as bad omens. Flowers or coloured rice are thrown on the heads of the bridal pair. The couple exchanges their garlands and the groom then takes the right hand of the bride and goes round the 'Manavarai' or marriage booth thrice. Afterwards the bridal pair pays 'Namaskarams' to the 'Nattanmaikkarars' and elderly guests, who express their hopes and wishes that they become the parents of sixteen children! Arathi, a ceremony of warding off the evil eye is then performed, while the couple is taken inside the house from the Manavarai where milk and plantains are served to them. In some weddings, soon after the Thali-tying ceremony is over, the bridal pair is taken out on a procession through the streets and lanes, to the temple, where coconuts are offered to the deity. The guests are usually entertained by a sumptuous dinner, sandal and pansupari and they, in return, give donations to the bridal pair. The wedding ceremony of lower castes

like Chakkilyans and Valayans differ in certain details.

Mohammedan marriage

52. Among Mohammedans. Marakayars as well as Rowthers, 'Nikha' ceremony (marriage) is just the registration of the matrimonial contract in the presence of 'Alim Shah' and the elders of the community. Brides house is the usual venue and no separate 'Manavarai' or marriage booth is erected. Weddings are, generally, held in nights or early mornings. Now-a-days they have 'Nikha' in day time also. The bride and the bridegroom are dressed in new clothes specially made for the Nikha. The groom attends the mosque with his father, near-relatives and all the male members of the community where special prayers are made by Alim-Shah and he is taken to the bride's residence. He is received by the bride's brother and young children take a kind of 'Arathi' to remove evil eyes as in the case of Hindu marriages. On the verandah of the bride's house or in the front hall, the groom is seated in public among the male members, while the bride is made to sit in women's quarters in seclusion, both of them facing the west, which implies facing 'Mecca', the holy place of Mohammedans. Alim-Shah, sitting beside the bridegroom, reads passages from the sacred 'Koran' and 'Nikha Khudba' (special prayers for weddings) and the groom expresses his willingness for the marriage, three times. Similar willingness is also expressed by the bride to the women around her. The Nikha book is then written in the presence of leaders of the community, wherein signatures are put by the bridal pair and their parents and the details of 'Mahr', (bride price) jewels given by the bride's parents etc., are also recorded. The 'Thali' of black beads is at the same time tied around the bride's neck by the sister of the groom, in the women's quarters. Gifts and donations of money are presented to the couple by the relatives and the guests. The bridegroom is taken inside the house, where the bridal pair is seated, side by side, when milk and 'pansupari' are served to them. Then comes some sort of 'Nalangu' similar to the customs among the Hindus. A few locks of hair of the bride are tied to a finger of the groom. Afterwards, a 'Nali' (vessel) of rice is brought and the bridegroom kicks over the same; the bride gathers the rice together in the vessel; the bridegroom, rather wilfully, one would think, kicks it over again. This he repeats three times. This peculiar custom, probably brings home the lesson for the bride that henceforth the wife should be patient and careful

in her domestic duties and she is to be in subjection to her husband.

53. The 'Nikha' is invariably followed by a grand non-vegetarian feast. The bridal pair is taken to the bridegroom's house in the evening, where 'Arathi' is again taken in receiving the couple. The bride, while stepping into the house, is careful in putting the right leg first and these resemble the Hindu way of receiving the bridal pair. It is noteworthy that certain Hindu customs like tying of Thali, taking 'Arathi', usage of 'Melam' or music are being adopted and retained by the Muslims.

Catholic wedding

54. Among Catholic Paravas, the marriage ceremony is performed by the priest in the Church. The bride and the bridegroom are taken, in their special wedding dress in front of the Parish Priest, who conducts prayers and reads special passages relating to marriages from the Holy Bible. The priest then enquires the willingness of the bridegroom and bride for the marriage and they are expected to express their willingness openly. Then the priest takes the 'Thali' and blesses it by saying special prayers and bridegroom then ties 'Thali' around the neck of the bride. Soon after this, they say prayers to the Almighty, to shower his holy blessings on the wedded couple. The fee is paid to the Church by the parties. The couple is taken to the bride's house, where they are served with milk and plantains. It must be noted that the wedding ceremony is performed according to Christian rites but it is preceded and followed by observances which are essentially of Hindus. They include the tying of Thali round the neck of the bride, exchange of presents and the formal transfer of the bride to her husband's home. The 'Thali' among Catholics, contains 'Holy Cross' in it in some cases. Dowry is an unknown thing among them; the bride is usually sent to her husband's house with new utensils apart from the usual jewellery. The bride's parents offer new clothes or a ring to the son-in-law at the time of first Christmas after the marriage. This is quite similar to Hindu custom of presenting the son-in-law at the time of first Deepavali!

Health and sanitation

55. Being a fishing village, Athangarai is not clean and the streets and lanes are full of dirt, filth and wastes of fish, crab etc., around the street corners. The streets are narrow and the houses are huddled together and the layout of lanes and streets are quite haphazard. Especially in Muslim settlements,

the huts are much congested and the so called Muslim street is nothing but a dirty footpath which zigzags haphazardly from one rubbish heap to another; sometimes refuse is dumped along the footpaths or behind the huts. Drainage or sewage system is quite an unknown thing and waste water is let out from the houses, just in front of them; as this is a sandy tract, the dirty water is absorbed by the earth and stagnation of water is rarely found. Streets where Hindus live, have somewhat better hygienic conditions and the Hindu house-wife is more keen to keep the house and surroundings clean. Street cleaning is not regularly done by the 'Thotti' or scavenger employed by the Village Panchayat so that the lanes and by-lanes are full of dirt and filth, dried plantain leaves, waste of fishes and crabs etc. The Parava habitation is fairly clean and the huts are not so congested that open space is provided from house to house.

Common diseases

56. Epidemics like cholera, smallpox and fevers

formerly took a heavy toll of life, most of which are, of course, preventible. Now-a-days cholera is not prevalent and it occurred last in 1948 when 27 lives were lost in Athangarai. Smallpox is common even to this day, despite some preventive measures taken by the Governmental authorities. It is, however, admitted that with the improvement of medical facilities, spraying of D. D. T., mass vaccination, etc., the incidence of epidemic diseases show a rapid decline in the recent years. Vaccination is carried out by the visiting staff of the Health Department, but some people, however, do not fully co-operate with them and try to avoid vaccination. There are some, who consider that occurrence of smallpox, chickenpox, etc., is due to the 'visitations of the goddess Mariamman'. When the spread of smallpox is noticed, Mariamman Pongal,—a festival to the goddess—is arranged by the villagers and offerings of fowl, rice etc., are made to the deity. Diarrhoea, and other dysenteric disorders are widely prevalent among infants and children, probably because of the ill-balanced diet.

TABLE No. V

Material culture and habits

Community	No. of household	No. of households that use mosquito curtain having monthly income of			No. of households that do not use mosquito curtain having monthly income of			No. of households that use soap having monthly income of			No. of households that do not use soap having monthly income of			that send clothes to washermen, having monthly income of			that do not send clothes to washermen having monthly income of			
		that use mosquito curtain having monthly income of			that do not use mosquito curtain having monthly income of			that use soap having monthly income of			that do not use soap having monthly income of			that send clothes to washermen, having monthly income of			that do not send clothes to washermen having monthly income of			
		Rs. 101 & above	Rs. 51 - 100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 101 & above	Rs. 51 - 100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 101 & above	Rs. 51 - 100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 101 or above	Rs. 51 - 100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 101 & above	Rs. 51 - 100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 101 & above	Rs. 51 - 100	Rs. 50 or less	
Maravar	118	...	...	...	3	31	85	3	30	78	...	1	7	3	31	84	...	...	1
Idayar	19	...	1	...	...	5	13	...	5	11	...	1	2	...	6	13	...	...	...
Valayar	18	...	...	...	...	2	16	...	1	13	...	1	3	...	2	12	...	...	4
Nadar	11	...	...	...	...	3	8	...	3	5	...	...	3	...	3	7	...	...	1
Chakkiliyar	9	...	...	...	...	2	7	...	2	6	...	...	1	...	2	7	...	...	...
Vellala	7	...	...	...	...	2	5	...	2	4	...	...	1	...	2	4	...	...	1
Asari	3	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	2	...	...	1	...	...	2	...	...	1
Naidu	3	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	2	1	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	...
Karayar	3	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	2	1	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...
Vannan	2	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
† Catholic	20	...	...	...	...	4	15	...	3	14	...	1	1	...	4	15	...	...	...
Paravas																				
Muslim	136	3	1	...	6	31	95	9	32	80	...	...	15	9	32	91	...	...	4
Total	356	3	2	...	9	86	256	12	84	222	...	4	34	12	88	243	...	...	13

† one household has no income.

57. People answer their calls of nature in and around the village, near the sea-shore or in the palmyra groves around the village. Under the scheme of National Water Supply, 192 rural latrines were constructed in the village. Puplic latrines as well as private latrines in the dwellings were formed. All those latrines are out of use, except one in the house of a retired Fish Yard officer, of the Fisheries Department. People do not favour the use of latrines at all. The village may be dirty but the people are clean; they take bath every day or every other day and while bathing, they wash their clothes twice or thrice a week. Dirty clothes are sent to the washermen also by all, except Chakkiliyans. Table No. V indicates the material habits of different communities.

Drinking water

58. Drinking water is drawn from the wells at different places in the village; water from the river is not drinkable, as in most of the months only the back waters of sea flow towards the land. The Village Panchayat has recently formed as many as nine boring pumps in the street-corners but all of them, except one, are out of order; and people also show their preference to the well of their own choice. Two 'Ooranies' or tanks are provided for taking bath separately for men and women. Muslim women have got a separate tank on the outskirts of the village.

Medical assistance

59. Lack of medical facilities is the usual phenomenon in the fishing villages. There is no hospital or dispensary in Athangarai and no doctor either Homeopathic or Allopathic is practising here. People of Athangarai seem to have their own temperamental aversion to hospitalization; the hospital facilities available in the nearby village of Panaikulam are not availed by them. People usually go in for native medicine which are cheaply available. A native Konar youth is the sole 'doctor' in the village, who treats the patients with some herbs and native medicines such as 'Kashayam' and 'Thailam'. He has no training of any kind in any institution and has only acquired the skill from his fore-fathers, who are the traditional vaidyars of Athangari. He is trusted by poor-folk, for his treatment of diseases and he gets a very nominal fee. Only a few well-to-do persons in the village go to the District Headquarters Hospital for treatment, while a vast majority of people cannot simply afford to it. Muslim women, especially are quite averse to go to public hospitals, due to their conventional modesty and shyness to face males; in fact, they prefer the private Homeopathic dispensary, run by a native Mohammedan near Uchipuli, four miles away. Most of the Muslims in Athangarai patronise this dispensary. Maternity aid is not provided in the village and the nearest

TABLE No. VI

Medical care

Community	No. of maternity cases confined				Ordinary medical treatment					Medical consultation			Vaccination				
	In hospital	Bringing doctor home	By qualified Midwife at home	By unqualified Thai at home	Without assistance at home	Allopathic	Ayurvedic	Homeopathic	Combination of more than one system	Others	In public hospital or in dispensary	In private hospital or dispensary	By calling in Physicians		At least once	Within the past six months	
													Allopaths	Homeopaths	Others		
Maravar	27	...	21	128	1	4	...	...	23	92	24	...	...	...	95	565	40
Idayar	12	...	2	...	4	...	...	...	6	13	1	2	1	...	15	78	9
Valayar	4	...	6	22	2	1	...	...	4	13	4	...	...	...	15	69	22
Nadar	1	...	4	1	3	1	...	...	2	8	2	1	...	...	10	39	8
Chakkiliyar	...	...	...	27	...	...	...	...	1	8	...	...	...	...	9	31	15
Vellala	1	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	3	4	1	...	1	1	5	24	...
Asari	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	3	16	...
Naidu	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	2	...	3	...	...	...	...	11	5
Karayar	1	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	3	...	...	...	...	15	...
Pandithar	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	9	...
Vannan	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	2	14	...
Agamudiyar	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	10	...
Brahmin	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Pandaram	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	3	...
Semman	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	2	...
Catholic	22	...	24	4	...	5	...	...	4	11	10	...	...	...	10	72	16
Paravias	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	71	...	44	167	47	2	...	...	12	122	2	1	4	...	133	463	182
Total	145	...	111	351	57	14	...	...	64	279	56	5	6	1	298	1422	297



A native doctor who treats the patient with indigenous medicines



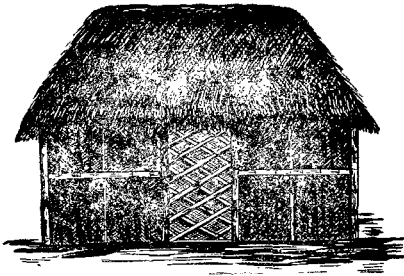
The open - air kitchen. Fisherfolk cook their food near the coast.



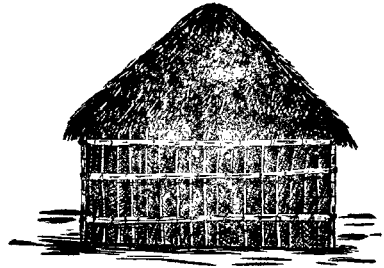
The tiny huts of cooly fishermen with walls made of coconut or palmyra leaves



A thatched house with walls made of palmyra leaves



A thatched hut



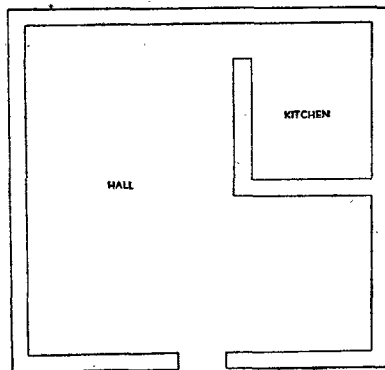
Side elevation of the hut

maternity centre run by the Panchayat Union administration, is at Alagankulam two miles away. It is manned by an Ayah who is not a qualified midwife and her visits to Athangarai are few and far between and she pays a visit only on specific request. Women normally deliver in their homes and hospitalization is rare. Barber's wife is the conventional midwife and she gets a nominal sum plus coconuts and '*pansupari*'. In recent years, some delivery cases are taken to the Government Hospital at Ramanathapuram and only people of fair means go in for it. Table No. VI indicates the position regarding medical care and maternity assistance.

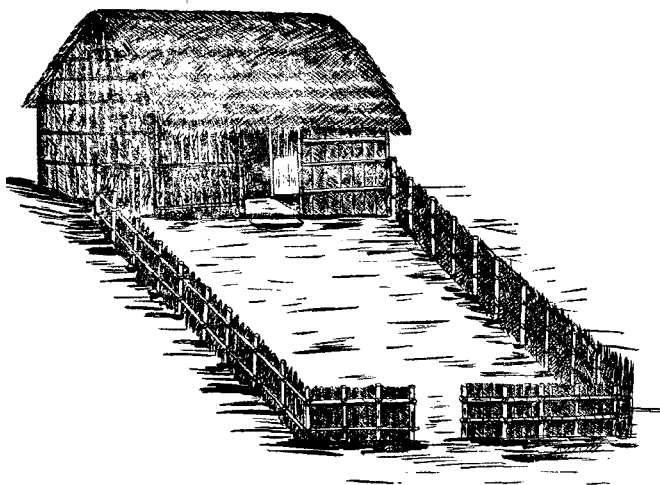
Houses

60. The houses are built of mud walls with palmyra thatch. The floor is invariably an earthen one. Tiled houses are rare; only some landlords

and master-fishermen own tiled houses and nobody in the whole of Athangarai, has a terraced building with flat roof. Generally, in the thatched as well as tiled houses, ceilings, rafters and beams are of palmyra, as it is the only wood easily available in this region. Even a few wealthy people have not used teakwood or any such good variety of wood for rafters. Some tiled houses have walls of 'sandy stone', which is locally available. It is commonly said that a tiled roof is a sign of economic solvency and a luxury, which only a few well-to-do persons of the village can afford to possess. The dwellings of 'coolie fishermen and agricultural labourers are tiny huts, consisting of low mud walls without any white-washing, with thatches of palmyra leaves or coconut leaves. The streets are all narrow and the huts are quite close to each other so that there are only two or three streets broad enough to admit



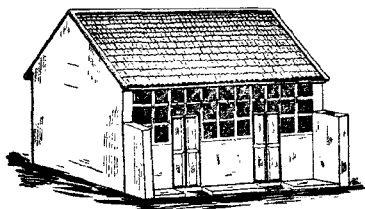
Ground plan of the hut



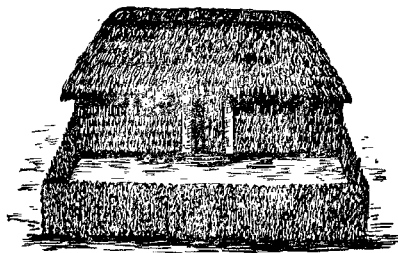
Hut of a cooly fisherman with compound wall made of palmyra leaves

cart or any vehicle, the other thorough-fares being merely tortuous lanes. The dwellings of fisherfolk in the main village provide a picture of shapeless clusters of huts where congestion and overcrowding is common; the huts are huddled close together without any consideration of drainage or ventilation. The huts have one opening in most cases no door is provided and it is shut by some coconut or palmyra leaves. The houses receive light and air only through the doors, in the absence of any window in the entire building.

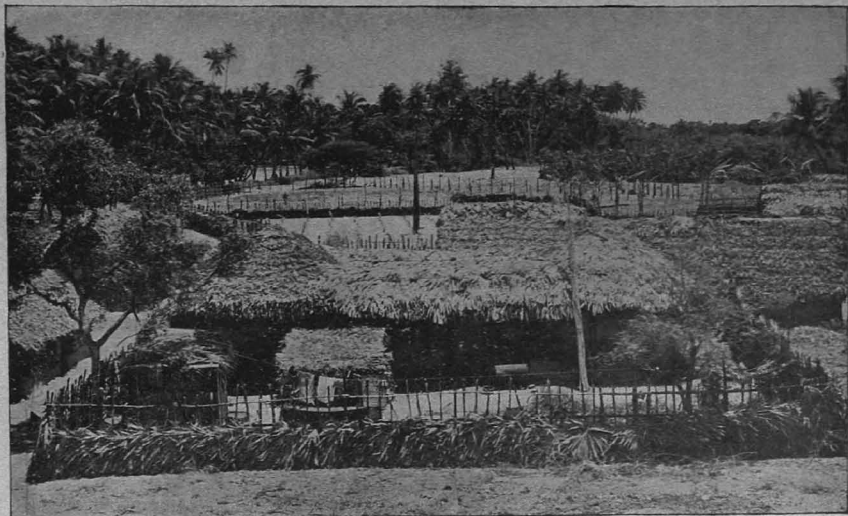
61. Some huts are encircled by walls made up of palmyra leaves, and the space within the compound is used for bath, cooking etc. Drying up of fish is also done within the compound. Compound wall of brick or masonry is not to be found in any of the house in the village. The housing conditions of Valayans are more deplorable; most of them being tied labourers working under big landlords, they live in small huts constructed amidst the fields. A Valayan does not normally owns a house and if he changes his master, he shifts his residence also to



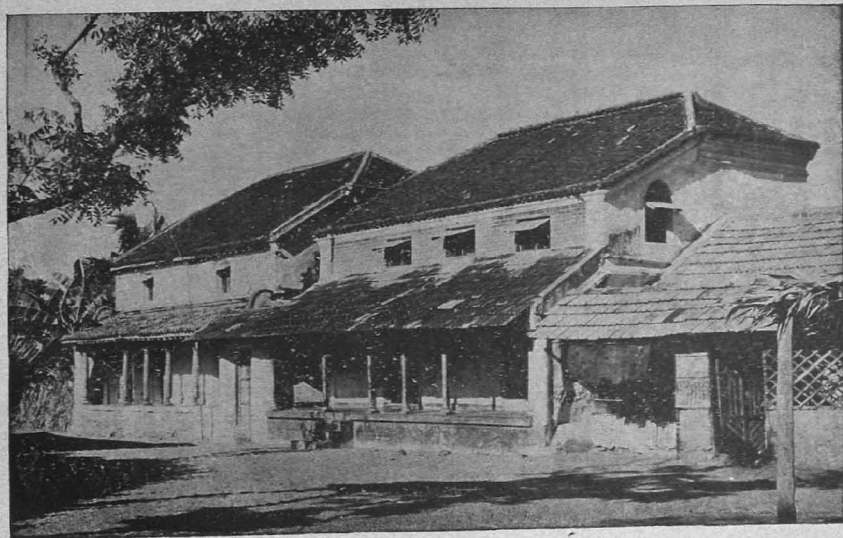
A tiled house of well-to-do Muslim



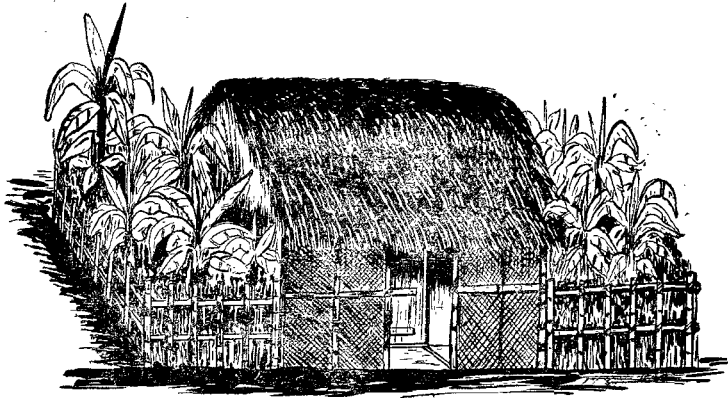
A hut with wall and roof made of plantain leaves



A huge thatched hut of a Maravar cultivator



Tiled houses of well-to-do Muslims



A dwelling with a kitchen garden of banana

the new field where he erects a low thatch of palmyra leaves, as they are locally available in plenty. The huts of Valayans, the poorest among the poor have walls made up of leaves of palmyra or plantain, as they cannot even afford to spend for mud which has to be brought from a distant place, as the entire

region around the village is a sandy tract. Some of them are too poor to make repairs of even these thatched walls and roofs. The different types of dwellings with various roof and wall materials are shown in Table No. VII.

TABLE No. VII

House types

Community	No. of houses occupied by each community	No. of houses with the roofs made of						No. of houses with walls built of				No. of houses with			
		Terraced houses	Country tiles	Mangalore tiles	Asbestos or Zinc sheet	Straw or grass	Coconut or palmyra leaves	Mud	Bricks	Stone	Others	Huts without walls	Mud floor	Cement floor	Other types of floors
Maravar	101	...	2	4	...	2	93	50	1	4	2	44	94	7	...
Idayar	17	...	...	3	...	1	13	11	...	...	2	4	15	2	...
Valayar	18	...	...	...	...	1	18	6	...	...	...	12	18	...	...
Nadar	10	...	...	1	...	1	8	9	...	1	...	...	10	...	...
Chakkiliyar	8	...	...	...	...	1	7	7	...	...	...	1	8	...	...
Vellala	7	...	2	1	...	1	4	3	1	...	...	3	6	1	...
Karayar	3	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	2	...	...	...	3	...	...
Asari	3	...	...	...	...	...	3	3	...	...	...	...	3	...	...
Naidu	3	...	...	...	...	1	2	3	...	...	...	...	3	...	...
Pandithar	2	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
Vannan	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Agamudiyar	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Brahmin	1*	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Muslim	131	...	18	7	...	11	95	110	5	4	3	9	122	9	...
Catholic Paravars	18	...	1	...	...	1	16	10	1	...	...	7	17	1	...
Total	327	...	25	16	...	19	266	218	11	8	8	81	306	20	...

* Being houseless he is residing in choultry

Rooms

62. The houses of poorer sections are all tiny as well as single roomed; the same room serves all purposes, kitchen, dining and bed-room. Separate bed-rooms or dormitories for unmarried members

are a rare thing to be found in any of the houses. Only in 171 houses, there are two rooms, and 38 houses have three or more rooms, 23 of them being owned by Muslims. Table No. VIII classifies the households according to number of rooms occupying.

TABLE No. VIII
Households by number of rooms and by number of persons

Community	Total No. of households	Total No. of rooms	Total No. of family members	Households with no regular room		Households with one room		Households with two rooms		Households with three rooms		Households with four or more rooms	
				House-holds	Members	House-holds	Members	House-holds	Members	House-holds	Members	House-holds	Members
Maravar	119	160	605	...	...	81	409	35	173	3	23	...	...
Idayar	19	44	87	...	...	2	7	11	50	4	22	2	8
Valayar	18	19	94	...	...	17	89	1	5	...	...	...	...
Nadar	11	18	47	...	...	5	24	5	17	1	6	...	...
Chakkiliyar	9	9	44	...	...	9	44	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vellala	7	15	24	...	...	1	1	4	10	2	13	...	...
Asari	3	5	17	...	...	1	5	2	12	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	5	16	...	...	1	4	2	12	...	...	...	...
Karayar	3	7	15	...	...	...	...	2	10	1	5	...	...
Pandithar	2	3	14	...	...	1	4	1	10	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	5	9	...	...	...	...	1	4	1	5	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	2	10	...	...	2	10	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	2	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	2	3	...	...	...	...	1	3	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...
Catholic	20	35	88	...	...	5	31	15	57	...	...	...	...
Paravas													
Muslim	136	279	645	...	...	23	87	90	445	17	78	6	35
Total	357	613	1721	...	...	148	715	171	809	30	154	8	43

Dress

63. The pattern of dress and ornaments of people shows a combination of varied types; while Muslims wear a lunghi and banian, Hindus have a dhoti with an upper cloth and Catholic Paravas wear only a small loin cloth on their waist. Similar is the case of ornaments, where we see a variety of jewellery among different classes of people. The pattern of dress of Muslim women follows the usual pattern, of an ornamental lunghi Kuppayam or loose bodice and an upper cloth of three yards or so. Kuppayam is not a tight-fitting bodice unlike 'Ravikkai' worn by Hindu women. Muslim gents use simple lunghi but not of ornamental designs; invariably they wear banian or shirt. Only some among them wear lunghi and a towel or dhoti with a towel, like their Hindu brethren. Well-to-do

Muslims use lunghis of fine variety, mostly bought from Malaya or some far-eastern countries.

64. Among Hindus, men and women have very simple attire; dhoti, a piece of cloth measuring two yards and a towel or upper cloth constitute the typical dress of a Hindu adult. Only a few traders or teachers among them wear shirts. Banians are not so common among them. Hindu women among Maravars, Valayars, Nadars etc., wear only a coloured saree of eight yards; only young women have jackets with the sarres. Blue or red is the usual colour of the saree and black sarres are not favoured and in occasions like marriages, they are completely prohibited among some Hindu castes. Catholic Paravas usually have the dress pattern similar to Hindus; while going to sea, a Parava fisherman wears a small loin cloth or 'Komanam'



Parava fishermen wear small loin cloth only, while they do fishing.



Muslim women cover their forehead by the upper cloth.



A Hindu household. The *areaj-moodi* is worn by the little girl, a piece of silver suspended by a waist-cord. *Kolusu*, on the ankles may also be seen.

and he seldom wears banian or shirt. Only on going outside the village, or on any festival day, he wears a dhoti, and a shirt or banian. Among the young boys and girls of Hindus and Catholics, boys perhaps go naked till they reach the age of three, when they don a small 'Komanam' piece of cloth of three inches breadth, supported by a waist-cord. Only when they are grown up, say five or six years, they use a towel in the form of a dhoti, without any shirt or upper cloth. It is a common sight that most of the boys go to school, without wearing a shirt or banian. Only after the age of ten or twelve, boys will be wearing dhotis and shirts. Drawers or pants are quite uncommon.

65. Little girls upto the age of two or three go naked but sometimes they wear 'Arai-moodi' a leaf-shaped piece of silver suspended by a waist-cord

'which calls attention to what it purports to conceal'. Only among some educated families, young girls wear frock or gowns but it is a rarity. Girls of age seven or eight among Maravars, Valayans, Konars etc., begin to wear 'Sittadai' or a small saree of three yards to four yards and saree takes the place of sittadai, when they reach puberty. Petticoats are common among school going girls. Muslim girls use invariably petticoats with 'Thavani' or upper cloth. Even at the age of ten, the Muslim girls wear the 'Thavani' over their heads just like grown-up women. After puberty, they begin wearing lunghis with 'kuppayam' (jacket) and upper cloth. Kuppayams are not very common among young Muslim women; and the fashion of wearing choli or tight-fitting jacket is gaining ground slowly.



'Gothumai Mani'—A neck ornament of Muslim girls

Ornaments

66. It is an universal truth that Indian women are very fond of ornaments and the women of Athangarai, both Hindus and Muslims are not an exception. Mohammedan women load their ears with too many jewels, by piercing the lobes and fringes of the ears. 'Kathuvai' or 'Alukkathu', as it is commonly called is an antiquated ornament exclusively used by Muslims; it consists of a series of twelve small rings on the outer edge of the ear. And with this ornament, 'Lolak' and 'Kammal'

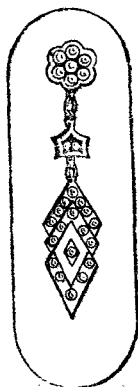
are worn in the lobes; the ear is scarcely seen. 'Mattal' a small chain, connecting the fringe of an ear to the hairs, is a favourite ornament among them. On festive occasions, they are fully loaded with different types of jewellery all over the body in their ears, in the hair, in the nose, on the neck, on the feet and from wrist to elbow on their hands; jewels of gold and silver and of black or red beads, rings, bracelets, necklaces, anklets all are there in magnificent profusion. But such profusion is, of course, confined to a few wealthy families in the village. The wife of an ordinary cooly fisherman is



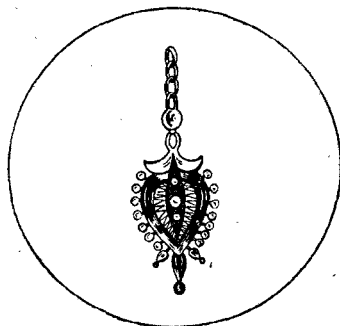
Thattu — An ear ornament of Muslims



Koppu and Thodu worn by Muslim women



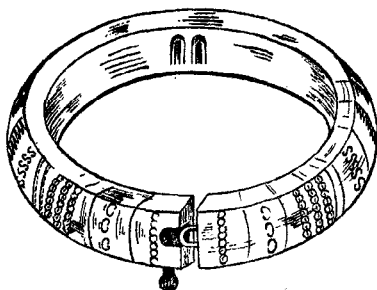
Lolak — An oscillating ear ornament



Thongattan — An oscillating ear ornament



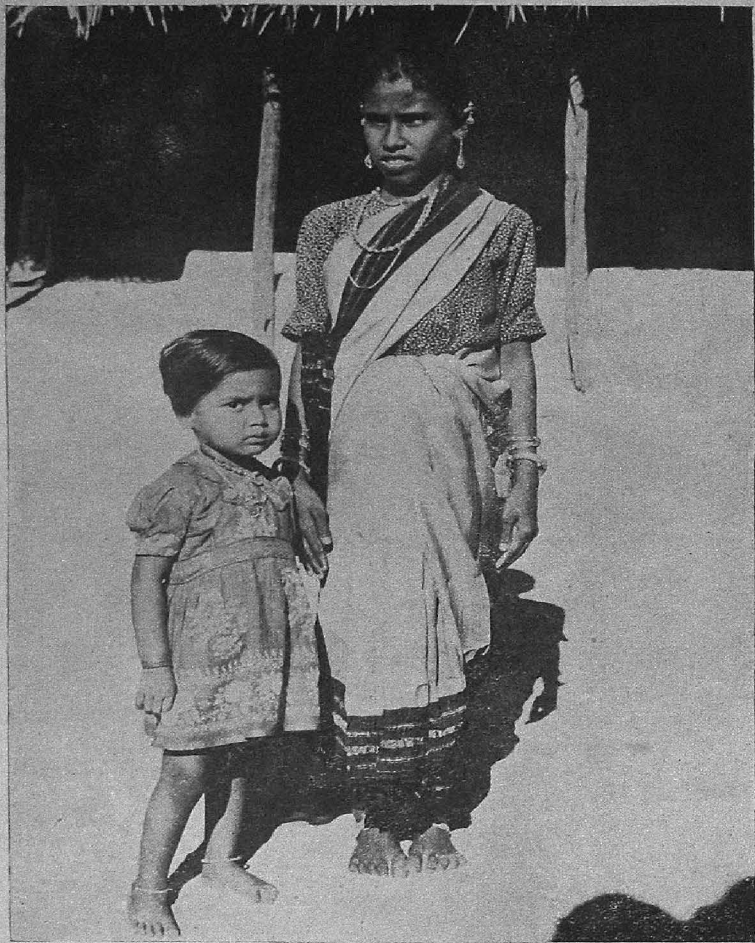
Besari—Nose ring



Kadayam—A heavy bracelet of Muslim women



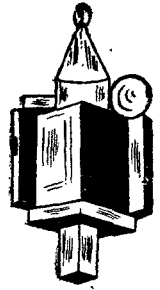
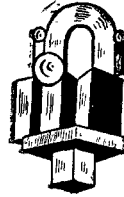
A Marava woman. The heavy ear-ornament *Thandatti* and the nose rings can be seen.



Muslim girls. The different ornaments, *Koppu* and *Lolak* on the ears, necklets, and bangles on the hands, and anklets in the feet are worn by them.



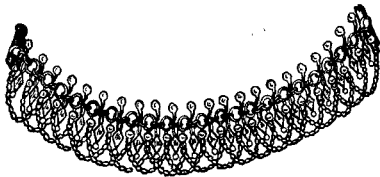
Urukamani—A heavy ear ornament



Thandatri—An antiquated ear ornament mostly worn by elderly women



Pathakkam—A favourite ornament of Hindu girls



Golusu—A silver anklet



Thali of Maravars



A different type of Thali of Maravars

content perhaps with a nose ring or an ear-ring, Koppu or Thodu. Among Hindus, we see a different set of jewellery. Ear-rings and nose-rings are very common; invariably all middle aged and young women have these rings. They wear a curious sort of heavy gold ear-ring known as 'Thandatti' which is made of lac thinly plated over with gold; it is seldom made of solid gold, and this is common among

elderly and middle-aged women. Nowadays, this type of wearing ornaments on the stretched lobes of ears becomes less common. 'Kunukku' rings made of lead are common among the girls of Valayans and Chakkiliyans. 'Thodu' or 'Kammal' of modern designs are not so prevalent among the women of Athangarai. Pathakkam is a favourite necklet among Hindu girls.



Thali of Catholic Paravas



A necklet worn by Parava women

67. Even men wear ear-rings known as 'Kadukkan', but Muslims do not wear any such ornament. A small gold neck chain, what they call 'Minor chain,' is worn by some well-to-do Muslim boys.

Food habits

68. The poverty of villagers is fully reflected by their food and food habits. The diet of villagers is generally cereal dominated and highly monotonous. Rice as well as millet grains such as cumbu, cholam, varagu are taken. The food in fishermen households is highly monotonous, fish constituting the chief diet. Table No. IX reveals the pattern of food, frequency of meals by different communities.

TABLE No. IX

Diet and food habits

Community	Total No. of households	No. of Vegetarian households	No. of Non-vegetarian households	No. of households taking			No. of households taking			
				Rice	Wheat	Grains other than rice or wheat	Roots including tapioca	One meal a day	Two meals a day	Three meals & more a day
Maravar	119	...	119	119	...	109	...	...	66	53
Idayar	19	...	19	19	...	18	...	...	16	3
Valayar	18	...	18	18	...	18	...	...	16	2
Nadar	11	...	11	11	...	11	...	...	8	3
Chakkiliyar	9	...	9	9	...	8	...	...	...	9
Vellala	7	...	7	7	...	7	...	...	2	5
Karayar	3	...	3	3	...	3	...	...	...	3
Asari	3	...	3	3	...	2	...	...	3	...
Naldu	3	...	3	3	...	3	...	...	...	3
Pandithar	2	...	2	2	...	2	...	...	...	2
Vannan	2	...	2	2	...	2	...	...	1	1
Agamudiyar	2	...	2	2	...	2	...	...	...	2
Brahmin	1	1	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	1
Pandaram	1	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	1
Semman	1	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	1
Muslim	136	...	136	126	...	128	...	...	111	25
Catholic Paravas	20	...	20	15	...	20	...	1	4	15
Total	357	1	356	342	...	336	...	1	227	129

Almost all the households take non-vegetarian food, except the solitary Brahmin household. Rice is the chief diet in 342 households out of 357 and in as many as 336 households millet grains such as cumbu, ragi, varagu are taken. Consumption of wheat is conspicuous by its virtual absence. The dietary pattern of the fisherfolk of Athangarai consists of rice or millet gruel early in the morning, rice and fish at noon and again rice with fish or vegetables in the night. They do not take protective foods such as milk, egg etc. As fish is available in

abundance, it forms the staple item in their diet. Morning breakfast consisting of idlis or rice-cakes and coffee is confined to a few households of cultivators, master fishermen and teachers. Drinking of tea is, however, gaining ground among all sections of population and according to local elders more number of tea shops have sprung up in recent years after prohibition.

69. Table No. X reflects the dietary habits and prohibition of food.

TABLE NO. X

Prohibited foods and drinks

Community	Total No. of households	No. of households reporting as prohibited		No. that did not report any food to be prohibited	No. that did not report any drink to be prohibited
		Non- vegetarian food	Intoxicant drinks		
Maravar	119	...	119	119	...
Idayar	19	1*	19	18	...
Valayar	18	...	18	18	...
Nadar	11	...	11	11	...
Chakkiliyar	9	...	9	9	...
Vellala	7	...	7	7	...
Karayar	3	...	3	3	...
Asari	3	...	3	3	...
Naidu	3	...	3	3	...
Panditbar	2	...	2	2	...
Vannan	2	...	2	2	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	2	2	...
Brahmin	1	1	1	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	1	1	...
Semman	1	...	1	1	...
Muslim	136	...	136	136	...
Catholic Paravas	20	...	20	20	...
Total	357	2	357	355	...

* Fish is prohibited.

Prohibition of intoxicant drinks is reported by all households. One Idayar family does not take fish, though they are non-vegetarians.

Utensils

70. The villagers use mostly mud vessels and aluminium utensils are in use in 298 families out of a total number of 357 households. Earthenware is found in as many as 356 households; the one Christian household does not possess mud utensils. Brass vessels are found in 101 households mostly in Parava, Marava and Muslim households. Chakkiliyans, Semman, Pandaram do not possess any brass utensils. Vessels of stainless steel are rarely used; 9 Muslims, five Maravars, two Vellalas,

one Nadar, one Naidu and a Vannan are able to purchase them. Two Muslim families have china-ware, which were brought from far-eastern countries and no other household uses it. The percentage of households using different types of utensils will be seen below:

Type of utensils	No. of households	Percentage to total No. of households (357)
Earthenware	356	99.7
Aluminium	298	83.5
Brass	101	28.3
Copper	94	26.3
Stainless steel	19	5.3
Silver-ware	4	1.1
China-ware	2	0.6

TABLE No. XI

Type of Utensils

Community	No. of households	Number of households possessing utensils of						
		Earthen-ware	Aluminium	Copper	Brass	Stainless steel	Silver	Earthen-China-ware
Maravar	119	119	103	33	37	5	...	...
Idayar	19	19	18	7	8	...	...	...
Valayar	18	18	14	1	3	...	...	...
Nadar	11	11	9	3	3	1	...	...
Chakkillyar	9	9	8	...	...	...	...	...
Vellala	7	7	6	4	4	2	1	...
Karayar	3	3	1	3	2	...	...	...
Naidu	3	3	3	3	3	1	...	...
Asari	3	3	3	1	1	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	2	1	1	2	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	2	2	1	1	...	...	...
Vannan	2	2	2	1	1	1	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Catholic Paravas	20	19	16	11	10	...	...	...
Muslim	136	136	111	22	25	9	3	2
Total	357	356	298	94	101	19	4	2

The possession of copper and brass vessels is quite rare and silver utensils are in use only in four households. The possession of utensils by people of various communities is shown in the Table XI: People buy their requirements of vessels and utensils from the street hawkers. There is no shop selling utensils in the village; very often people purchase brass and aluminium vessels in Ramanathapuram town. Mud pots are sold by the street vendor coming from distant villages. Nowhere in the coastal villages, potters are found; the entire region being sandy, pottery becomes impractical.

Furniture and consumer goods

71. Furniture is a rare phenomenon in the homesteads of this village and rarely one comes

across chairs, benches, stools in a house. Almirahs, cup-boards, shelves are conspicuous by absence. Cots are in use only in some houses. People prefer to sleep or squat on the floor. Even wealthy persons do not possess such items of furniture. Not even a single house is found to be furnished. The absence of furniture is rather a matter of taste, and not of economic prosperity. Both the rich and poor are not keen on keeping furniture. Only teachers and salaried persons use chairs, stools etc. The results of ancillary data collected during the survey on the acquisition of furniture and consumer goods are embodied in Table No. XII.

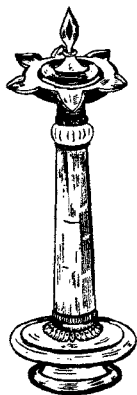
TABLE No. XII

Furniture and consumer goods acquired in last five years

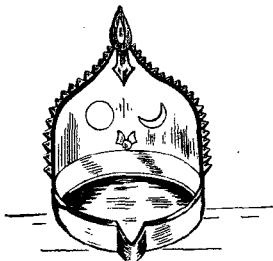
Community	Total number of households	Number of households which have acquired in last five years					
		Almirah	Local cot	Chair	Bench	Battery light	Petromax light
Maravar	119	1	1	1	1	1	...
Idayar	19	1	1	1	1	...	...
Valayar	18	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	11	...	...	1	1	...	...
Chakkiliyar	9	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vellala	7	...	...	...	...	...	...
Karayar	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	136	...	1	1	1	2	1
Catholic Paravas	20	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	357	2	3	4	4	3	1

72. The most common consumer goods found in the houses are bed lamps, hurricane lanterns and a handful of petromax lights apart from household utensils. The village is not electrified and radio sets, fans etc., are virtually absent. Kerosene stoves is found only in a solitary Muslim household. Fifteen

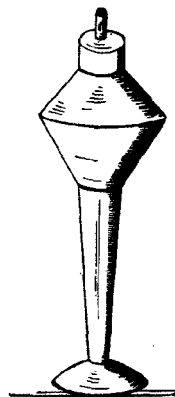
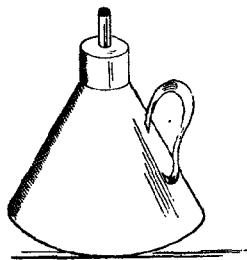
persons have torch lights, 12 of them being Muslim and the rest Maravars. Usage of bicycle is slowly gaining ground among the villagers and five persons are using bicycles, four of them being Muslims. The details of possession of different consumer goods are shown in Table No. XIII.



Kuthu Vilakku



Mada Vilakku



Kerosene lamps made of tin

TABLE No. XIII

Possession of consumer goods

Community	No. of households	Number of households possessing						
		Hurricane lantern	Petro-max light	Battery light	Kerosene stove	Bedroom lamp	Bicycle	Radio set
Maravar	119	119	1	3	...	2	...	...
Idayar	19	19	...	...	...	...	...	...
Valayar	18	15	...	...	...	3	...	...
Nadar	11	9	...	...	...	2	...	...
Chakkiliyar	9	9	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vellala	7	7	1	...	...	1	...	...
Karayar	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	3	...	...	...	...	1	...
Muslim	136	136	1	12	1	...	4	...
Catholic Paravas	20	18	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	357	350	3	15	1	8	5	...

CHAPTER III

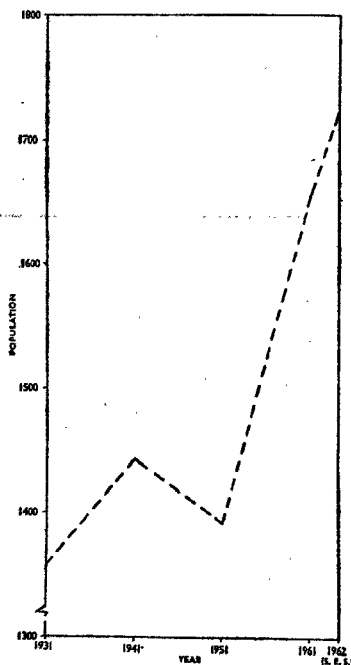
POPULATION

Growth of population

73. The village of Athangarai has a population of 1,721 persons, 846 males and 875 females, with 357 households accommodated in 351 houses. The village population was 1,655 according to 1961 Census count. In the year 1951, it stood at 1,393, thus showing an increase of 18.8 per cent during the decade 1951 - 61, which means 1.88 per cent per year. This is evidently a high growth rate; the population trend during the past decades is as seen below :

Census Year	Population	Increase or decrease
1931	1,358	
1941	1,444	+ 86
1951	1,393	- 51
1961	1,655	+ 262
(S. E. Survey 1962)	1,721	

POPULATION TREND



The increasing and decreasing trends are clearly visible from the chart. In the decade 1931-41, the village population had shown an increase from 1,358 to 1,444, the percentage growth being 6.3, whereas in the next decade, the population fell down to 1,393. Again, the decade 1951-61 saw a steep increase of 262 persons or 18.8 per cent. Considering the three decades as a whole, the population increase works out to 21.87 per cent which means 7.29 per cent for a decade. In the last decade, the growth rate per annum viz., 1.88 per cent is comparatively high. The rates of increase for the taluk, district and the state are shown below for purpose of comparison.

	Percentage increase
Athangarai	18.8
Ramanathapuram taluk	16.9
Ramanathapuram district	16.3
Madras State	11.85

Emigration : A chief feature

74. During the decade 1941-51, a sudden drop in population was noticed viz., 3.53 per cent per decade or 0.35 per year. What are the causes? Obviously the large exodus of people to overseas countries like Malaya, Burma and Ceylon and the high death rates were the chief reasons for this decline of population. It is ascertained that prior to Independence a large number of people especially Muslims left for those countries in search of gainful employment; then the conditions were much favourable and people were free to move to and from those places as and when they liked. Immigration laws of those countries were so lenient, that they had an easy opening to those places; with acute poverty and scarcity at home, people emigrated to those countries finding much scope for better earning and varied employment.

High death rate

75. Further the incidence of deaths was high in the decade 1941-51 due to certain epidemics prevalent in the village. The death rates were, however, low in the succeeding decade 1951-61. The details of births and deaths during the two decades, as recorded by the Village Headman are as shown in the following Table No. XIV.

TABLE No. XIV.

Births and deaths

Year	Number of births			Number of deaths			Excess of births over deaths
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	
1941	21	32	53	32	42	74	— 21
1942	18	27	45	33	33	66	— 21
1943	20	26	46	32	42	74	— 28
1944	23	36	59	31	27	58	1
1945	33	31	64	31	27	58	6
1946	25	24	49	18	28	46	3
1947	38	20	58	26	26	52	6
1948	25	27	52	37	41	78	26
1949	26	19	45	12	4	16	29
1950	22	32	54	15	11	26	28
1951	24	28	52	13	15	28	24
1952	24	26	50	9	16	25	25
1953	25	19	44	17	6	23	21
1954	17	18	35	15	11	26	9
1955	45	39	84	18	8	26	58
1956	37	27	64	8	15	23	41
1957	31	37	68	14	8	22	46
1958	25	23	48	7	5	12	36
1959	31	23	54	8	12	20	34
1960	23	28	51	7	9	16	35

The above data clearly reveal the high death rate in 1941 - 51; especially in the early years of the decade the excess of deaths over births was high. In 1948, the number of deaths exceeded the number of births by 26, when cholera was said to be prevalent. Of course, there was excess of births over deaths in some years, but it was not to a significant extent. Anyway, it is clear that apart from emigration the high death rate is likely to be another major cause behind the decline in population in that decade. The total births and deaths for the two decades 1941 - 50 and 1951 - 60 are shown below :

Decade	Total No. of births	Total No. of deaths	Excess births over deaths
1941—50	525	548	—23
1951—60	550	221	329
Both decades	1,075	769	306

Vital rates

76. The birth and death rates worked out based on estimated mid-year population for the years 1941-1960 are indicated in Table No. XV.

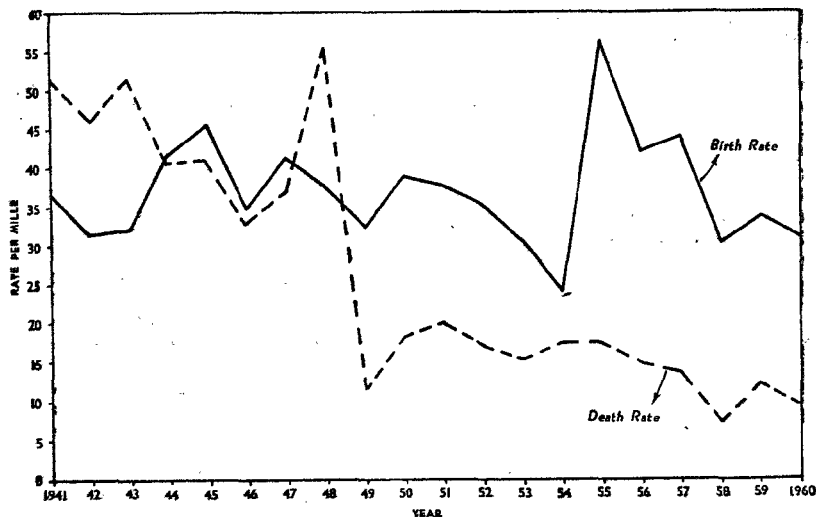
The death rates were uniformly high in the decade 1941 - 51, with slight exception in the last two years of the decade. In 1948, the number of deaths had reached as high as 78, the death rate being 55.4 per mille. It is observed that epidemics like cholera and smallpox were common in those periods; in 1948, as many as 27 deaths occurred due to cholera out of 78 deaths. However, in the recent years after Independence general health conditions have become better, with the improvement in hygienic conditions, spraying of D: D. T., mass vaccination etc., and the resulting effect was the steady declining trend in death rates. During the decade 1951 - 61, the birth rates stood high, while death rates declined to a significant degree; the death rate never exceeded 20 per mille, in any of the years between 1951 and 1960. In 1958 and 1960, the death rate came down even below ten. Further, due to growing medical assistance and maternity aid, infant mortality was decreasing during the past two decades. With the spectacular decline in death rates and high level of birth rate in the village throughout the decade, it is no wonder that the growth of population was much

TABLE NO. XV

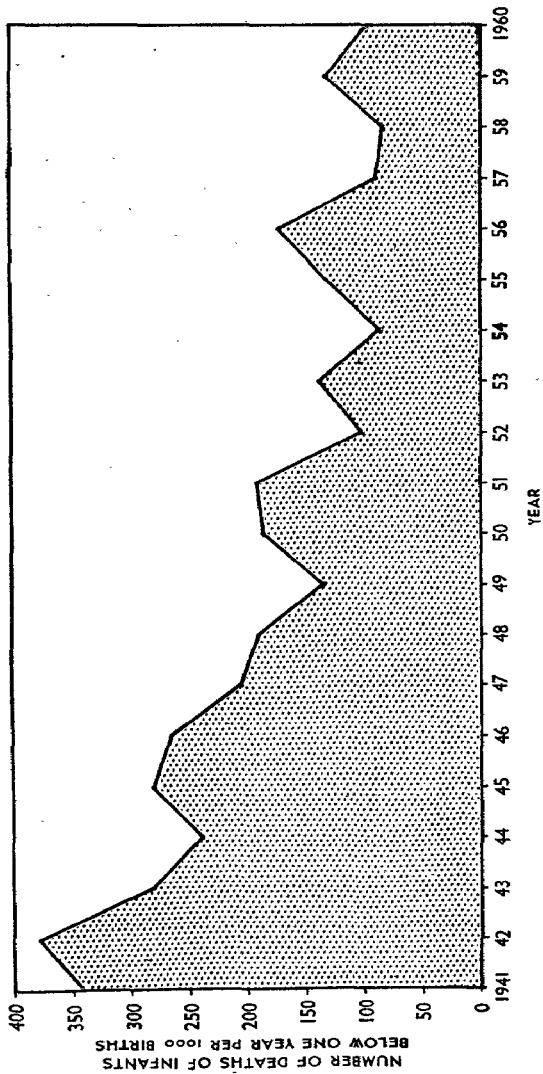
Birth and death rates according to the estimated mid-year population

Year	Mid-Year Population	Births		Deaths	
		Total No. of births in the year	Annual birth-rate (per mille)	Total No. of deaths in the year	Annual death-rate (per mille)
1941	1,443	53	36.7	74	51.3
1942	1,438	45	31.3	66	45.9
1943	1,433	46	32.1	74	51.6
1944	1,427	59	41.4	58	40.6
1945	1,422	64	45.0	58	40.8
1946	1,417	49	34.6	46	32.5
1947	1,412	58	41.1	52	36.8
1948	1,407	52	37.0	78	55.4
1949	1,402	45	32.1	16	11.4
1950	1,397	54	38.7	26	18.6
1951	1,400	52	37.1	28	20.0
1952	1,426	50	35.1	25	17.5
1953	1,452	44	30.3	23	15.8
1954	1,479	36	23.7	26	17.6
1955	1,505	84	55.8	26	17.3
1956	1,531	64	41.8	23	15.0
1957	1,557	68	43.7	22	14.1
1958	1,583	48	30.3	12	7.6
1959	1,610	54	33.5	20	12.4
1960	1,636	51	31.2	16	9.8

BIRTH AND DEATH RATES



INFANT MORTALITY



high. The excess of births over deaths during the period 1951 - 60 was as high as 329, which is, of course, extraordinary.

Slow down in emigration

77. Even during this decade, there was emigration from this village but to a lesser extent. Due to the tightening up of Immigration Laws in far-eastern countries, emigration of people has decreased. Burma and Ceylon have been virtually closed to Indian immigrants after attainment of Independence. In the Federation of Malaya, immigration rules were later on tightened up to some extent and the regulations enforced more strictly than before. As a result only a limited number of persons migrated to Malaya and Singapore and several persons who had settled long back in those countries returned for good. Persons who go to Ceylon by illicit methods from Athangarai are said to be few in number. No precise data are, however, forthcoming. According to the version of Village Headman and some elderly persons, it is clear that emigration trend has slowed down during the decade 1951 - 61 and it will be negligible in the coming decade.

Density of population

78. Athangarai occupies an area of 3.15 square miles or 2013.23 acres, having a population of 1,721; the density of population per square mile is, therefore, 547 persons. The population density of the village during the previous decades and the corresponding figures for the Ramanathapuram taluk and district are shown below for purposes of comparison.

Year	Population per square mile		
	Athangarai village	Ramnad taluk	Ramnad district
1941	459	467	413
1951	443	491	431
1961	526	575	502
Socio Economic Survey 1962	547	...	...

The density of population of Athangarai was steadily increasing after 1951 and the trend for taluk and district was also a similar one.

Fertility

79. The high growth rate of population in the decade 1951 - 61 can be explained in a way by the fertility of women in the village; but from the present survey, specific data relating to various factors like total number of births in the period, still births, age at birth, order of birth etc., are not

forthcoming. Anyway the child - woman ratio for the village gives us a general picture in this respect. It works out to, as follows :

Total number of children in the age group 0 - 4.	328
Total number of women in the age group 15 - 44.	337
Number of children per 1,000 females	975

Of course, this ratio is very high; it must, however, be admitted that this represents only a crude value denoting the fertility position, but it does serve as a general indicator in the absence of accurate fertility rates. The variations in child - woman ratio between community to community may be seen from the figures shown below :

Community	No. of Children between 0 & 4 years	No. of Woman between 15 & 44	Child - Woman ratio
Hindus	202	192	1,057
Muslims	108	132	818
Christians	18	13	1,385
All Communities	328	337	975

The child-woman ratio for the village is 975, while large deviations are found among different ethnic groups. The rates given above suggest that Muslim women are relatively less fertile and Catholics are having high rate of fertility. The Hindus occupy a normal position.

Sex ratio

80. The survey reveals that Athangarai has a fairly high sex ratio viz., 1,034 i.e., for every thousand males, there are 1,034 females in the village. The high predominance of womenfolk can well be attributed to the migration of male population, which is one of the major factors in the life of the villagers. Men, while going abroad seeking better employment do generally take their wives; in the case of 50 not families, either the head of family or an elder male member has left the village, leaving behind the wife or other members of the family in the village itself. A good number of families, especially Muslims are mainly depending for their living, on the periodical remittances from abroad. As a result, the resident population becomes predominantly female. The varying trend in sex ratio from 1941 onwards is as follows :

Year	Males	Females	Sex ratio
1941	729	715	988
1951	672	721	1,073
1961	800	855	1,069
S. E. Survey 1962	846	875	1,034

The trend of sex ratio has shown a steep increase from 988 to 1,073 during the decade 1941-51 and then it has slowly come down to 1,069 in 1961. This can be well explained by the large extent of emigration of male population in the decade 1941-51 and the declining proportion of emigration after 1951. The same trend is noticed in regard to the sex ratio for the Ramanathapuram taluk and district, which reflects the general position prevailing in the region.

Year	Sex ratio in respect of		
	Athangarai village	Ramanathapuram taluk	Ramanathapuram district
1941	988	1,115	1,087
1951	1,073	1,199	1,090
1961	1,069	1,120	1,060

Generally in the East Ramanathapuram region, the sex ratio always stands high and particularly in Ramanathapuram taluk, the predominance of female population is large. During the decade 1941-50, as was already stated, emigration of people in this village and in the neighbouring areas to countries like Ceylon, Burma, Malaya and Singapore was large, compared to the latter decade. During the decade 1951-60, the change of emigration policy of the Democratic Governments of these countries caused much reduction in emigration. This changed atmosphere was the main reason, if not the sole reason, for the variations in sex ratio. It may be examined whether the births and deaths would have had any effect on the variations of sex ratio in the periods 1941-50 and 1951-60. The following table gives the details of sex-wise births and deaths in Athangarai, during these two decades :

Decade	No. of births		Excess of male births over females births
	Males	Females	
1941-50	251	274	-23
1951-60	282	268	14

Decade	No. of deaths		Excess of male deaths over female deaths	Net increase (or decrease, of males over females)
	Males	Females		
1941-50	267	281	-14	-9
1951-60	116	105	11	3

The net increase of females over males indicated in the last column for the decade 1941-50 is only 9 and in the next decade, there was excess of 3 males over females. Actually the sex ratio has shown an increase in the decade 1941-50 and a slight fall during the period 1951-60. Hence, it is clear, that the fluctuations in regard to births and deaths would have exercised some influence, if not great, on the variations of sex pattern of the village population.

The sex ratio varies from community to community ; the figures given below reflect the sex pattern among people of different religion.

Religion	Population		Sex-ratio
	Males	Females	
Hindus	497	491	988
Muslims	300	345	1,150
Catholics	49	39	796
Total	846	875	1,034

81. The sex pattern among people of different age groups will be clear from the following figures :

Age group (in years)	Males	Females	Sex-ratio
0-9	291	305	1,048
10-19	160	140	875
20-29	108	130	1,204
30-59	223	243	1,090
60 and over	64	57	891
All ages	846	875	1,034

It is quite clear that the sex ratio is high in the age groups 20-29 and 30-59 ; the fact that men in the working age-group would have migrated outside for better employment would have influenced the sex pattern particularly in these age groups. Curiously the proportion of women is far less in the age groups 10-19 and 60 and over ; no special reasons are attributed to this strange sex distribution in these age groups.

It is clearly seen that Muslim community has a high sex ratio viz., 1,150 females per 1,000 males ; on the contrary, the sex ratio for Hindus works out to 988 while for Catholic Paravas, it falls far below 1,000, which indicates the predominance of males over females. What is it due to ? We see that the element of migration is greater, among Muslims as compared to Hindus and Christians. The ancillary data collected during the Socio Economic Survey reveal that among Muslims 39 male members have migrated to overseas countries or other towns, leaving behind the wives or other members. For Christians and Hindus, the respective figures are 1 and 17. This is the main factor contributing to the predominance of women over males among Muslims viz., 345 females as against the male population of 300. Among Catholics, out of a total population of 88, 49 are males and the rest are females, thus indicating a

very low sex ratio of 796. One of the factors contributing towards the predominance of males over females may be the unduly large number of male children over female children. We see that among Catholics, there are 23 boys below 15 years of age, as against only 18 girls and particularly in the age group 0-4, a large variation is seen in the sex pattern i.e., there are 14 male children and only four females. The following table illustrates the sex pattern among the Catholics.

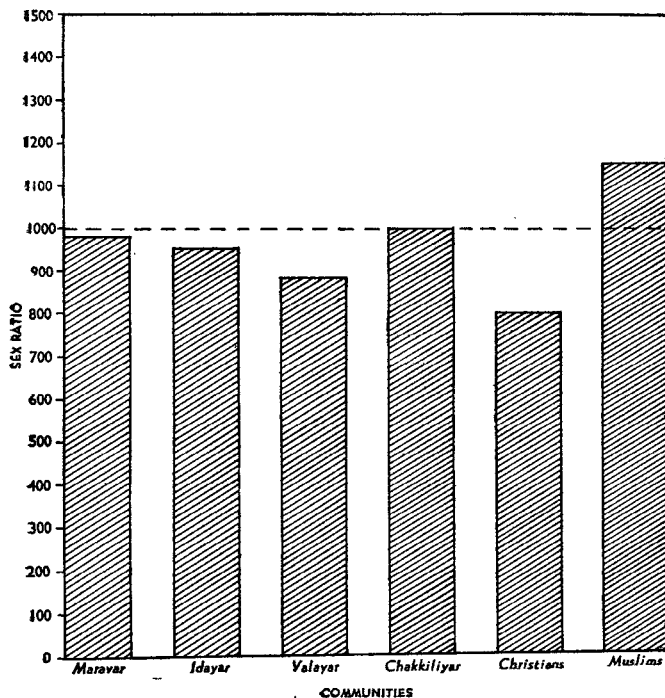
Age-group	Male	Female	Sex-ratio
0-14	23	18	783
15-34	11	7	636
35-59	10	10	1,000
60 & over	5	4	800
All ages	49	39	796

Size of household.

82. A large variation is observed in the size of household which varies from one member to 11 members. The average number of persons per household works out to 4.82. The following table classifies the households according to the size i.e., number of family members.

Size of a household	No. of households	Percentage
One member	16	4.5
2-3 members	76	21.3
4-6 "	190	53.2
7-9 "	68	19.0
10 & above	7	2.0
Total	357	100.0

SEX RATIO AMONG MAJOR COMMUNITIES



It is seen that medium sized families with four to six persons account for 53.2 per cent and about 21 per cent are large households with seven or more number of persons. Out of 92 small households, 16 households are single-member households and the remaining ones are with two or three members. Of the 16 persons living alone, nine are women, eight of them being widows; of the seven men living alone, three are bachelors, three widowers and another Brahmin inn-keeper lives in the choultry itself, leaving his family in Ramanathapuram town. The number of families with ten or more members is only seven, one of which consists of 11 persons and the rest with ten members. Table No. XVI furnishes the distribution of households by the varying size and community. It is quite clear that generally households of Hindu castes are larger ones as compared to Christians and Muslims. The table below gives the distribution of households according to size, in terms of percentage.

Religion	Total No. of house holds	Percentage of households according to size of households				
		One mem- ber	2—3 mem- bers	4—6 mem- bers	7—9 mem- bers	10 mem- bers & above
		Hindus	201	3.5	19.9	54.7	18.9	3.0
Muslims	136	5.2	22.8	52.2	19.1	0.7
Catholics	20	10.0	25.0	45.0	20.0	...
Total	357	4.5	21.3	53.2	19.0	2.0

The proportion of small households having three persons or less among Hindus is 23.4 per cent, while the respective proportion for Muslims and Christians are 28 per cent and 35 per cent. In regard to large families with seven or more members, the percentage for Hindus works out to 21.9 whereas the proportion is slightly less in respect of Muslims and Christians. The average size of household for the village

community as a whole is 4.82, and the average size varies from caste to caste, as may be seen from the statement below :

Community	No. of households	Average size of household
Hindus		
Vannan	2	7.00
Naidu	3	5.66
Asari	3	
Valayar	18	5.22
Maravar	119	5.08
Karayar	3	5.00
Agamudiyar	2	5.00
Chakkiliyar	9	4.88
Idayar	19	4.58
Pandithar	2	4.50
Nadar	11	4.27
Vellala	7	4.43
Pandaram	1	3.00
Semman	1	2.00
Brahmin	1	1.00
All Hindu Castes	Total 201	4.92
Mustim	136	4.74
Catholic Paravas	20	4.40
Total	357	4.82

It is quite clear that the average number of members per household is distinctly high among Hindu castes like Maravar, Valayar, Vannan, Naidu, Karayar and Agamudiyar while it is low among Catholics and Muslims. The average size of household for all Hindu castes comes to 4.92, which is slightly above the mean value 4.82.

83. The low average size for Muslims can mainly be attributed to the migration of persons in search of better living. In 27 households one person has migrated outside in search of jobs and in six households, two persons have left the village. Among Catholics, there are 88 persons in 20 households, the average size being as low as 4.4. Out of 20 Catholic families, two households happen to be single-member ones and in the other two households there are only two members with no children at all. Generally, it is seen that the families are small in size among them; only four households are having seven or eight members and there is no family consisting of more than eight persons. The table below indicates the size and composition of households among different ethnic groups.

TABLE No. XVI

Size of household

Community	No. of household	Size of household														
		Single member		2-3 members			4-6 members			7-9 members			10 members & over			
		House-holds	Males	Females	House-holds	Males	Females	House-holds	Males	Females	House-holds	Males	Females	House-holds	Males	Females
Maravar	119	2	...	2	21	30	25	70	171	172	23	91	84	3	14	16
Idayar	19	1	...	1	6	9	8	8	20	16	3	11	12	1	5	5
Valayar	18	...	...	...	3	3	4	10	26	21	4	16	13	1	5	6
Nadar	11	1	...	1	3	2	4	5	13	12	2	6	9	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	9	...	...	...	3	2	5	3	6	9	3	14	8	...	...	...
Vellala	7	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	4	6	1	2	5	...	...	...
Karayar	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	8	7	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	7	3	1	3	4	...	...	...
Asari	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	4	5	1	4	3	...	...	...
Vannan	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	1	...	...	...	1	4	6
Pandithar	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	3	6	...	...	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	5	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	1	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	136	7	4	3	31	37	46	71	167	183	26	87	108	1	5	5
Catholic																
Paravas	20	2	1	1	5	7	6	9	25	19	4	16	13	...	...	...
Total	357	16	7	9	76	94	104	190	462	465	68	250	259	7	33	38

The cause for smaller households can be traced to the nature of families, whether simple or joint families. Out of 20 families, we see that 15 are simple families, consisting of husband and wife with or without children. Only one household is a joint family. Even among the simple families, the number of children is not high. As many as 48 persons remain unmarried, out of a total of 88 persons among Christians. All these put together go to explain this sub-normal size of families among Christians.

Marital status

84. The chief features on marital structure of the village society are found to be the higher percentage of unmarried among males than among females, and larger proportion of widowed and divorced persons among women. Table No. XVII classifies village population by age and marital status.

TABLE No. XVII

Age and marital status

Age group	Total population			Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or Separated	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
All ages	1721	846	875	496	438	326	354	23	81	1	2
0-4	328	180	148	180	148	...	...	...	...	...	...
5-9	268	111	157	111	157	...	...	...	...	...	...
10-14	187	91	96	91	96	...	...	...	...	...	...
15-19	114	70	44	69	29	1	14	...	...	...	1
20-24	108	47	61	28	7	19	54	...	...	...	...
25-29	129	60	69	12	1	48	68	...	...	...	...
30-34	107	52	55	1	...	51	53	...	1	...	1
35-44	211	103	108	3	...	97	96	2	12	1	...
45-59	148	68	80	...	...	62	54	6	26	...	...
60 & over	121	64	57	1	...	48	15	15	42	...	...

The village has a total population of 1,721, of which 680 are married persons, 934 never married, 104 widowed and three divorced. The relative distribution of married, never married, widowed and divorced persons among male and female population is shown below :

Sex	Percentage distribution				
	Never married	Married	Widowed	Divorced or Separated	Total
Males	58.63	38.53	2.72	0.12	100.00
Females	50.05	40.46	9.26	0.23	100.00
Both sexes	54.27	39.52	6.04	0.17	100.00

Widowers account for only 2.72 per cent of total males while the proportion of widows is as high as 9.26%. Similar is the case among separated or divorced persons. The reason is simple. While widowers among all communities are free to remarry, widow re-marriage is not allowed in some upper castes like Vellalas, Brahmins, Naidus etc. Further, the possibility of remarriage of widowers remains unmitigated even at older ages, while widows opt for remarriage only if they are young, say around thirty. This explanation is equally applicable for the relative disparity among the divorcees also. Table No. XVIII classifies the population by sex, marital status and communities.

TABLE No. XVIII

Marital status by communities

Community	Total population			Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or Separated	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Maravar	605	306	299	185	153	113	116	8	30	...	...
Valayar	94	50	44	31	25	17	18	2	1	...	...
Idayar	87	45	42	24	19	19	19	1	4	1	...
Nadar	47	21	26	12	14	9	10	...	2	...	...
Chakkiliyar	44	22	22	16	10	6	10	...	2	...	...
Vellala	24	9	15	3	7	4	5	2	3	...	...
Naidu	17	10	7	7	5	2	2	1	...	...	...
Asari	16	8	8	5	2	3	3	...	3	...	...
Karayar	15	8	7	5	4	3	3	...	...	...	...
Vannan	14	7	7	4	5	2	2	1	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	10	5	5	3	3	2	2	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	9	3	6	2	3	1	3	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	3	1	2	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
Senuman	2	1	1	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Catholic Paravas	88	49	39	30	18	19	18	...	3	...	...
Muslim	645	300	345	169	169	123	141	8	33	...	2
Total	1,721	846	875	496	438	326	354	23	81	1	2

Never married persons

85. Among male population unmarried persons outnumber ever-married persons and the case is quite opposite in respect of womenfolk. While five men above the age of 30 are unmarried, not even a single woman remains a spinster beyond that age.

Scanning the table, it is clear that only eight women of age 20 or above are returned as never married while 45 men are unmarried in that age brackets. Only one man below the age of 20 is married and late marriage has come to stay, in so far as men are concerned and for women, early marriage is still the rule.

The table below shows the relative proportion of never married population with age and sex break-up.

Age range (years)	Males			Females		
	Total No. of males	Never married males	Percentage of Col. (3) to Col. (2)	Total No. of females	Never married females	Percentage of Col. (6) to Col. (5)
0-19	452	451	99.8	445	430	96.6
20-29	107	40	37.4	130	8	6.2
30-44	155	4	2.6	163	...	...
45-59	68	...	...	80	...	...
60 & over	64	1	1.6	57	...	...
All ages	846	496	58.63	875	438	50.06

The proportions of never married males and females to total persons in the respective age groups are shown in the above table. Among males of age 20 to 29, 37.4 per cent of them are bachelors while the corresponding percentage for females of that age-range is only 6.2. One man who had crossed the age of 60 remains unmarried and he belongs to Vellala caste. Of the four unmarried men between the ages of 30 and 44 three are Muslims and one comes from Idayar caste. The percentage of ever-married population viz., married, widowed and divorced in the different age groups will be seen from the statement below.

Age group	Percentage of ever-married persons to total	
	Males	Females
0-19	0.22	3.37
20-29	62.62	93.85
30-44	97.42	100.00
45-59	100.00	100.00
60 and over	98.44	100.00
All ages	41.37	49.94

Marriage is universal among the women who had crossed the age of 30. Only in the age range 45-59, all the males are ever-married.

Widowhood

86. There are 23 widowers, as against 81 widows in Athangarai. The following table indicates the number of widowers and widows in various age levels and the respective proportions to the total ever-married males and females.

Age range	Males			Females		
	No. of ever-married males	No. of widowers	Percentage	No. of ever-married females	No. of widows	Percentage
0-14	...	...	...	...	...	...
15-29	68	...	...	137	...	...
30-44	151	2	1.32	163	13	7.97
45-59	68	6	8.82	80	26	32.50
60 and over	63	15	23.81	57	42	73.68
All ages	350	23	6.57	437	81	18.54

Widowers constitute 6.6 per cent of the ever-married men and widows, 18.5 per cent of ever-married women. At all age groups the incidence of widowhood is high in respect of females. There is neither a widower nor a widow below the age of 30. As the age level increases, the percentage of widowed persons showed a steady increase, among both sexes. The percentage of widows to the total ever-married females is eight against the age group 30-44 and it rises to 32.5 in the next age range of 45-59 and to the highest figure of 73.7 in the age group 60 and over. As the age becomes higher, the probability of remarriage of widows declines, to which the above data bear testimony.

87. Of the 81 widows, 33 belong to Muslims, 30 to Maravars and the rest is distributed over the remaining communities. The incidence of widowhood

among the different communities will be seen from the Table No. XIX.

TABLE No. XIX

Widowhood

Community	Males			Females		
	No. of ever-married males	No. of widowers	Percentage	No. of ever-married females	No. of widows	Percentage
Maravar	121	8	6.6	146	30	20.5
Idayar	21	1	4.8	23	4	17.4
Valayar	19	2	10.5	19	1	5.3
Nadar	9	...	...	12	2	16.7
Chakkiliyar	6	...	...	12	2	16.7
Vellala	6	2	33.3	8	3	37.5
Asari	3	...	...	6	3	50.0
Karayar	3	...	...	3	...	...
Naidu	3	1	33.3	2	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	2	...	...
Pandithar	1	...	...	3	...	...
Vannan	3	1	33.3	2	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	1	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	1	...	...
Total Hindus	200	15	7.5	240	45	18.8
Catholic Paravas	19	...	...	21	3	14.3
Muslim	131	8	6.1	176	33	18.8
Total	350	23	6.6	437	81	18.5

The percentage of widows to ever-married women shows a wide disparity between the various communities. The proportion ranges from 5.3 per cent for Valayar to 50 per cent in the case of Asari. For the Hindu castes as a whole, and also for Muslims the percentage works out to 18.8; among the Catholic Paravas 14.3 per cent of ever-married females are widowed. In respect of communities such as Vellala and Asari among whom widow-remarriage is not permitted, naturally such percentage is high. There are only three divorcees; two are Muslim girls below the age of 35 and another is a middle-aged man belonging to Idayar caste. Divorce and remarriage of divorcees are permitted among Muslims, Christians and several Hindu castes such as Maravar, Agamudiyar, Valayar, Karayar and depressed classes. Only Vellalas, Asaris, Naidus, Brahmins do not tolerate divorce.

Age at marriage

88. The results of enquiry on the age at first marriage are embodied in the following statement:

Age at first marriage (years)	Males			Females		
	No. of persons married	Percentage to total		No. of persons married	Percentage to total	
15-17	10	2.85		3	0.69	
18-20	117	33.33		89	20.51	
21-23	78	22.22		149	34.33	
24-26	109	31.06		152	35.02	
27-29	21	5.98		25	5.76	
30-32	9	2.56		13	3.00	
33-35	6	1.71		3	0.69	
36-38	1	0.29				
Total	351	100.00		434	100.00	

From the above data, it is apparent that the general age at marriage for boys is 18-26 and for females

it ranges from 16-21. Among males one-third of persons had married between the ages 18 and 20 and 31 per cent between 24 and 26. The low figures recorded against the range 21-23 will probably be due to age-heaping in 20 and 25 which is normally visible in all kinds of vital statistics of such surveys. Ten males had entered matrimony even at the ages 15 to 17. But from table on 'Age and Marital Status' it is clearly seen that during the time of survey only 20 males below the age of 25 were reported to be married, of whom only one comes under age group 15-19. This clearly indicates that early marriage of males was prevalent in olden days and it is losing ground at present. Late marriages after 30 are not common; roughly five per cent of married males had entered matrimony between the ages 30 and 38. In regard to females, the marriageable age is generally 16 to 21; 34 per cent were given in marriage at the ages 16 to 18 and 35 per cent between 19 and 21; three girls of age 12 or below had entered matrimony. But now such early marriages are not

common. Late marriage of girls after the age of 25 is very rare; sixteen girls married at the age of 25 to 30.

Literacy

89. Athangarai village, has a low level of literacy. Of the total population of 1,721 persons, as many as 1,300 persons i.e., a little above three-fourths of population are illiterates; only 24.5 per cent of people are literates. The percentage of literacy according to 1951 Census was 14 per cent. The level of literacy is, of course, slowly increasing. There is one Senior Basic School in the main village and a Primary School in the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani which is manned by a single teacher. Both the schools were formerly run by the District Board and after the emergence of Panchayat Unions, these schools were taken up by Mandapam Panchayat Union. The level of literacy among the people of various age levels can be analysed with the following table:

TABLE No. XX

Literacy and education

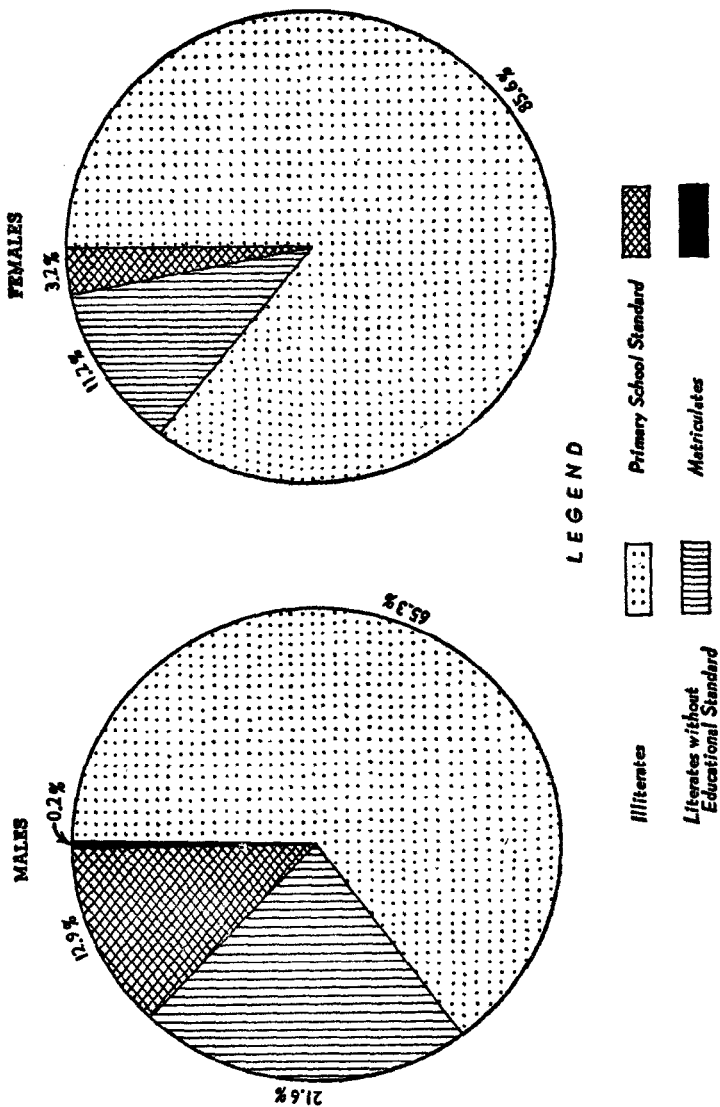
Age group	Total population			Illiterates		Literates without educational standard		Primary or Junior Basic		Matriculation		Above Matriculation	
	P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
All ages	1,721	846	875	552	748	183	101	109	26	2	...	...	...
0-4	328	180	148	178	148	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5-9	268	111	157	62	101	48	56	1	...	...	...	...	...
10-14	187	91	96	32	68	45	22	14	6	...	...	...	...
15-19	114	70	44	34	36	17	5	19	3	...	...	...	...
20-24	108	47	61	26	49	8	5	12	7	1	...	...	...
25-29	129	60	69	37	65	10	2	12	2	1	...	...	...
30-34	107	52	55	29	48	13	5	10	2	...	...	...	...
35-44	211	103	108	63	98	23	4	17	6	...	...	...	...
45-59	148	68	80	45	78	9	2	14	...	...	...	...	...
60 & over	121	64	57	45	57	8	...	10	...	...	...	...	...

P-Persons; M-Males; F-Females;

The literacy percentage for the male population is 34.75 while for women it is as low as 14.5%. This is the general trend in any village. In regard to different age groups, percentage literacy is definitely higher in the lower age groups and as the age moves, the proportion of literates declines. In the case of young boys between 10 and 14 years, 64.8

per cent are literates which is the highest among all age groups. Among the aged males above the age of 60, only 28.1 per cent are literates. The percentage of literacy among elderly women is very low. While 2.5 per cent of females in the age range 45-59 are literates, all the elderly women who had crossed the age of sixty remain illiterates.

LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARD



School-going children

90. The percentage of literacy for the girls of school going age is somewhat better but not upto the level of boys of the same age. The outlook of villagers has not widened and education of girls is still not popular. Low age at marriage of girls is one of the chief reasons for this. The villagers generally feel that education for a girl is merely a waste and that girls can better carry on their household duties so that they can fit into the husband's household in marriage. The following table presents the details of percentage of school attending children and total number of school age children according to different religious groups:

Religion	Total No. of children in age group 5-14		No. of children attending school		Percentage of children attending	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
	Hindus	112	141	52	25	46.4	17.7
Muslims	81	98	30	34	37.0	34.7
Catholics	9	14	2	3	22.2	21.4
Total	202	253	84	62	4.16	2.45

Taking the village as a whole, only 41.6 per cent of boys between the ages of five and 14 receive school education, while only 24.5 per cent of girls of this age group attend school. Combining for both sexes, it is seen that 32.1 per cent of school age children are sent to school. The proportion of school attending children is the highest among Muslims and lowest among Catholics. Catholic Paravas do not take much care to send their boys to schools. Girls' education receives better attention among Muslims rather than Hindus. 46.4 per cent of Hindu boys are sent to school but among Muslim boys only 37 per cent of them are going to school. Most of the poor Valayan boys go to work, and thus add a meagre amount to the family earnings. The utter poverty conditions prove to be a barrier to the education of boys.

Caste and literacy

91. The social and economic disparity has its definite impact on the literacy level also. It is but natural that advanced castes such as Brahmin, Pillai have more literates. Among socially handicapped castes such as Valayans, literates are few in number. The figures shown below indicate the number of illiterates, literates with varying educational standards etc., among the various communities.

TABLE No. XXI

Literacy and education by communities

Community	Total population			Illiterates		Literate without educational standard ¹		Primary or Junior Basic		Matriculates	
	Persons	Males Females		Males Females		Males Females		Males Females		Males Females	
		Maravar	605	306	299	227	283	52	13	27	3
Valayar	94	50	44	46	44	3	...	1	...	...	...
Idayar	87	45	42	23	41	15	1	7	...	...	...
Nadar	47	21	26	14	20	6	5	1	1	...	...
Chakkiliyar	44	22	22	10	21	7	1	5	...	...	...
Vellala	24	9	15	1	5	1	6	7	4	...	...
Naidu	17	10	7	2	4	1	2	7	1	...	...
Asari	16	8	8	2	8	5	...	1	...	...	...
Karayar	15	8	7	3	4	5	3	...	...	...	...
Vannan	14	7	7	4	5	...	2	3	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	10	5	5	1	4	4	1	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	9	3	6	1	2	1	2	1	2	...	...
Pandaram	3	1	2	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Semman	2	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Muslim	645	300	345	184	275	71	60	44	10	1	...
Catholic Paravas	88	49	39	33	30	11	4	4	5	1	...
Total	1,721	846	875	552	748	183	101	109	26	2	...

The data presented above confirm that literacy level also descends. The literacy percentage stands high among the advanced castes and as we move down the social scale the literacy

level also descends. The literacy percentage among various communities is indicated in Table No. XXII.

TABLE No. XXII

Literacy levels

Community	Males			Females		
	Total No. of males	Literates	Percentage of literacy	Total No. of females	Literates	Percentage of literacy
Maravar	306	79	25.8	299	16	5.4
Vellala	9	8	88.9	15	10	66.7
Asari	8	6	75.0	8	...	0
Idayar	45	22	48.9	42	1	2.4
Naidu	10	8	80.0	7	3	42.9
Brahmin	1	1	100.0	...	...	...
Nadar	21	7	33.3	26	6	23.1
Agamudiyar	5	4	80.0	5	1	20.0
Valayar	50	4	8.0	44	...	0
Pandithar	3	2	66.7	6	4	66.7
Vannan	7	3	42.9	7	2	28.6
Karayar	8	5	62.5	7	3	42.9
Pandaram	1	...	...	2	1	50.0
Chakkiliyar	22	12	54.5	22	1	4.5
Semman	1	1	100.0	1	...	0
Muslim	300	116	38.7	343	70	20.3
Catholic						
Paravars	49	16	32.7	39	9	23.1
Total	846	294	34.75	875	127	14.51

Among Brahmins, Vellalas, Naidus, Agamudiyars, Asaris etc., the percentage of literate males to total male population is definitely high, well above 75 per cent. Maravars, though socially high, have shown poor literacy level. Among Valayans, only eight per cent of men are literates; however, Chakkiliyars have a considerable proportion of literates viz., 54.5%. The Government's aid towards education of Harijan children is utilised by the Chakkiliyan boys, which is considered a great boon to them. The literacy percentage among the young is distinctly greater than the literacy among elders. The figures shown below reinforce this trend.

Literacy among females

92. The proportion of literates among female population is low almost in all communities, Vellalas and Pandithars providing exceptions. For the village as a whole, literacy level for women stands at 14.5 per cent; within the communities, it ranges from 'nil' for Valayans, Asari and Semman, to 66.7 per cent, in the case of Vellalas and Pandithars. Among Pandithars, the literacy proportion is equal for males and females. Among all the communities, the percentage literacy of females is far below the respective percentage literacy of males.

Village school

93. There are two schools, one in each hamlet; both the schools were formerly run by the District Board and at present by Panchayat Union. The buildings are not adequate and furniture and other equipments for teaching are quite insufficient. The school in the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani is a single-teacher school; it is housed in a thatched

Age group	No. of Chakkiliyans		Literates		Percentage of literacy	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
0-4	3	3	...	...	...	...
5-14	4	7	4	1	100.0	14.3
15-24	11	3	7	...	63.6	0
25-34	1	1	...	...	0	0
35-44	1	3	1	...	100.0	0
45 & above	2	5	...	...	0	0
All ages	22	22	12	1	54.5	4.5

shed with scarcely 200 square feet in plinth area. In rainy days classes cannot be conducted. The school in the main village is a Senior Basic School and education is imparted upto VII Standard. There were only eight pupils in VII Standard at the time of our survey. There are five teachers and the strength of the pupils and average attendance is given below :

Standard	Total strength		Average attendance	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
I	27	29	26	26
II	27	22	26	20
III	23	20	22	18
IV	10	11	9	9
V	6	10	5	9
VI	4	5	4	5
VII	4	4	4	3

The nearest Secondary School is located at Alagankulam, two miles away and six boys and one girl from Athangarai attend the school at Alagankulam. Three boys from Maravar and Muslim communities are sent to the Secondary School at Ramanathapuram town. Nobody is receiving College education, and

only one Matriculate is undergoing training for school teacher.

Working force

94. The working force of Athangarai village consists of 664 persons, 459 being males and 205 females. As many as 1,057 are non-workers. The number of dependants per 100 workers comes to 159. The figures shown below reveal the relative proportion of workers and dependants in the village.

Sex	Total population	Workers	Percentage of workers
Males	846	459	54.26
Females	875	205	23.43
Both sexes	1,721	664	38.58

Only 38.58 per cent of village population are economically active; i.e., 61.42 per cent of population depends on the earnings of the remaining 38.58 per cent. The sex break-up of workers clearly indicates that less than one-fourth of the total females are workers. Table No. XXIII indicates the number of workers and non-workers with age and sex break-up

TABLE No. 'XXIII

Workers and non-workers by sex and age groups

Age group	Total population			Workers			Non-workers		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
All ages	1,721	846	875	664	459	205	1,057	387	670
0-4	328	180	148	...	...	...	328	180	148
5-9	268	111	157	7	...	7	261	111	150
10-14	187	91	96	54	35	19	133	56	77
15-19	114	70	44	67	49	18	47	21	26
20-24	108	47	61	64	42	22	44	5	39
25-29	129	60	69	91	60	31	38	...	38
30-34	107	52	55	73	52	21	34	...	34
35-44	211	103	108	152	102	50	59	1	58
45-59	148	68	80	98	67	31	50	1	49
60 & over	121	64	57	58	52	6	63	12	51

There are 61 workers among youngsters below 15 years; of them 35 are boys and the rest girls. They are mostly from Maravars, Valayars and Chakkiliyars. The proportion of working force is the highest in the age group 35-59; 98.8 per cent of men are workers and for women the percentage is 43.1. Even among old aged persons i.e., above 60 years, 52 men and 6 women are found to be economically active. Women generally do not go in for farm labour, except among the poorest sections of Valayars, Maravars etc. Mat-weaving is the chief occupation attended to by women mostly from Maravar, Nadar and Chakkiliyar castes. Catholic Parava women rarely go to work. Among Muslims too, only widows with no support and poorer women are workers, mostly selling fish.

95. The statement given below furnishes the proportion of workers among different religious groups and communities.

Community	Males			Females		
	Total No. of males	No. of workers	Percentage	Total No. of females	No. of workers	Percentage
Maravar	306	166	54.25	299	127	42.47
Idayar	45	27	60.00	42	4	9.52
Chakkiliyar	22	12	54.55	22	14	63.64
Valayar	50	26	52.00	44	19	43.18
Vellala	9	7	77.78	15	2	13.33
Nadar	21	9	42.86	26	8	30.77
Misc. castes	44	20	45.45	43	2	4.65
Total for Hindus	497	267	53.72	491	176	35.85
Catholic						
Paravas	49	25	51.02	39	1	2.56
Muslims	300	167	55.67	345	28	8.12
Total	846	459	54.26	875	205	23.43

The percentage of male workers is high among Muslims, viz., 55.67 which is slightly above the average for village as a whole. Among Catholic Parava men only 51 per cent are returned as workers and such proportion for Hindu males works out to 53.72. In regard to female workers, Hindus have the highest percentage viz., 35.85 and the figures for Muslims and Christians are 8.12 and 2.56 respectively. The average for the village as a whole works

out to 23.43%. Within Hindu, a great diversity exists between different castes. The percentage of female workers to total female population is highest among Chakkiliyar viz., 63.64 and in the case of Idayars, the proportion works out to 9.52. Among Naidus, Asari, Karayar, Agamudiyar, all females are found to be non-workers.

Burden of dependency

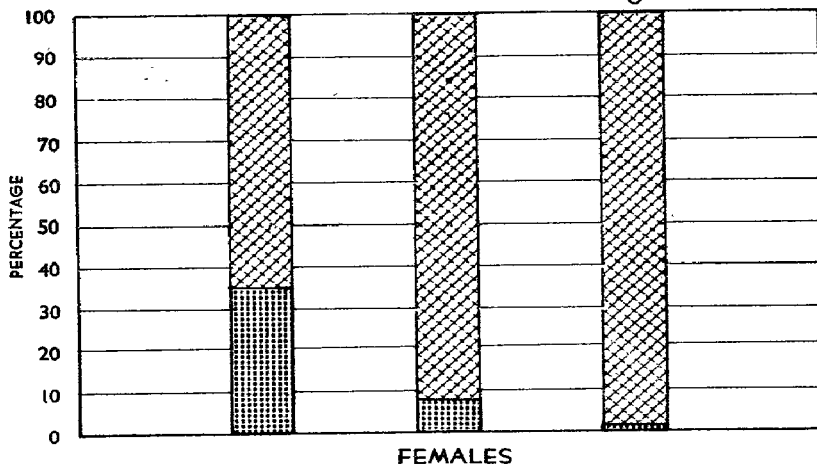
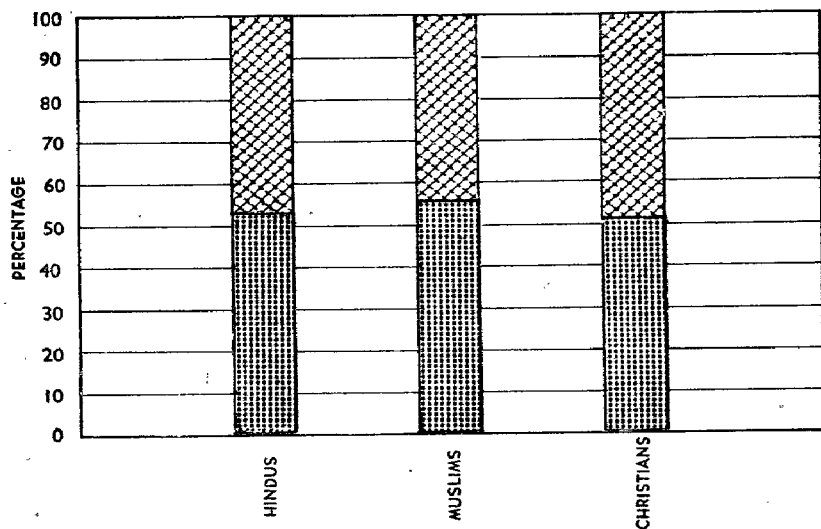
96. There are 664 persons who are economically active, as against 1,057 non-workers; the burden of dependency viz., the number of dependants per 100 workers is 159. This figure varies from community to community. Among the Hindu castes of Naidu, Asari, Karayar, Pandithar, only male members used to go in for work and so the burden of dependency stands high, while it is low among Maravars, Valayars, Nadars etc., among whom female labour is quite common. The details of workers, non-workers and burden of dependency for the various castes are shown in the statement below which is self-explanatory.


Community	No. of non-workers	No. of workers	No. of dependants per 100 workers
Maravar	312	293	106
Idayar	56	31	181
Valayar	49	45	109
Chakkiliyar	18	26	69
Semman	1	1	100
Vellala	15	9	167
Nadar	30	17	176
Pandaram	2	1	200
Agamudiyar	7	3	233
Vannan	10	4	250
Naidu	13	4	325
Pandithar	7	2	350
Karayar	12	3	400
Asari	13	3	433
Brahmin	...	1	0
Hindus	545	443	123
Muslims	450	195	231
Catholic			
Paravas	62	26	238
Total	1,057	664	159

In all the castes, the burden of dependency exceeds 100 except among Chakkiliyans, where it is 69. Among Semmans it is exactly 100, i.e., the number of non-workers is higher than the number of workers in all castes except Chakkiliyans and Semmans.

WORKING FORCE

MALES



 Workers

 Non - Workers

TABLE No. XXIV

Non-workers by sex, age groups and nature of activity

Age group	Total number of non-workers			Full time students or children attending school		Persons engaged only in household duties		Dependants, infants and children not attending school and persons permanently disabled		Other dependants	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Female
	All ages	1,057	387	670	100	62	...	273	286	331	1	4
0-4	328	180	148	2	...	...	...	178	148	...	...
5-9	261	111	150	47	48	...	5	64	97	...	...
10-14	133	56	77	37	14	...	25	19	38	...	...
15-19	47	21	26	14	...	...	24	7	2	...	...
20-24	44	5	39	...	...	...	39	5	...	...	...
25-29	38	...	38	...	...	...	38	...	...	...	...
30-34	34	...	34	...	...	...	32	...	1	...	1
35-44	39	1	58	...	...	...	56	1	1	...	1
45-59	50	1	49	...	...	...	42	...	6	1	1
60 & over	63	12	51	...	...	...	12	12	38	...	1

Non-workers

97. Table No. XXIV indicates the various types of activities of non-working population. Of the 1,057 non-workers, 162 are full time students attending school, 273 housewives, 617 are dependants, infants, and children not attending school, disabled persons etc., three are rent receivers and pensioners and only one is a beggar. The number of non-workers in the major age ranges is indicated below :

Age range (years)	Total Population	Non-workers	Percentage
0-14	783	722	92.21
15-34	458	163	35.59
35-59	359	109	30.36
60 & over	121	63	52.07
Total	1,721	1,057	61.42

61.42 per cent of village population are non-workers. Among the youngsters in the age group 0-14, 92.2

per cent are dependants. This proportion drops to 35.6 in the next age group 15-34 and further it decreases to 30.4 in the age range 35-59. Among the elderly people of age 60 and above, the proportion of non-workers rises again to 52.1. The table below gives a comparison of proportion of non-workers in the village with that of Ramanathapuram taluk and the district.

	Percentage of non-workers to total persons		
	Total	Males	Females
Athangarai	61.42	45.74	76.57
Ramanathapuram taluk	62.35	48.85	74.40
Ramanathapuram district	52.04	41.75	61.76

The percentage of male non-workers in Athangarai is comparatively less than the respective proportion for Ramanathapuram taluk but higher than the district figure. In respect of women non-workers, the percentage of dependants in the village is slightly higher than the taluk level and far above the district figure.

CHAPTER IV
VILLAGE ECONOMY

Occupational pattern

98. The basis on which the economy of village rests is essentially fishing and agriculture. A vast majority of Muslim families and all Paravas and Karayars depend solely on fishing; only some of them carry on cultivation along with fishing. Out of 357 households in Athangarai, 125 households

practise fishing, of which 29 are 'Samatties' or master fishermen. Sixty eight households are engaged in cultivation, either on owned land or lease land. Agricultural cooly families number 91 in all. Business is the chief household occupation in 22 households; some other occupations are mat weaving, carpentry, teacher, dhoby and barber. Table No. XXV furnishes the classification of households by the chief occupation.

TABLE No.

Community	Total number of households	Occupational classification											
		Cultivation only	Cultivation with							Industry with			
			Industry	Business	Industry & Business	Fishing	Agricultural labourer	Agricultural labourer & Industry	Others	Industry only	Fishing	Agricultural labourer	Others
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Maravar	119	3	14	2	1	1	4	41	2	...	...	23	2
Idayar	19	7	...	...	...	...	4	1	...	...	...	...	...
Valayar	18	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	10	...
Nadar	11	2	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	3	...
Chakkiliyar	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	3	...
Vellala	7	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	4	2
Asari	3	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
Karayar	3	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Pandithar	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Muslim	136	2	...	...	...	9	1	...	...	1	2	...	1
Catholic													
Paravas	20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	357	17	15	6	1	12	9	46	4	7	3	40	6

Agriculture

99. Agriculture is not a flourishing occupation in this village. The tract being a sandy one, the soil is completely devoid of fertility. Vast tracts of waste land are seen around the village quite unfit for any type of cultivation. Palmyra groves abound the entire region. The soil is ideally suited to raising of coconut and there is vast scope for extension of

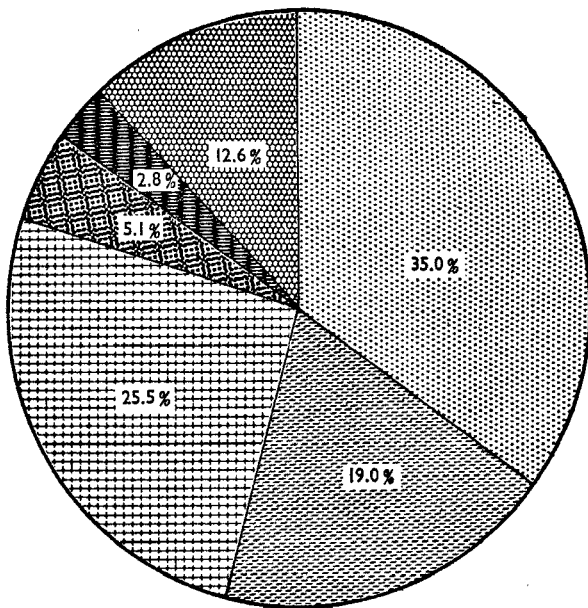
coconut groves. The State Government is also giving aid to coconut growers and the villagers do not, however, evince much enthusiasm. Poramboke lands are assigned to landless persons and Ceylon repatriates for raising coconut under long term lease. Only some persons have come forward to get this aid and grow coconut trees, as the lands are assigned far off the village and further the yield will be got only after ten years or so.

XXV

of households

Business only (15)	Business with					Agricultural labourer only (20)	Agricultural labourer with		Fishing only (23)	Fishing & other occupations (24)	Other occupations (25)	Rent receivers (26)	Dependants (27)
	Fishing (16)	Fishing & Industry (17)	Agricultural labourer (18)	Others (19)	Fishing (21)		Others (22)						
3	...	1	2	...	18	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
...	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
1	1	...	...
...	
...	1	...	...	...	...
...	1	...	...
1	1	...	...	...	...	...
...	2	...	...
...	1	...	...
...	
10	17	1	...	2	...	2	1	79	1	1	3	3	
1	...	1	...	...	2	2	...	12	...	1	...	1
16	17	3	2	2	35	4	2	92	1	10	3	4	

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

 Fishing Agricultural Labour Mat Weaving Cultivation Business Others

Workers

100. The occupational pattern of individual workers is as follows :

Occupation	Males		Females	
	No. of workers	Percentage	No. of workers	Percentage
Cooly fisherman	140	30.5	...	...
Agricultural labourer	140	30.5	17	8.3
Cultivator	78	17.0	3	1.5
Master fisherman	30	6.5	...	...
Business (including tea shop)	18	3.9	21	10.3
Tenant cultivator	9	2.0	2	1.0
Mat weaver	6	1.3	150	73.2
Shepherd	7	1.5	...	...
Teacher	2	0.4	1	0.5
Tailor	2	0.4	...	...
Highways cooly	3	0.6	...	...
Dhoby	2	0.4	1	0.5
Miscellaneous occupations	22	5.0	10	4.7
Total	459	100.0	205	100.0

Among males, agricultural labourers and cooly fishermen are the major occupational groups; 78 persons look after cultivation and nine are tenant cultivators or share-croppers. There are 30 master fishermen (or 'Samatties' as they are usually called), all of them being males. Mat weaving is the chief occupation among female workers; 73 per cent of women workers come under this category. 10.3 per cent carry on some trade or business, and only 8.3 per cent of women workers are agricultural labourers. Only one woman is a teacher and five women are selling idlies or rice cakes. Table No. XXVI shows the occupational structure of workers among the different communities with sex break-up.

TABLE No. XXVI

Workers classified by sex and occupation

Community	Cooly Fisherman		Agricultural labourer		Mat weaving		Cultivator		Master Fisherman	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Maravar	...	...	78	8	4	117	62	...	1	...
Idayar	...	...	15	2	...	1	10	1	...	...
Valayar	...	...	23	5	...	14	...	...	...	...
Vellala	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
Nadar	...	...	4	2	1	4	...	1	...	...
Chakkiliyar	...	...	9	...	1	14	...	...	...	...
Karayar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...
Naidu	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Asari	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Agamudiyar	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	126	...	5	...	...	...	3	...	22	...
Christian	14	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	4	...
Total	140	...	140	17	6	150	78	3	30	...

VILLAGE SURVEY

Table No. XXVI—(Cont.)

Community	Business		Tea shop		Lease cultivator		Shepherd		Tailor	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)
Maravar	4	...	3	...	1	1	4	...	1	...
Idayar	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...
Valayar	...	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	...	...
Vellala	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	...	...
Nadar	2	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Karayar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Asari	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	5	20	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Christian	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	12	21	6	...	9	2	7	...	2	...

Community	Idli selling		Village Official		Highways cooly		Watchman		Panchayat sweeper	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)	(28)	(29)	(30)	(31)
Maravar	...	1	1	...	3	...	3	...	1	...
Idayar
Valayar
Vellala	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	1	...
Chakkiliyar
Karayar
Naidu
Asari
Vannan
Pandithar
Agamudiyar
Brahmin
Pandaram
Semman
Muslim	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Christian
Total	...	5	2	...	3	...	3	...	2	...

TABLE No. XXVI (Contd.)

	Koil Poojari		Sweet making & selling		Teacher		Clerk		Petty Yard Officer		Carpenter		Dhoby		Barber	
	M (32)	F (33)	M (34)	F (35)	M (36)	F (37)	M (38)	F (39)	M (40)	F (41)	M (42)	F (43)	M (44)	F (45)	M (46)	F (47)
Marayar
Idayar
Valayar
Vellala	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar
Karayar
Naidu	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	...
Pandithar	1	...
Agamudiyar
Brahmin
Pandaram
Semman
Muslim	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Christian	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	...	1	...	3	...	2	1	1	...

	Tea shop worker		Inn keeper		Garland maker		Cobbler		Fish net making and repairing		Spinning		Boat-man		Peon	
	M (48)	F (49)	M (50)	F (51)	M (52)	F (53)	M (54)	F (55)	M (56)	F (57)	M (58)	F (59)	M (60)	F (61)	M (62)	F (63)
Marayar
Idayar
Valayar
Vellala
Nadar
Chakkiliyar
Karayar
Naidu
Asari
Vannan
Pandithar
Agamudiyar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	2	...	1	...	1	...	1	...	...
Christian
Total	1	...	1	...	1	...	1	...	2	...	1	...	1	...	1	...

101. In the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani, mat weaving is common in every household and women attend to it in spare hours, thus supplementing the family income. Muslim women seldom go in for jobs like farm labour; they look after petty shops in front of their houses and poorer section among them sell fish in the neighbouring village of Alagan-kulam. Four Muslim women earn some money by preparing and selling sweetmeats or rice cakes. Only among Maravars, women largely go in for mat-weaving, agricultural labour etc. Of the total number

of 150 women workers engaged in mat-weaving, 117 belong to Maravar caste, 14 to Valayar caste, with an equal number from Chakkiliyar caste. Four Nadar women in main hamlet have taken up mat-weaving as their occupation. Maravar women are skilled workers in fields and eight Maravar women are returned as agricultural coolies. Making and repairing of fishing nets is done by Muslim women.

102. The following table classifies the workers by the nature of occupation.

TABLE No. XXVII

Workers classified by sex, community and industry, business and cultivation

Community	Number of workers engaged in										
	Total number of workers			Household industry		Household business		Household cultivation		Other occupations	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Maravar	293	166	127	6	117	7	1	63	1	90	8
Idayar	31	27	4	...	1	...	...	11	1	16	2
Valayar	45	26	19	...	14	...	...	2	...	24	5
Nadar	17	9	8	1	4	2	...	2	1	4	3
Chakkiliyar	26	12	14	1	14	...	...	...	...	11	...
Vellala	9	7	2	...	...	1	1	4	1	2	...
Karayar	3	3	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	4	4	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	2	...
Asari	3	3	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	4	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	1
Pandithar	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...
Agamudiyar	3	3	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Pandaram	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Senman	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	195	167	28	148	3	7	24	4	...	8	1
Christians	26	25	1	18	...	1	1	...	...	6	...
Total	664	459	205	183	153	19	27	87	5	170	20

Cultivators form roughly one-fifth of the workers among males whereas only 2.4 per cent of female workers attend to cultivation. Nine of these cultivators do not own land and they are either share croppers or tenant cultivators.

Household Industry

103. Household industry covers fishing, mat-weaving, carpentry, fish-net making, tailoring etc. The higher percentage of workers found among females is chiefly attributed to the widely prevalent mat weaving in the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani. With the poor yield in the fields, the Marava cultiva-

ting households in this hamlet took up this cottage industry some three years back. This industry provides substantial supplementary means of livelihood to these poor farmers. Housewives make palmyra mats during their spare hours and even children do this work. Men do not take this as their primary work, but a good number of persons had taken up mat weaving as their secondary occupation. Only six men have this job as their primary occupation, while the number of women workers returned primarily as 'mat weavers' is 150. Fishing is exclusively done by males and two women attend to making and repairing of fish nets. Spinning of yarn is found in only one household.

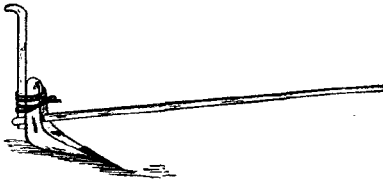
Land utilisation

105. Being a sandy and barren area, large tracts of land are found lying waste in Athangarai. The figures of land utilisation according to the records of the village Karnam will bear testimony to this.

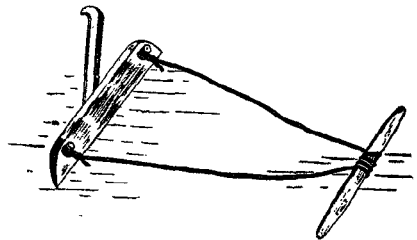
Description	Total extent		Extent under cultivation		Tharisu not under cultivation	
	Acres	Cents	Acres	Cents	Acres	Cents
Patta lands (dry)	1636	56	820	42	816	14
Government assessed waste ('Anatheenam')	99	53	35	28	64	25
Government Poramboke lands	277	14	0	02	277	12
Total	2013	23	855	72	1157	51

The village has no wet lands at all and cultivation by irrigation is quite an unknown phenomenon in Athangarai. The river water is never used for cultivation purposes as the river contains sea water. Of the total area of 2,013.23 acres in the village only 855.72 acres are under cultivation and the rest is lying waste. Even in the patta lands an extent of 816.44 acres is left uncultivated by the cultivators and mostly it is a jungle of 'Odai' trees, a kind of thorny trees. The soil being not fertile and the rainfall uncertain, cultivation becomes unprofitable and the pattadars do not raise any crop; only the fields nearer to the village are under cultivation and only dry crops are grown, the chief among them being Samai, Cumbu, Ragi, Vali and Gingelly. There is no irrigation tank in the village. The farmers use only primitive agricultural implements and adoption of improved tools is not gaining ground among the peasants.

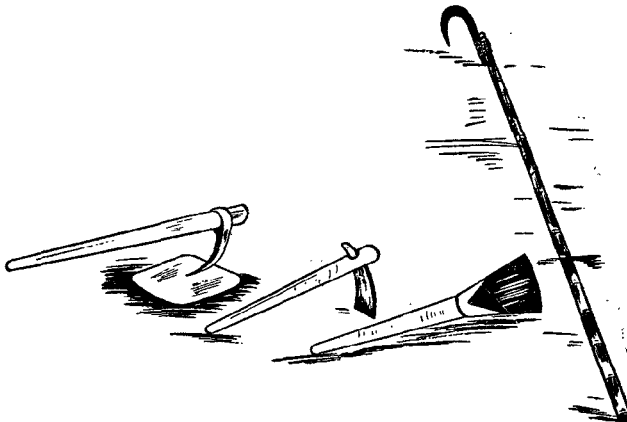
Agricultural Implements



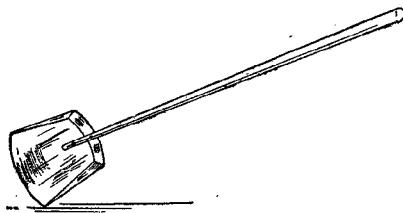
The country plough



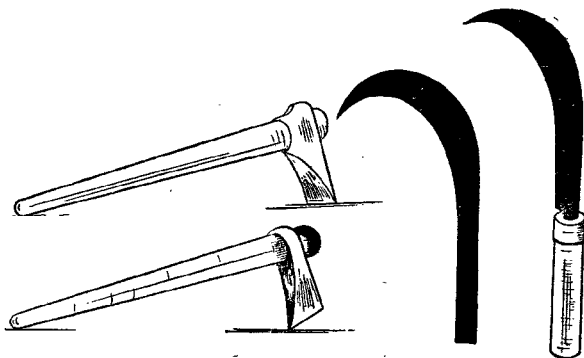
Levelling instrument



Weeding implements and leaf cutter



Another type of levelling instrument



Axes and Bill hooks

Crops

106. Apart from the above dry crops, plantain, coconut, palmyra, betel vine are also raised. Palmyras abound the entire region and very little effort is needed on the part of the peasants. The palmyra comes up as natural growth, spreading by itself; coconuts are raised by the cultivators and the coconut thopes are found on the banks of Vaigai river. This has got much scope in Athangarai, the soil being ideally suited to it. The Government Coconut Nursery is located at Uchipuli, four miles away. The Agriculture Department of State Government is giving aid to coconut growers and so the coconut thopes are slowly on the increase. The Coconut Nursery at Uchipuli raises coconut seedlings which are sold to ryots at

subsidised rates i.e., 0-65 nP. per seedling. They are also giving technical advice to coconut growers. The Agriculture Department is also giving aid to poor landless labourers, Harijans and Ceylon repatriates. Poramboke lands to an extent of five acres each are assigned to those persons for raising coconuts, under long term lease and loans are also given for purposes of fencing, preparing pits, seedlings, manures etc., at various stages of cultivation. An amount of Rs. 30 is also paid each month to meet the expenses and this amount is given for a period of five years. When the coconuts come up for yielding say after ten years, the loan amount will be recovered and finally the lands will be assigned to the persons permanently. Coconuts are also raised by the Athangarai Village Panchayat in a Government poramboke land with 30 seedlings.

107. Samai and gingelly are commonly grown in and around Servaikaran Oorani. Plantains are raised in the main hamlet mostly in 'kitchen gardens' behind the dwellings. Some raise plantains on the outskirts of the village, not very far away. It is cultivated in alternate years, land being left fallows for a period of one year. The plantain of Athangarai is of peculiar variety called 'Monthai', the fruits of which are astonishingly large in size about 8" to 10" length and 4" in circumference. The 'Monthai' plantains of Athangarai are largely sold in Ramanathapuram and nearby villages of this taluk and they are much in demand. Plantains are usually planted in the Tamil month of Chitrai (April-May) or

Adi (July-August) and they stand for a period of 15 to 18 months. After harvest the lands are left barren for six months to one year and only after manuring, the field gets ready for the next planting. The banana when ripe, is a wholesome item of diet and unripe plantains are boiled and taken as vegetables. The leaves serve as eating plates and people use the succulent stem also as an item of diet after boiling the same. It is only the fibre that is not exploited by the ryots.

Cropping pattern

108. The following table shows the extent of land under different crops in Athangarai.

TABLE No. XXIX

Crop Statistics

Extent of land under the different crops (in acres)

Fasli year	Samai	Cumbu	Ragi	Gingelly	Plantain	Paddy	Horsegram (Kanam)	Vail	Kodikkal (Betal vine vegetables etc.)	Chillies	Tobacco	Thopes of Coconut, Palmyra and Odai trees
1367	247.25	167.44	70.49	121.29	24.83	10.17	17.49	11.07	2.66	0.36	...	28.80
1368	349.37	42.97	95.23	49.60	22.11	26.41	1.50	1.00	3.88	0.50	...	32.36
1369	342.15	103.81	177.88	145.47	14.35	8.75	4.30	4.68	4.89	0.57	0.83	47.7
1370	238.17	110.32	190.41	185.50	17.76	21.96	...	24.56	3.13	0.14	0.95	37.54

Paddy is cultivated only to a smaller extent and it is not an irrigated crop but only rained. Rainfall being precarious, paddy cultivation is not

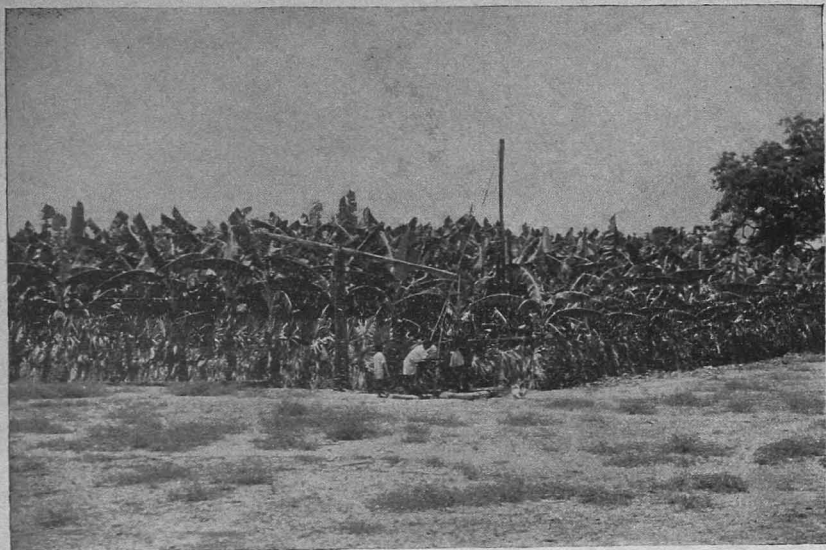
a fruitful farming and growing of commercial crop like gingelly is on the increase and the coconut thopes have sprung up near the sea-shore and the river bank.



A multi - purpose shop



Mat weaving is the chief household industry in Athangarai. Children too attend to this work.



A banana garden

Fertility of soil

109. As already stated the soil is not fertile and the yielding capacity of crops is very low. The 'Taram' of land is assessed as low and the rate of tax for dry lands is mostly Re. 0-56 nP, or

0-37 nP. per acre. Only a very small extent of land are assessed at the rate of Re. 0-81 nP. per acre. The statement showing the extent of lands and assessment for the different fasli years as per the village statistical register is as follows :—

Revenue on Ryotwari holdings

Fasli Year	Dry lands		Wet lands		Water rate	Total assessment	Remission	Miscellaneous Revenue	Cess	Total
	Extent	Assessment	Extent	Assessment						
	Acre. Cent.	Rs. nP.								
1367	1641'02	797'05	...	...	...	797'05	...	8'07	252'23	1057'35 Surcharge 104'74
1368	1641'02	797'05	...	...	...	797'05	...	21'68	251'40	1070'13 Surcharge 106'57
1369	1641'02	797'05	...	...	...	797'05	...	12'70	250'37	1060'12 Surcharge 105'29 Forest 4'75
1370	1636'56	795'40	...	...	...	795'40	...	22'87	260'10	1078'37 Surcharge 106'44 Forest 4'75

The total quantum of agricultural produce of different crops grown in the village is indicated in Table No. XXX.

The entire quantity of paddy and samai is locally consumed and chillies, oil seeds and plantains are largely sold away.

TABLE No. XXX

Quantum of agricultural produce

Description	Paddy	Samai	Ragi	Cumbu	Chillies	Oil seeds	Plantain
Annual quantity produced	470 M. M.†	10 M. M.	2,350 M. M.	2,425 M. M.	371 Viss	645½ M. M.	24,750 Bunches
Total annual quantity consumed by the producing households	470 M. M.	10 M. M.	2,125 M. M.	2,203 M. M.	112½ Viss	258½ M. M.	53,60 Bunches
Total annual quantity available for sale	...	...	225 M. M.	222 M. M.	258½ Viss	387 M. M.	19,390 Bunches

†M. M.—Madras Measures.

Land

110. The ownership of land and tenure of lease among the different communities are well brought out by Table No. XXXI.

Table No. XXXI (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)				
Naidu	3	1	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	
			Land held from private persons	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
			Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			Land given out for lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	3	2	Land owned	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
			Land held from private persons	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			Land given out for lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	...	Land owned	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
			Land held from private persons	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			Land given out for lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	136	102	Land owned	...	...	...	1	3	4	11	4	4	
			Land held from private persons	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
			Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			Land given out for lease	1	1	4	...			
Catholic Paravas	20	18	Land owned	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...
			Land held from private persons	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			Land given out for lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Village Total	357	206	Land owned	...	...	2	7	24	30	31	14	18		
			Land held from private persons	...	...	...	4	2	...	2	1	...	
			Land owned and taken on lease	1	1	1	1	1	2	...			
			Land given out for lease	1	4	4	1			
				Total				2	13	31	31	34	21	19

As many as 206 households are landless, many of them being agricultural coolies working on wages or coolly fishermen. Ten households have given out land for lease. Only 19 holdings are large sized ones with ten acres and above and twenty one holdings are of area of 5 to 10 acres. As many as 46 holdings are small sized ones of one acre or less.

Reciprocal aid

111. Farmers everywhere mutually lend or borrow

agricultural implements, tools and cattle and the farmers of Athangarai are not, however, an exception. At the time of sowing, harvesting etc., every farmer's household assists its neighbours in whatever way they can render their help, in carrying out the agricultural operations. Table No. XXXII indicates the extent of reciprocal aid found among the cultivating households in various agricultural operations.

TABLE No. XXXII

Reciprocal aid in agricultural practices

Community	Number of households practising agriculture	Number of households		
		Borrowing agricultural implements from others at the time of cultivation	Taking help of neighbours at the time of sowing or harvesting	Assisting neighbours and receiving help at the time of cultivation in the shape of manual labour
Maravar	68	58	58	58
Idayar	12	4	6	6
Valayar	2	2	2	2
Nadar	5	2	2	2
Chakkiliyar	1	1	1	1
Vellala	4	2	2	2
Asari	1	...	...	...
Naidu	1	...	...	...
Karayar	2	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	...	...	..
Agamudiyar	...	...	...	..
Vannan	...	...	...	..
Brahmin	...	...	...	..
Pandaram	...	...	...	..
Seemnan	...	...	...	..
Catholic Paravas	...	...	...	...
Muslim	12	10	10	10
Total	110	79	81	81

Abolition of zamindari

112. As stated earlier, the village was under the zamindari of Ramanathapuram for years together and after abolition of zamindari system under the Madras (Estates Abolition and Conversion into Ryotwari) Act 1948, the village was taken over by the Government. The lands were then resurveyed and settlement made as per ryotwari principles. After verification of records and evidences, pattas were issued to individual ryots, confirming the rights of

the farmer on the land. One of the major effects of abolition of zamindari is the reduction of land tax apart from the elimination of middlemen. The land settlement is now based on acreage of land owned and not upon the grains harvested by the farmer. The results of an opinion survey regarding the benefits or harm accrued to the villagers due to the abolition of zamindari are embodied in Table No. XXXIII.

TABLE No. XXXIII

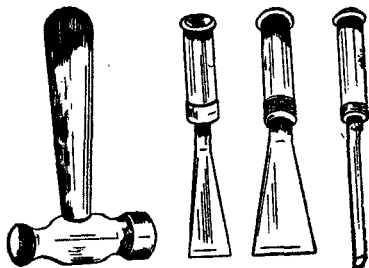
Land reforms

Community	No. of households enquired	No. of households benefited by reduction of land tax due to abolition of zamindari	No. of households harmed by abolition of zamindari	No. of households who are not aware of the abolition of zamindari
Maravar	119	45	...	74
Idayar	19	2	...	17
Valayar	18	...	...	18
Nadar	11	2	...	9
Chakkiliyar	9	...	...	9
Vellala	7	2	...	5
Karayar	3	...	...	3
Naidu	3	...	...	3
Asari	3	...	...	3
Vannan	2	...	...	2
Pandithar	2	1	...	1
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	2
Brahmin	1	...	...	1
Pandaram	1	...	...	1
Semman	1	...	...	1
Muslim	136	23	...	113
Catholic Paravas	20	...	...	20
Total	357	75	...	282

Traditional occupation

113. As stated earlier, fishing is carried on by three communities Hindu Karayars, Muslims and Catholic Paravas; some Hindu castes like Vellalas and Maravars have an aversion towards fishing, as

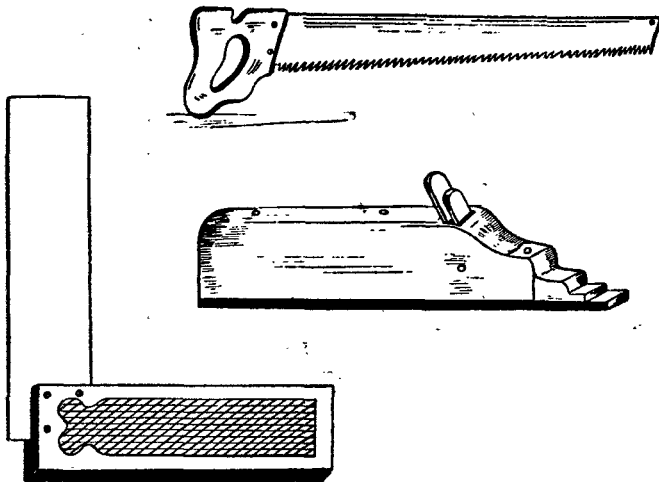
they consider it low to wade into sea water for catching fish. In the village society, each caste from time immemorial is traditionally associated with the practice of a particular occupation. Traditional jobs like sheep-keeping, carpentry or smithy,



Carpenter's tools

washing etc., are assigned to particular communities and the caste occupation is carried on from generation to generation. No deviation is generally observed and no other caste takes up a traditional

job of some other community. A toddy-drawer is always a Nadar or Shanan, a barber is Ambattan, a washerman belongs to Vannan caste and only Kammalans are doing carpentry, blacksmithy etc.



Carpenter's tools

There may be some deviations from these regulations in cities and towns but in villages like Athangarai not so affected by urbanization, it will be few and

far between. The following Table No. XXXIV brings out the features of traditional occupations kept up by the different communities in Athangarai,

TABLE No. XXXIV

Traditional occupation

Caste	Traditional occupation	Total number of households	No. of households following traditional occupation	Households which changed their occupation as					
				Cultivator	Agricultural labourer	Business	Mat-weaving	Teacher	Others
Idayar	Rearing of sheep, cows, etc.	19	1	8	10	...	...	...	...
Nadar	Palmyra tapping	11	1	2	4	2	1	...	1
Asari	Carpentry	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Karayar	Fishing	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	Washing	2	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Pandithar	Barber	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	Leather-work	9	1	...	4	...	4	...	...
Catholic Paravas	Fishing	20	16	...	2	...	...	1	1

Mobility of occupation

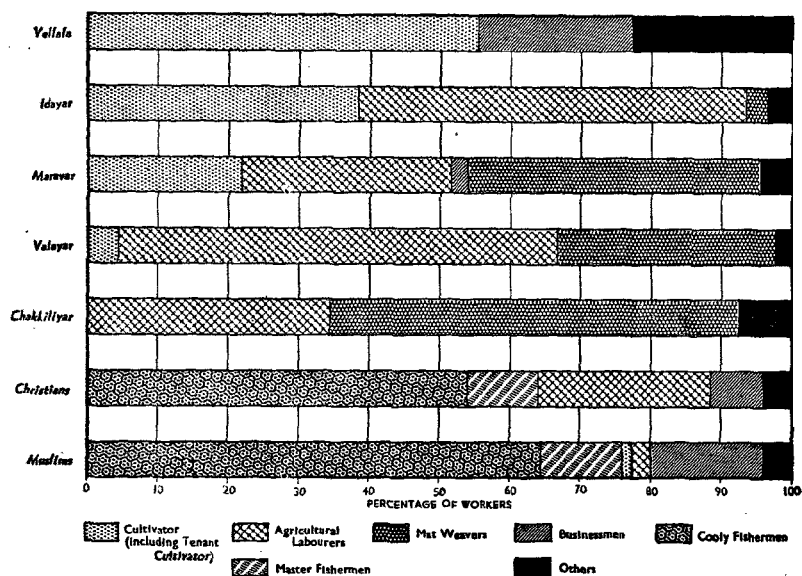
114. From the above details it is seen that there is definitely occupational mobility among some castes from the traditional occupation of the caste. Especially Chakkiliyans never follow their

age-old occupation of making chappals and other leather work and four of them turned as agricultural coolies and four took up mat weaving for their sustenance but only one Chakkiliyan, as a 'Thotti' of the village panchayat, attends street cleaning. Idayars, the traditional shepherds or cowherds had

forsaken their job of rearing cows and sheep and only one family keeps sheep and the others are either cultivators or agricultural labourers; it is said that there was a heavy toll of lives of sheep due to

the epidemics in the past and Idayars were not able to recoup the loss incurred. Of the 20 families of Paravas, the sea-faring community, 16 follow their traditional occupation and two took up agricultural

OCCUPATIONAL DIVERSITY OF MAJOR COMMUNITIES



cooly work and one is a teacher. Only among Kammalans, Pandithars and Karayars, no such deviation is found. One member from Vannan community has taken up teacher's profession.

Change of occupation

115. Table No. XXXV brings out the change of occupation by the heads of households from their father's occupation in regard to all communities.

TABLE No. XXXV

Occupational mobility

Community	Total No. of households	Number of households who changed their father's occupation	Details of mobility		
			Father's Occupation	Head's present occupation	Cause of change
Maravay	119	1	Cooly fisherman	Shepherd	Fishing is strenuous
		1	Cultivation	Master fisherman	Cultivation is uneconomic
		2	"	Watchman	"
		1	Agricultural labourer	Sweeper	To earn more
		1	Cultivation	Mat weaving	Cultivation is uneconomic
Idayar	19	1	"	Highways cooly	"
		1	"	Agricultural labourer	Barren land
		2	Shepherd	Cultivation	Death of cattle due to epidemics
Valayar	18	1	Shepherd	Lease cultivation	"
		1	Cultivation	"	Poverty
Nadar	11	1	"	Teacher	Cultivation is uneconomic
		1	Tapping	Business	} Due to prohibition
		1	"	Lease cultivation	
		2	"	Agricultural labourer	
Chakkiliyar	9	1	"	Mat-weaving	} Mat weaving is gainful
		1	Agricultural labourer	"	
Vellala	7	1	Cultivation	Religious worker	No land
Naidu	3	1	Village Official	Petty Yard Officer	Present occupation is remunerative
		1	Petty Yard Officer	Tailor	Tailoring is gainful
Agamudiyar	2	1	Agricultural labourer	Tea-shop	Tea shop is gainful
Pandithar	2	1	Barber	Cultivation	No male member to maintain family
Vannan	2	1	Dhoby	Teacher	Teacher's job is gainful
Brahmin	1	1	Cultivation	Inn-keeper	Poverty
Muslim	136	1	Cooly fisherman	Lease cultivation	Present occupation is gainful
		1	"	Boatman	"
		1	"	Sweetmeat selling	"
		1	Cultivation	Spinning	No male member to manage cultivation
		1	"	Cooly fisherman	Indebtedness and mortgage of lands
		1	Village Official	Master fisherman	Unqualified as he is illiterate
		1	Cooly fisherman	Selling fish	Old age
		1	Landlord	Provision stores	Lost the land
		1	Cooly fisherman	Selling vegetables	Due to father's death
		3	"	Selling rice cakes	No male member in the family
Catholic Paravas	20	1	Village Official	Rent receiver	Land given out for lease
		1	Master fisherman	"	Aversion to fishing
		2	Cooly fisherman	} Supported by others	} Old age
		1	Agricultural labourer		
		1	Cultivation	Teacher	Teacher's job is gainful
		1	Fishing cooly	Begging	Poverty and old age

The tract being not fertile, cultivation turns unfruitful and it is but natural that people gave up cultivation in preference to some occupations like mat weaving, teacher, fishing etc. Among the Maravar cultivators, one person took up mat weaving, three left cultivation in preference to some jobs like Highways cooly, watchman in the neighbouring aerodrome and one turned as master fisherman and he owns nets and engages cooly

workers for fishing work. Maravars and other Hindu castes consider cooly fishing work as a low occupation, but to be a master fisherman the question of social prestige does not arise. One Valayar cultivator became a lease cultivator, forced by circumstances as he lost the landed property inherited from his father. Among Nadars, change of occupation from tapping to agricultural labour, mat weaving etc., was effected because of prohibition.

TABLE

Nature of change of occupation from

Occupation	Total No. of persons in the occupation (Heads of household)	No. of persons whose father's occupation was									
		Same occupation	Cultivation	Agricultural labourer	Cooly fisherman	Shepherd	Village Official	Barber	Tapping	Dhoby	Master fisherman
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Cooly fisherman	96	95	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Agricultural labourer	91	88	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
Cultivation	59	56	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	...	...
Master fisherman	29	27	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Business	18	14	...	...	2	...	1	...	1	...	...
Mat weaving	10	7	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Lease cultivation	9	5	1	...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...
Rice cakes making and selling	5	2	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tea shop	4	3	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Teacher	3	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Carpenter	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Watchman	3	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Village Official	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Religious worker	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Highways cooly	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sweetmeats making	2	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Panchayat sweeper	2	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Inn keeper	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Shepherd	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Petty Yard Officer	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Boatman	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Spinning	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tailor	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cobbler	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Garland making	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Barber	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dhoby	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dependants including rent receivers	7	1	...	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
Total	357	312	14	5	11	3	3	1	5	1	2

Among Muslims, only one person had forsaken the occupation of fishing in preference to lease cultivation as he felt that the latter one is a gainful job, and another case is just the reverse where the son of a cultivator turned as a cooly fisherman. The general trend among Muslims is to stick to fishing for generations, save a few exceptions who took up odd jobs like preparing and selling sweetmeats, spinning, selling fish, vegetables etc.

Aspirations

116. The son of a fisherman becomes a fisherman and never he aspires for better employment. Among the three sea-faring communities Muslims, Paravas and Karayars, the fishing occupation is carried on from generation to generation. From Table No. XXXVI, it is seen clearly that of all the 96 cooly fishermen families, the family occupation in 95 families was the same in the previous generation

No. XXXVI

father's generation to present generation

Number of persons who want their sons to be

Same occupation	Cultivator	Agricultural labourer	Teacher	Advocate	Business	Clerk	Peon	Master fisherman	Teacher or Businessman	Cooly fisherman	Mat weaving	Tea shop	No aim	No son
(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)
25	1	...	4	5	1	2	...	...	...	1	41	16
27	4	...	1	...	2	5	...	...	...	...	1	...	38	13
13	...	2	...	...	2	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	28	5
8	5	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	3
1	1	...	...	...	...	3	...	2	...	...	...	...	8	3
...	...	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	1
...	4	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	1
...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	1
...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	2	...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...
...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
1	1
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
...	1	1
...	1
...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
76	10	5	2	1	18	37	1	4	1	1	1	1	144	54

also viz., fishing and in only one case, the father of the head of household was a cultivator. A son of a fisherman continues to be a fisherman and he never thinks of taking up better jobs elsewhere. The fisherman is steeped in debt, his master fisherman being the chief creditor, and frequently, the son of a fisherman after his death inherits the debts, besides property (if any) and in order to clear off debts, he is bound to serve as a cooly fisherman under the same master and thus the cycle goes on. Being illiterate and ignorant, fishermen are fully in dark about the outside world and not even they have aspirations to get out of this occupation. According to the present enquiry, 25 persons out of 96 cooly fishermen expressed their desire that their sons to follow the same occupation and 41 persons did not have any aim at all, when they were asked the question "What kind of work would he like his son to do?". Just like this, three carpenter families of Kammalan caste are carpenters for generations together and so is the case with Vannans and Ambattans. Among the Shanans, the toddy tappers, a definite shift in occupation has occurred, where due to prohibition people have taken up different occupations like business, agricultural cooly work, mat weaving etc. But for prohibition, this would not have occurred.

Fishing

117. Sea-fishing is the chief economic activity in Athangarai and in the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani river-fishing is practised by a few persons, only in some seasons. The three sea-faring communities Muslims, Paravas and Karayars live in the main hamlet and for generations together they wade into sea-water for fishing and they know no other occupations. The terms *Karayar* and *Paravar* themselves imply their traditional occupation of sea-fishing. The main fishing season is January to September, as is the case in other fishing villages in Palk Bay. During the rainy months, fish catch is dull due to incessant rains. In case there is a lull, at times, in the North East Monsoon, a fair catch is expected. In the Gulf of Manaar (or South sea as is commonly called by the local fishermen) busy fishing is from January to March. The Palk Bay is generally known as 'North Sea'. The seasons, types of fish etc., vary to a marked degree between these two seas.

Fishing technique

118. Usually, fishermen go out for fishing in the early hours of the morning, well before the rim of

the sun appears on the horizon above the edge of the water. All the morning they fish and return in the afternoon. Only when there is a good catch they remain till sun-set. In rainy seasons, when the rain is beating down on the water and the waves are tossing their light canoes, fishermen do not venture to go into sea. 'Kattamarans' are not used by these fishermen. Small canoes or 'Vathai' (as they call it in vernacular) are in use. The fishing craft and tackle used by them are primitive and inefficient. They are still continuing with the traditional country boats and the age-old 'Karavalai' or shore seine nets.

Deep sea fishing

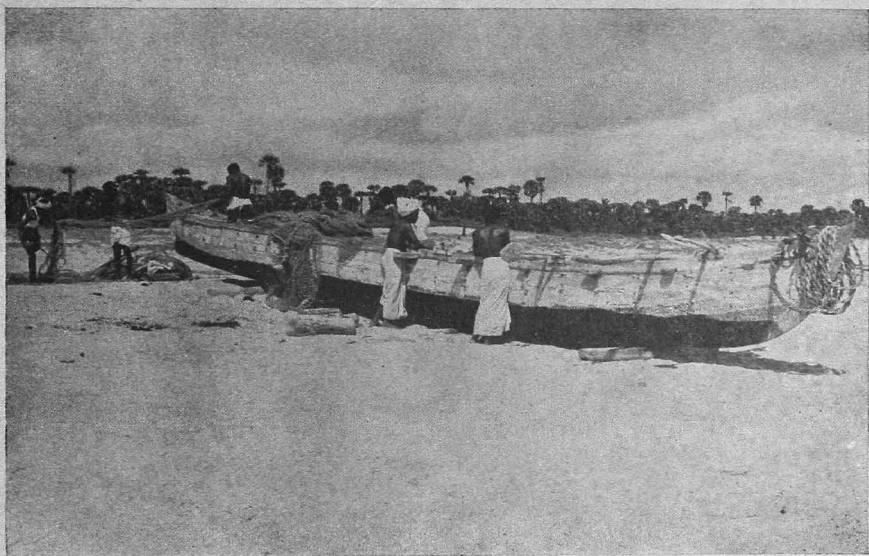
119. From times immemorial, fishermen of Athangarai carry on inshore-fishing and deep-sea fishing is not practised. No other type of net except 'Karavalai' is known to them. Only in recent years, some Catholic Paravas have brought some deep-sea nets from their fellow men in other places and deep-sea fishing is done by two or three Paravas only. Muslim fishermen and Karayars never go in for deep-sea fishing, nor do they evince any interest in it. In the nearby fishing centres of Mandapam, Rameswaram etc., where fishery development is going on, interior sea fishing with modern fishing gear and nylon net has come to stay. But the poor fisherfolk of Athangarai do not take a keen and intelligent interest in new methods of fishing. The importance and utility of deep-sea fishing with propeller-driven vessels and launches and improved nettings are not fully realised; even if some realise the fact, nobody dares to come forward to take up modern methods of fishing, due to paucity of money and lack of enterprising nature. People do not respond much to various measures taken by the Government in modernising the industry; only two persons have been sent for training in modern fishing methods organised by the Fisheries Department. Nobody has so far come forward to get loan from the Government for the purchase of propeller driven boats.

Middlemen

120. Fishing industry is not properly organised; the entire industry is in the hands of some rich Samatties or master fishermen. They are the owners of boats and nets. Each Samatty employs 20 to 30 cooly fishermen, who do the actual fishing work. These fishermen are generally indebted to their Samatties and so they are not the masters of their catch. The entire catch goes to the Samatty



Deep-sea fishing—A boat is returning from the sea.



Preparations for in-shore fishing



A poor catch from the traditional Karavalai



Smiling at a good catch! The fish is caught in the *Modi* or bag of the Karavalai.

who pays the coolies in cash and kind. Wages are paid according to the ability of the individual coolies, and on the basis of catch. Somehow the wages are too meagre considering the strenuous work done by the coolies. Each cooly fisherman gets an amount ranging from 25 to 50 naye paise for a day's hard labour.

Inshore fishing

121. The inshore fishing requires only a small canoe, measuring 20' to 25' and a Karavalai or net. The net is placed inside the canoe and they set out into the sea. They leave one end of the Karavalai on the shore, while leaving and they sail upto a distance of say one to one and a half miles from the shore. They locate the fish shoals; by experience they know to fix the place of concentration of fishes and they spread the different parts of the net one by one thus encircling the shoals. They sail back to the shore thus trapping the fish-shoals and as soon as the canoe reaches the shore, the other end of the net is dragged. About 20 to 30 men are employed for dragging the nets, approximately 10 to 15 persons on each side. While the net is dragged towards the sea-shore, the fishes are caught in the 'Madi' or bag of the Karavalai and a fisherman follows the net, wading into water, thus guiding the above operations.

Fishing net

122. The common gear employed by the fishermen of Athangarai and nearby coastal villages is the shore-seine net or Karavalai in Tamil. This is a special type of net used for inshore fishing only, as the name *Karavalai* itself indicates. This is a large hemp net consisting of several parts such as Madi, Marukku, Thattu and coir ropes at the end. The main part is the Madi or bag of cotton (of $\frac{1}{4}$ " mesh), 18 fathoms in circumference (1 fathom equals 6 feet). It is seven fathoms deep from the mouth to the bunt. Next to this bag on either side are laced the 'wing' pieces which are also of cotton, 9 fathoms high and 15 fathoms long, made of $\frac{3}{8}$ " mesh. Next to this cotton wing piece on either side are joined six portions of coir wings, the size of mesh increasing progressively from 6' to 90" from the centre towards the free end. To this is attached the warp, coils of coir rope of each 60 fathoms long and one inch thick. These series of wings serve to check fishes from escaping from the main bag (Madi). The different parts of the above mentioned wings are as follows:—

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| (i) Thattu | (iv) Muppadayan |
| (ii) Ambadayan | (v) Kadaikanni |
| (iii) Nappadayan | (vi) Thalavalai (Kosa) |

The length of the wings also increases as the mesh size increases from the Thattu towards Thalavalai. The ropes attached at the end with Kosa on both sides may vary from one net to another and they serve for dragging this huge net with fish catch towards the sea-shore.

The cost of a Karavalai is so high that only rich persons can afford to have; approximate cost of one set of Karavalai ranges from Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000 and one small canoe or boat costs roughly Rs. 2,500. The details of cost of material with labour charges are given below:

	Approximate cost (Rupees)
1. Boat	2,500
2. Madi & Marukku	1,000
3. Wings	1,500
4. Coils of ropes, warp etc.,	1,500
5. Floats and accessories	200
Total	<u>6,700</u>

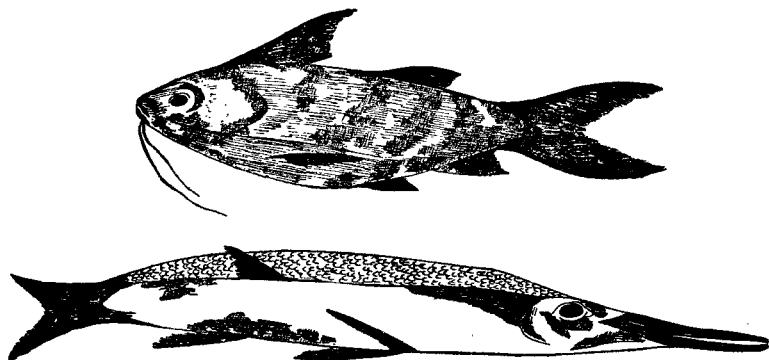
Boats are made in Thondi, a fishing centre in Tiruvadanai taluk. The net is made of cotton thread only and usually threads of 20 counts are used. Nylon threads are useful only for deep-sea fishing nets.

Types of fishes

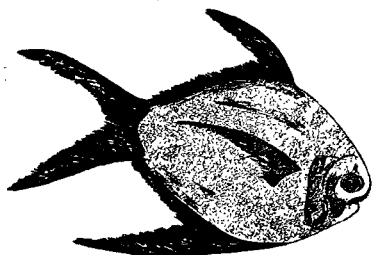
123. The type of fish for Karavalai varies from the type of deep sea fishes, as fishing is done only near the shore; fishes like Pomfrets, Mackerel, Seer, Sardines, Dussameria, Rays, Silver Bellies, crabs etc., are common in this sea. Fish is mostly sold in the form of dried fish. As the fish is easily perishable, only a small portion is sold in fresh conditions and a major part is dried up. Small fishes like Sudai (Sardines), Karal., are cured by drying on sand on the sea-shore in the hot sun for two or three days. Other types of fish are cured with salt, which can be stored for a few months. The Government Fish Curing Yard in Athangarai supplies white powder salt to the 'fishermen ticket holders' at subsidised rates. This yard is situated just close to the sea-shore, a furlong west of the Rajah's Choultry and it dates back to 1884 or prior to that year. One Petty Yard Officer of the State Fisheries Department is in charge of this yard.

It is said that this land was given by a former Zamindar of Ramnad to the ticket holders *gratis*, but some say that the land was purchased from the general fund. Anyway this is one of the oldest fish curing yards in the east coast and its service is well utilised by the

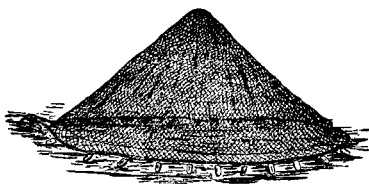
fishermen. The price of salt in open market is high and so fishermen prefer to buy their requirements in this yard. Though all the fishermen are not the ticket holders, those not having tickets or permits get salt from these people,



Common types of fishes (1) Cat fish (2) Valiya Muran



Pomphret, a common variety of fish



Nylon net used for deep sea fishing

Handicaps

124. For want of proper storage facilities, marketing of fish is not done in a proper way. The importance of good storage facilities is recognised by the fisherfolk, in view of the extremely perishable nature of this commodity. The handicaps of climatic forces can be overcome with cold storage

method. Now for want of quick transport and cold storage facilities, only a smaller portion of total landings are marketed in fresh conditions, and they cannot send fish in good condition to the consuming centres. This colossal wastage of fresh fish can be avoided, if proper storage and quicker transport are arranged. At present a private person is running



The Government Fish Curing Yard at Athangarai



Curing of fish. Fishes are cured with salt and the salted fishes can be stored for a few months.



The fishermen sell fresh fishes to the traders, who take them to interior markets.



Repairing of fishing nets by fishermen on the sea-shore.

an ice plant in Uchipuli, four miles away, which is the chief fish marketing centre. Fishes caught in Athangarai are generally carried to interior markets such as Ramanathapuram, Paramakudi etc., on cycles. It is a common sight that cyclist traders flock to the sea-shore of Athangarai from the neighbouring places daily in the morning and carry fish to different parts of this region. However, this is a slow and tedious process and more often fishes get spoiled. If vans provided with ice storage are employed, it will be profitable. There was a suggestion that fishermen can form a co-operative marketing organisation with sound financial stability so that they can purchase their own vans to carry fish catches to interior markets in fresh form but the problem is the lack of finance, and co-operation among the master fishermen. No Government vehicles or lorries are operating at present from Athangarai or nearby villages.

Yarn

125. Fishermen experience some difficulty in making nets; they do not get sufficient yarn for making and repairing nets in the proper seasons. Yarn was supplied through Co-operative Society at subsidised rates and this was not quite adequate. Net made of a special type of yarn known as 'A' variety twisted yarn of 20 counts is said to improve the fish catch, but there is always the complaint among fishermen that this yarn is not always available to all bonafide fishermen. Fishing implements like floats, anchor chains and tarpaulins are also badly needed by them.

Co-operative Society

126. A Fishermen Co-operative Society is functioning in Athangarai from 8th April 1952. There are 35 members in the society and all are master fishermen. The paid-up share capital is Rs. 1,285 and the total value of assets is estimated at Rs. 8,069. The names of the Panchayatadars, at the time of our survey were Janab K. A. Ibrahim, S. Majceth, K. P. K. Ibramsha Marakkayar, Savoora Marakkayar and P. Seeni Mithar. Though the Paravas are also members, they do not command any influence, as they form only a small minority. The entire organisation is under the influence of these Muslim Samatties. Loans have been given to 22 members, and a total amount of

Rs. 11,000 was distributed to these persons at the rate of Rs. 500 per member. However, the activities of the Co-operative Society are not satisfactory and there is always the complaint among the fishermen that it is practically dormant. Table No. XXXVII indicates the communities to which members of the Fishermen Co-operative Society belong.

TABLE No. XXXVII

Co-operative Society

Community	Total number of households	Number of members belonging to Fishermen Co-operative Society
Vellala	7	1
Karayar	3	2
Muslim	136	27
Catholic Paravas	20	2
Other communities	191	...
Total	357	32

Cattle wealth

127. Livestock supplies the major labour force in agricultural operations. In Athangarai, however, the cultivation is not flourishing, the tract being sandy and naturally people do not take care of their cattle. Nobody seems to have an idea of getting improved type of bulls from the Government-aided programme of supplying good variety of cattle. With no good scope in farming, it is but natural, cattle is not receiving adequate attention of peasants. The cattle in Athangarai have no grazing facilities and only far away from the village, some green shrubs and grass are available for the cattle to graze on. The village had a bovine population of only 72,59 being cows and bulls and 13 buffaloes, according to the livestock census of 1961. This represents a very low cattle population, as compared to the number of cultivating households in Athangarai. The Livestock Statistics according to 1961 Livestock Census are given in the following statement which includes poultry also.

Bovines

	Total number		Total number
Bulls	26	He-buffaloes	6
Cows	33	She-buffaloes	7
	59		13

Sheep & Goats

	Total number		Total number
Sheep	58	Cock	6
Goats	113	Hen	47
	171	Chicken	54
			107

Poultry

The traditional shepherd community of Idayars no longer follows the hereditary occupation and only eight families rear sheep; cows are found only in four households. Cattle disease was once prevalent and a heavy toll of deaths occurred. Since then, the shepherds hesitate to bring up sheep or goats and they prefer to go in for agricultural coolly work on wages. Even the Marava cultivators do not have enough bulls and bullocks for agricultural purposes. Cattle are few among the households of Asari, Karayar, Pandaram and Semman. Among the sea-faring caste of Paravas, only one household possesses two cows and four households own sheep. Poultry is kept in 106 households out of 357 households and of these 106, 51 households belong to Maravars, 31 to Muslims, five to Nadars and six to Idayars. Four households each among Valayar, and Vellala are having poultry. No improved variety of poultry is found in Athangarai and Block activities in this direction are not receiving much enthusiasm from the villagers. The complaint of the Gramasevak is always there that the villagers being very poor and backward do not come forward to receive the Block aid to breed

Possession of cattle

128. Table No. XXXVIII gives the particulars of households possessing the cattle and poultry in respect of various communities.

TABLE No. XXXVIII**Livestock statistics**

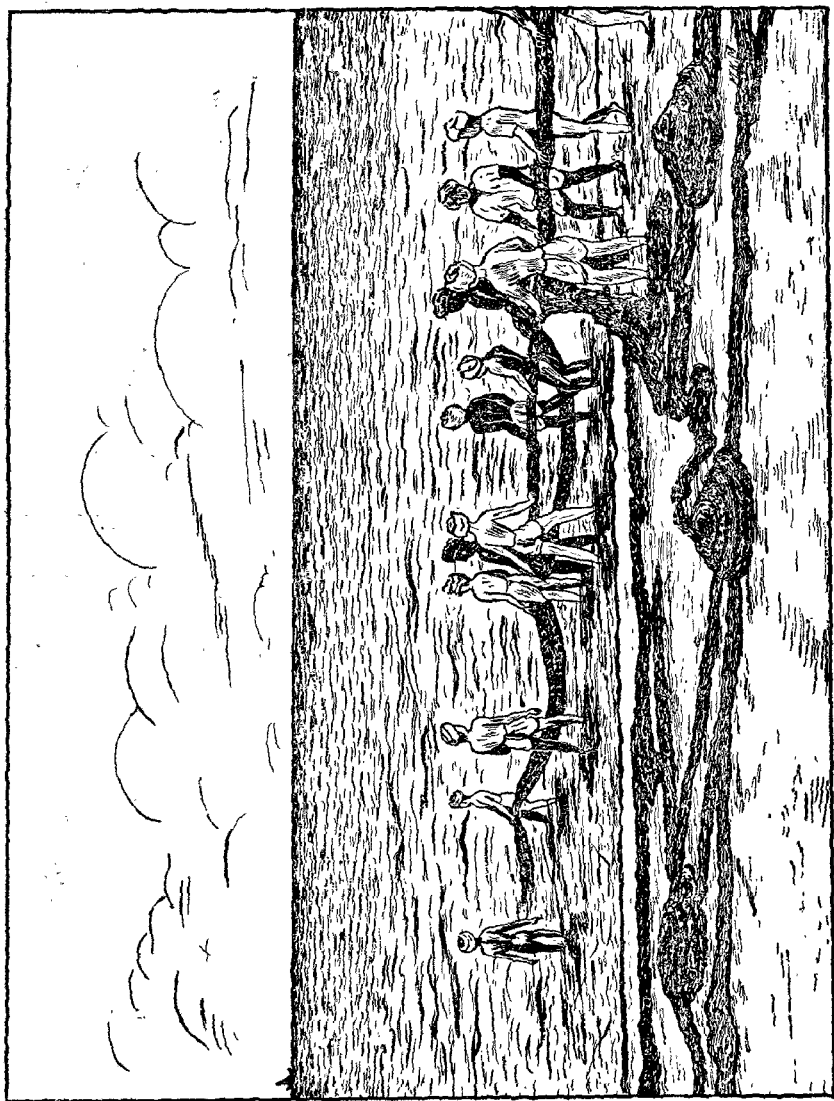
Community	Milch cattle		Cows		Buffaloes		Calves		Draught Bullocks		Goat/sheep		Poultry	
	Households owning	Total number	Households owning	Total number	Households owning	Total number	Households owning	Total number	Households owning	Total number	Households owning	Total number	Households owning	Total number
Maravar	4	7	20	36	16	32	2	3	20	38	20	78	51	95
Idayar	3	4	4	5	...	...	...	...	4	10	8	43	6	10
Valayar	...	...	2	4	1	1	...	...	...	...	2	3	4	9
Nadar	...	...	3	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	5	11
Chakkiliyar	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	5	1	1
Vellala	1	6	2	3	2	3	1	3	...	...	3	3	4	8
Karayar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
Asari	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
Naidu	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	5	...	...
Agamudiyar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Vannan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	18
Brahmin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Catholic Paravas	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	5	2	3
Muslim	1	2	9	40	...	...	4	15	...	...	31	115	31	62
Total	9	19	42	95	19	36	7	21	24	48	77	260	106	218



A group of fishermen

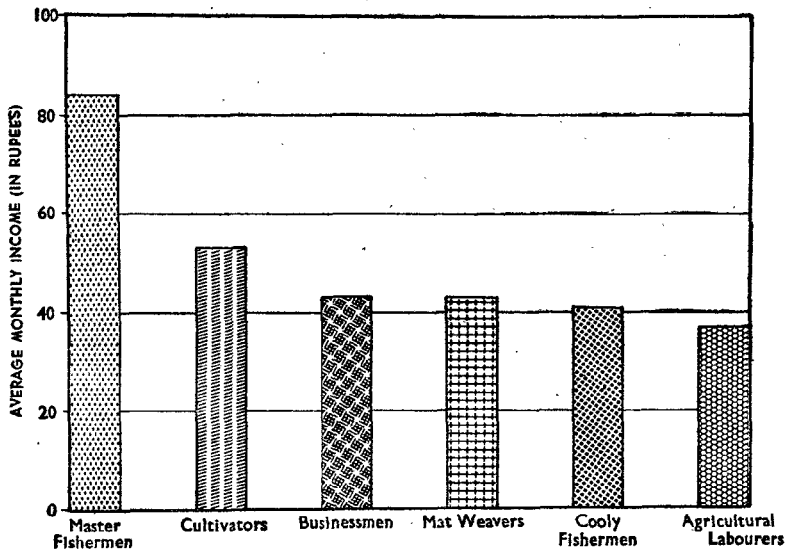


Muslims on a Friday. They attend to some odd jobs like repairing nets.



Inshore Fishing

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL CLASSES



improved cattle or poultry. There is no cattle pound in the village. The nearest Veterinary First Aid Centre is at Uchipuli, four miles away, but the villagers of Athangarai do not come forward to utilise this assistance. The Veterinary Hospital is located at Ramathapuram. The common cattle disease affected the goats is 'Anthrax' and there was a heavy toll of death of goats and sheep about ten years ago. Preventive treatment is not generally taken for the cattle and the people are not interested in getting their cattle injected as a preventive measure.

Income levels

129. Occupational diversity is fully reflected in the income levels of the villagers. The incomes of the rich boat owners, the cooly fishermen, cultivators lease cultivators, agricultural labourers and other

non-agricultural classes will be seen from the table below:—

Major occupation	Total households	No. of households according to income range (Rupees per month)				
		25 or less	26-50	51-75	76-100	101 & over
Master fisherman	29	...	1	9	12	7
Cooly fisherman	96	4	80	10	1	1
Cultivator	59	1	29	21	6	2
Agricultural labourer	91	9	74	8	...	...
Business	18	2	13	...	3	...
Mat weaving	10	1	6	3	...	...
Lease cultivation	9	2	6	1	...	...

A vast majority of cooly fishermen earn a meagre amount between Rs. 25 and Rs. 50 in a month, while among master fishermen owning fishing nets and boats, as many as 19 out of 29 households earn more than Rs. 75, of which seven households come under the income bracket of Rs. 100 and more. But on the contrary, four cooly fishermen earn less than Rs. 25 in a month, 80 getting an income ranging from Rs. 26 to Rs. 50 and only 12 households derive an income exceeding Rs. 50, of which 10 households getting an income between Rs. 51 to 75. Just like the above comparison, the income ranges of the cultivators and landless labourers will be worth study; of the 59 cultivators, only one derives an income of Rs. 25 or less, 29 getting an amount ranging from Rs. 26 to Rs. 50 and the number of households earning more than Rs. 50 is 29. But among agricultural labourers, as many as 74 households out of 91 households come under the income range of Rs. 26-50 and only eight households are in a position to earn above Rs. 50 in a month. The income levels of the lease cultivators are also not bright, as will be seen from the figures shown above. Among businessmen, most of them own shops, some selling fish and of the 18 households carrying on business, two households are earning an amount of Rs. 25 or less and 13 households come under the income group Rs. 26-50. Only three of them are having a monthly income ranging from Rs. 76 to 100. There are 10 families depending on mat weaving as their chief source of family income of Rs. 50 or less and only three of them derive an income greater than Rs. 50 but less than Rs. 75. The disparity in the per capita incomes of the different occupational classes will be clear from the table below.

Occupation	Total No. of workers	Total income	Per capita monthly income
		Rs. nP.	Rs. nP.
Master fisherman	30	2,149.00	71.63
Cooly fisherman	140	3,606.00	25.76
Cultivator	81	2,485.00	30.68
Agricultural labourer	157	3,043.50	19.39
Lease cultivator	11	275.00	25.00
Business	33	758.00	22.97
Mat weaving	156	1,005.50	6.45

A cooly fisherman, on an average gets only Rs. 25-76 per month, while the per capita income of a master fisherman works out to Rs. 71.63, The average income of a mat weaver is as low as Rs. 6.45.

Income-A community-wise study

130. The relative economic levels of the different ethnic groups can be gauged from the distribution of incomes of families. Table No. XXXIX sets out the income classification of different communities. Valayans are the poorest class in the village and of 18 families of them, four families get only Rs. 25 or less in a month and as many as 12 families just earn an amount ranging from Rs. 26 to Rs. 50. Only Muslims and Maravars are economically better and nine families of Muslims and three Maravar families are earning Rs. 100 or more and in any other community not even a single household comes under this income range. Though a large number of Muslim families are cooly fishermen, yet quite a few master fishermen among them command the entire fishing industry and their income levels are high and as many as 41 households out of 136 earn an amount of Rs. 50 or more in a month. Out of 119 Maravar households, 34 households come under the income group of more than Rs. 50 and 85 households earn only Rs. 50 or less. The Catholic Parava fishermen are not in anyway better off; of the 19 households, one household earns Rs. 25 or less, 12 come under the income range Rs. 26-50 and four households get a monthly income of Rs. 76 to Rs. 100. The income of Nadars, the traditional toddy drawers is also meagre; of the 11 families, only three families derive a monthly income exceeding Rs. 50 and they had changed their traditional occupation and taken up small trade. The servicing communities, Asari, Barber, Dhoby etc., derive only an income below Rs 50 and one Vannan household shown under the income group Rs. 76-100 is a teacher migrated from another village and he is not carrying on the traditional occupation. The only one Brahmin family gets only meagre income and he is the 'Kamastar' or care-taker of the choultry, who is not a native of this village.

TABLE No. XXXIX

Monthly income of household by occupations and communities

Community	Household occupation	Number of households	Number of households according to monthly income (in Rupees)				
			25 or less	26—50	51—75	76—100	101 & over
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Maravar	Thalayari	1	...	...	...	1	...
	Tea shop	2	...	2	...	...	...
	Business	3	...	3	...	...	...
	Lease cultivation	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Cultivation	45	1	23	16	5	...
	Shepherd	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Agricultural labourer	53	5	45	3	...	...
	Master fishermen	1	...	...	...	...	1
	Preparing and selling rice cakes	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Mat weaving	5	...	3	2	...	...
	General cooly	2	...	1	1	...	...
Watchman	3	...	...	...	1	2	
D.D.T. worker	1	...	...	1	...	...
Total		119	6	79	24	7	3
Idayar	Cultivation	8	...	3	4	1	...
	Lease cultivation	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Agricultural labourer	10	1	8	1	...	...
Total		19	1	12	5	1	...
Valayar	Lease cultivation	2	1	1	...	...	...
	Agricultural labourer	16	3	11	2	...	...
	Total	18	4	12	2	...	...
Nadar	Teacher	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Business	2	...	1	...	1	...
	Lease cultivation	2	1	1	...	...	...
	Agricultural labourer	5	...	5	...	...	...
	Mat weaving	1	...	...	1	...	...
Total		11	1	7	2	1	...
Chakkiliyar	Agricultural labourer	4	...	2	2	...	...
	Mat weaving	4	1	3	...	...	...
	Panchayat sweeper	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Total	9	1	6	2	...	...
Vellala	Temple priest	1	1	...	...	...	...
	Village Official	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Cultivation	1	...	...	1	...	...

Table No. XXXIX (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Vellala	Lease cultivation	2	...	2	...	...	...
(Contd.)	Preparing and selling rice cakes	1	1	...	...	...	...
	Preparing and selling sweetmeats	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Total	7	2	3	2	...	...
Asari	Carpenter	3	...	3	...	...	...
Karayar	Master fishermen	3	...	1	1	1	...
Naidu	Cultivation	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Petty Yard Officer	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Tailor	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Total	3	...	1	2	...	...
Pandithar	Cultivation	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Barber	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Total	2	...	1	1	...	...
Vannan	Teacher	1	...	...	...	1	...
	Dhoby	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Total	2	...	1	...	1	...
Agamudiyar	Tea shop	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Agricultural labourer	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Total	2	...	2	...	...	...
Brahmin	Choultry keeper	1	...	1	...	...	...
Pandaram	Garland making	1	...	1	...	...	...
Semman	Cobbler	1	...	1	...	...	...
Muslim	Priest	1	1	...	...	...	...
	Tea-shop	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Business	12	2	8	...	2	...
	Cultivation	3	...	1	...	...	2
	Lease cultivation	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Cooly fishermen	84	3	69	10	1	1
	Master fishermen	22	...	...	8	8	6
	Boatman	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Spinning	1	1	...	...	...	...
	Preparing and selling sweetmeats	1	1	...	...	...	...
	Preparing and selling rice cakes	3	1	2	...	...	...
	Dependants	6	3	2	1	...	...
	Total	136	12	83	21	11	9

Table No. XXXIX (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Catholic							
Paravas	Teacher	1	...	...	...	1	...
	Business	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Agricultural labourer	2	...	2	...	...	...
	Cooly fishermen	12	1	11	...	...	...
	Master fishermen	3	...	...	...	3	...
	Dependant (Beggar)	1	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	20	1	14	...	4	...
Village	Priest	2	2	...	...	...	...
Total	Teacher	3	...	...	1	2	...
	Village Official	2	...	...	1	1	...
	Tea shop	4	...	3	1	...	...
	Choultry keeper	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Business	18	2	13	...	3	...
	Cultivation	59	1	29	21	6	2
	Lease cultivation	9	2	6	1	...	...
	Shepherd	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Agricultural labourer	91	9	74	8	...	...
	Cooly fishermen	96	4	80	10	1	1
	Master fishermen	29	...	1	9	12	7
	Boatman	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Cobbler	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Tailor	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Petty Yard Officer	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Spinning	1	1	...	...	...	...
	Carpenter	3	...	3	...	...	...
	Highways cooly	2	...	1	1	...	...
	Sweetmeats making and selling	2	1	1	...	...	...
	Rice cake making and selling	5	2	3	...	...	...
	Mat weaving	10	1	6	3	...	...
	Garland making	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Watchman	3	...	...	...	1	2
	D. D. T. worker	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Panchayat sweeper	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Barber	1	...	...	1	...	...
	Dhoby	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Dependants	6	3	2	1	...	...
Total		*356	28	228	62	26	12

* One household has no income

Expenditure pattern

131. The study of income levels of the villagers naturally leads to an analysis of the pattern of expenditure. Table No. XL clearly indicates the average expenditure on various items of food clothing, fuel, education, medical, travelling, religious expenses etc., incurred by the households. Taking all the occupational groups together, the average expenditure per household comes to Rs. 46.61 nP. in a month and naturally this varies with the different income levels. The average expenditure per household in respect of various income ranges is shown below:

Household income per month	Number of households	Average expenditure per household Rs.nP.
Rs 25 or less	28	26.37
Rs 26-50	228	40.27
Rs 51-75	62	58.28
Rs 76-100	26	74.43
Rs 101 and over	12	93.73
Total	356	46.61

Income and expenditure

132. The average expenditure goes on increasing with the income levels. Among the poor folk having a monthly income of Rs. 25 or less, the average expenditure per household is Rs. 26.37 which at once indicates that their expenditure outstrips their income and naturally they will be steeped in debt. While we go on the higher income ranges, the average expenditure is also going up but it is a matter of interest how the people of different income levels apportion their expenditure on different items like food, clothing, luxuries etc. It is natural that a poor agricultural cooly or fisherman with his meagre income spends greater portion of his income on food alone and reserves very small amount for other items such as clothing, fuel, travelling and medical expenses. With the increasing incomes, the proportion of expenditure on items other than food goes on increasing. The proportion of food expenditure to total expenditure incurred by people, in different income groups will be seen from the following table.

TABLE**Average monthly expenditure**

Items of expenditure	All households		Percentage of expenditure on food and miscellaneous items	
	Total No. of households	Average expenditure per household Rs. nP.	Total amount (Rupees)	Percentage
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Food group				
Cereals	346	38.64	13,370.55	80.58
Other items	356	5.35	1,905.19	11.48
For food group	356	42.91	15,275.74	92.06
Miscellaneous group				
Education	101	1.77	179.23	1.08
Clothing	354	1.44	508.94	3.07
Fuel	320	0.63	202.76	1.22
Washing	345	0.38	132.70	0.80
Barber	339	0.46	156.10	0.94
Travelling	71	1.42	101.20	0.61
Medical expenses	4	6.32	25.25	0.15
Religious observances	1	0.50	0.50	0.003
Amusements	13	0.88	11.45	0.07
Total	356	45.61	16593.87	100.00

Income group (Rs)	No. of house- holds	Average expenditure		Percen- tage
		Food	All items	
		Rs.nP.	Rs.nP	
25 or less	28	24.14	26.37	91.5
26-50	228	36.92	40.27	91.7
51-75	62	54.20	58.28	93.0
76-100	26	69.58	74.43	93.5
101 & over	12	84.41	93.73	90.0
Total	356	42.91	46.61	92.1

Food

133. In all the income ranges, 90 per cent or more of the total expenditure goes to food alone. This proportion of food expenditure is less only in the highest income range viz., Rs. 101 and over. The sudden increase in the percentage in the income ranges Rs. 51-75 and Rs. 76-100 cannot, however, be explained. The food expenditure, of course, varies with the various occupational categories. Naturally a master fisherman spends less proportion of his income on food, rather than a poor cooly

fisherman. Similar contrast can be seen between a cultivator and an agricultural cooly. The figures given below represent the percentage of expenditure on food to the total expenditure in respect of major occupational groups.

Major occupation	No. of house- holds	Average expenditure		Percen- tage
		Food	All items	
		Rs.nP.	Rs.nP.	
Master fishermen	29	67.90	73.64	92.21
Cooly fishermen	96	39.26	42.18	93.08
Cultivators	59	46.10	51.16	90.11
Agricultural labourers	91	37.21	40.55	91.76
Business men	18	40.65	44.35	91.66
Lease cultivators	9	39.15	43.77	89.44

The above figures bear testimony to the general notion that the agricultural coolies and cooly fishermen spend a larger part of their money on food than comparatively well-to-do cultivators and master fishermen. Generally, the villagers spend more than 90 per cent on food alone and the rest is distributed over the other items.

No. XL

per household by income groups

No. of households and average expenditure in the monthly income ranges

Rs. 25/- or less		Rs. 26-50		Rs. 51-75		Rs. 76-100		Rs. 101 & over	
No. of households	Average expenditure per household	No. of households	Average expenditure per household	No. of households	Average expenditure per household	No. of households	Average expenditure per household	No. of households	Average expenditure per household
	Rs. nP.		Rs. nP.		Rs. nP.		Rs. nP.		Rs. nP.
(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
25	22.80	222	32.74	61	48.65	26	63.65	12	75.83
28	3.78	228	5.04	62	6.33	26	5.93	12	8.58
28	24.14	228	36.92	62	54.20	26	69.58	12	84.41
2	1.63	57	1.62	18	1.35	15	2.40	9	2.56
27	1.22	227	1.35	62	1.31	26	1.39	12	2.08
23	0.42	208	0.66	54	0.55	25	0.56	10	0.76
23	0.31	222	0.37	62	0.41	26	0.39	12	0.52
18	0.34	222	0.46	62	0.48	26	0.46	11	0.58
2	1.00	30	1.28	19	1.35	11	1.57	9	1.91
...	...	1	0.25	1	3.00	...	...	2	11.00
...	...	...	...	1	0.50	...	...	...	...
1	1.00	7	0.68	3	0.97	...	...	2	1.40
28	26.37	228	40.27	62	58.28	26	74.43	12	93.73

Clothing

134. The pattern of expenditure on clothing will be clear from the table below :

Occupation	Number of households	Average monthly expenditure on clothing Rs.nP.
Master fishermen	29	1.98
Cooly fishermen	96	1.21
Cultivators	56	1.51
Agricultural labourers	91	1.50
Business men	18	1.16
Lease cultivators	9	1.44

While the well-to-do master fisherman spends on an average nearly Rs. 2. in a month on clothing, a cooly fisherman is able to spend only Rs 1.21 nP. on this. It is but natural that expenditure on clothing increases as the level of income increases. The petty shop owners and those who sell fish, sweetmeats etc., spend a meagre amount of Rs. 1.16 per month. The average expenditure on clothing for all the families in the whole village works out to Rs. 1.44.

Fuel

135. Fuel is easily available in rural parts and poor agricultural labourers and fishermen spend less money on this item. The rich cultivators, master fishermen and the middle classes viz., Village Official, businessmen, fisheries department official, etc., of course, spend some amount in getting fuel. The table below furnishes the particulars of number of

families spending on fuel and the average monthly expenditure per household.

Occupation	Total No. of households	No. of households spending on fuel	Average monthly expenditure Rs.nP.
Master fishermen	29	22	0.69
Cooly fishermen	96	85	0.65
Cultivators	59	58	0.69
Agricultural labourers	91	85	0.58
Business men	18	7	0.64
Lease cultivators	9	7	0.89
Village Officials	2	2	0.38
Petty Yard Officer	1	1	1.50
Carpenters	3	3	0.38
Mat weavers	10	10	0.33

The average expenditure on fuel per household for the village as a whole is Re. 0.63 nP and the fishing yard officer spends a high amount of Rs. 1.50. Of the 96 cooly fishermen families, 85 spend on fuel and the remaining persons manage to get fuel free of cost, collecting from palmyra thopes and jungles on the outskirts of the village. Similar is the case among six agricultural labourer families and seven master fishermen families also.

Other items

136. The following table clearly brings out the number of households incurring expenditure on education of children, travelling and amusements.

Household income (Rs. per month)	Total No. of households	No. of households spending on			Average expenditure		
		Education	Travelling	Amusements	Education Rs.nP.	Travelling Rs.nP.	Amusements Rs.nP.
25 or less	28	2	2	1	1.63	1.00	1.00
26 - 50	228	57	30	7	1.62	1.28	0.66
51 - 75	62	18	19	3	1.35	1.35	0.97
76 - 100	26	15	11	...	2.40	1.57	...
101 & over	12	9	9	2	2.56	1.91	1.40
Total	356	101	71	13	1.77	1.42	0.88

Only 13 households do spend on amusements and the average amount per household is only 88 nP. The educational expenses are also low and only 101 households incur expenditure on educating

their children. The range of expenditure on marriage incurred by the households of various income levels is shown in Table No. XLI, Nineteen families spend more than Rs. 1,000 on a marriage.

TABLE No. XLI

Expenditure on Marriage

Expenditure on marriage	Number of households spending	Number of households according to monthly income ranges				
		Rs. 25 or less	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 101 & over
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
No expenditure	4	1	2	...	1	...
Rs. 50 or less	1	1	...	...	...	...
Rs. 51 - 100	5	1	4	...	...	...
Rs. 101 - 200	29	6	21	1	1	...
Rs. 201 - 400	120	9	99	7	4	1
Rs. 401 - 600	141	10	77	35	13	6
Rs. 601 - 800	16	...	12	2	2	...
Rs. 801 - 1,000	21	...	9	5	4	3
Rs. 1,001 and over	19	...	4	12	1	2
Total	356	28	228	62	26	12

Indebtedness

137. Fishermen, just like agriculturists are in need of money in off-seasons, when they are not having sufficient work. It becomes necessary for a cooly fisherman to borrow money from his master fisherman and practically every fisherman is heavily indebted to his master. The master fishermen also are steeped in debt and they borrow money from the capitalist merchants. The merchants advance money to the Samatties and they dictate prices of the fish catch. The first and foremost

development work to be done is to relieve the fishermen from the huge debt. Loans have to be given liberally on the basis of catch.

Incidence of debt

138. The economic position of the small cultivators and landless labourers is not better and most of them are also steeped heavily in debt. Table No. XLII indicates the extent of indebtedness among the villagers of different income levels.

TABLE No. XLII
Indebtedness by Income groups

Community	Income group (Rs.)	Total number of households	Number of households in debt	Percentage of indebted households	Total amount of debt (Rupees)	Average amount of debt per household in debt Rs. nP.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Maravar	25 and below	6	3	50	1,150	383.33
	26 - 50	79	71	89.9	21,985	309.65
	51 - 75	24	22	91.7	16,815	764.32
	76 - 100	7	7	100	8,100	1,157.14
	101 and over	3	3	100	3,500	1,166.67
Idayar	25 and below	1	1	100	200	200.00
	26 - 50	12	12	100	5,860	488.33
	51 - 75	5	4	80	5,650	1,412.50
	76 - 100	1	1	100	1,200	1,200.00
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Valayar	25 and below	4	3	75	535	178.33
	26 - 50	12	11	91.7	2,040	185.45
	51 - 75	2	2	100	350	175.00
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	25 and below	1	1	100	400	400.00
	26 - 50	7	7	100	2,650	378.57
	51 - 75	2	2	100	800	400.00
	76 - 100	1	1	100	800	800.00
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	25 and below	1	1	100	200	200.00
	26 - 50	6	5	83.3	1,300	260.00
	51 - 75	2	2	100	800	400.00
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Veilala	25 and below	2	1	50	100	100.00
	26 - 50	3	2	66.7	1,200	600.00
	51 - 75	2	2	100	10,600	5,300.00
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 - 50	3	3	100	450	150.00
	51 - 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...

Table No. XLII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Brahmin	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 - 50	1	...	...	...	...
	51 - 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Karayar	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 - 50	1	1	100	1,000	1,000.00
	51 - 75	1	1	100	2,000	2,000.00
	76 - 100	1	1	100	1,000	1,000.00
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 - 50	1	1	100	180	180.00
	51 - 75	2	2	100	700	350.00
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 - 50	1	1	100	2,000	2,000.00
	51 - 75	1	...	...	...	...
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 - 50	2	2	100	600	300.00
	51 - 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 - 50	1	1	100	150	150.00
	51 - 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 - 100	1	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 - 50	1	1	100	100	100.00
	51 - 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 - 50	1	1	100	50	50.00
	51 - 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 - 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...

Table No. XLII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Catholic Paravas	25 and below	1	1	100	300	300.00
	26 - 50	14	12	85.7	5,175	431.25
	51 - 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 - 100	4	3	75.0	3,500	1,166.67
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	25 and below	12	7	58.3	1,600	228.57
	26 - 50	83	73	88.0	55,450	759.59
	51 - 75	21	20	95.2	31,105	1,555.25
	76 - 100	11	10	90.9	18,550	1,855.00
	101 and over	9	7	77.8	12,000	1,714.29
Village Total	25 and below	28	18	64.3	4,485	249.16
	26 - 50	228	204	89.5	100,190	491.12
	51 - 75	62	57	91.9	68,820	1,207.37
	76 - 100	26	23	88.5	33,150	441.30
	101 and over	12	10	83.3	15,500	1,550.00
Total		356	312	87.6	2,22,145	712.00

Of the 356 households enquired, 312 or 87.6 per cent of the total households are steeped in debt. The percentage of indebted households is comparatively low among the low income group viz., those who are earning Rs. 25 or less in a month. The proportion rises to 91.9 per cent in the middle income group viz., Rs. 51-75 and then the percentage decreases in the succeeding income ranges. Even in the highest income group Rs. 101 and over, 83 per cent of them are in debt; master fishermen of the higher income ranges, are used to borrow money from the capitalist merchants, on the promise that they sell their fish only to those merchants. The average debt per household is increasing with the increase in the income levels. As the repaying capacity is becoming better, naturally the amount of borrowings is also higher. Curiously enough, it is only the persons of the middle income group viz., Rs. 51-75 are heavily indebted and the average amount of debt is Rs. 1,207 per indebted household and it is in this income group, the percentage of indebted families is also the highest viz., 91.9.

Community-wise analysis

139. In regard to the incidence of debt among people of different ethnic groups, the following table will reveal the position, which is quite self-explanatory.

Community	Percentage of indebted households	Average amount of debt Rs. nP.
Muslim	86.0	1,014.57
Maravar	89.1	486.32
Idayar	94.7	717.22
Paravas	84.2	560.94
Valayan	88.9	182.81
Nadar	100.0	422.73
Pillai	71.4	2,380.00
Asari	100.0	150.00
Naidu	100.0	293.00
Karayar	100.0	1,333.33
Chakkiliyar	88.9	287.50
Pandithar	50.0	2,000.00
Vannan	50.0	150.00
Agamudiyar	100.0	300.00
Pandaram	100.0	100.00
Semman	100.0	50.00
Brahmin	Nil	Nil
Total	87.6	712.00

140. Table No. XLIII classifies the borrowings by different causes.

TABLE No. XLIII

Indebtedness by causes

Community	Cause of debt	Amount of debt (Rupees)	Number of house- holds in debt	Percentage of debt due to cause to the total debt
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Maravar	House construction or repairs, to existing building	5,540	21	10.76
	Marriages	10,620	23	20.61
	Funerals	100	1	0.19
	Purchase of bulls	900	2	1.74
	To purchase fishing equipments	3,000	1	5.83
	Sickness	300	1	0.58
	Family maintenance	21,455	90	41.62
	Cultivation expenses	7,420	22	14.39
	Confinement	665	6	1.28
	Loss in business	1,400	7	2.71
	Religious ceremony	150	1	0.29
Idayar	Marriages	4,200	10	92.54
	Funerals	900	2	6.97
	Festivals	50	1	0.38
	To clear outstanding debts	350	1	2.72
	Sickness	600	2	4.65
	Family maintenance	4,930	15	38.19
	Cultivation expenses	1,830	4	14.17
	Divorce expenses	50	1	0.38
Valayar	House construction or repairs to existing building	100	1	3.41
	Marriages	255	2	8.72
	Family maintenance	2,090	14	71.46
	Cultivation expenses	400	1	13.68
	Loss in industry	80	2	2.73
Vellala	House construction or repairs to existing building	2,400	2	20.18
	Marriages	2,000	2	16.80
	Funerals	150	1	1.26
	Purchase of cattle	200	1	1.68
	Family maintenance	2,325	5	19.54
	Cultivation expenses	4,800	2	40.33
	Loss in business	25	1	0.21
Nadar	Marriages	1,400	6	30.11
	Family maintenance	1,050	7	22.58
	Cultivation expenses	600	2	12.90
	Loss in business	1,200	2	25.81
	Educational expenses	400	1	8.60
Chakkiliar	Marriages	1,100	5	47.83
	Family maintenance	1,000	7	43.47
	Cultivation expenses	200	1	8.70

Table No. XLIII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Karayar	Family maintenance	900	3	22:50
	Purchase of fishing equipment	3,100	3	77:50
Naidu	To clear outstanding debts	300	1	34:09
	Sickness	200	1	22:73
	Family maintenance	280	2	31:82
	Loss in business	100	1	11:36
Asari	Marriages	400	2	88:89
	Family maintenance	50	1	11:11
Vannan	Family maintenance	150	1	100
Pandithar	Marriages	500	1	25:00
	Family maintenance	500	1	25:00
	Business	1,000	1	50:00
Agamudiyar	Family maintenance	100	1	16:67
	Loss in business	500	1	83:33
Brahmin		...	...	...
Pandaram	Family maintenance	100	1	100
Semman	Family maintenance	50	1	100
Muslim	Education	500	1	0.42
	House construction or repairs to existing building	5,100	13	4:30
	Marriages	30,505	58	25:70
	Funerals	2,200	11	1:85
	Purchase of fishing equipments	34,700	25	29:24
	To clear outstanding debts	2,100	5	1:79
	Sickness	3,150	10	2:65
	Family maintenance	26,860	85	22:63
	Cultivation	1,750	4	1:47
	Loss in industry	2,400	10	2:02
	Loss in business	3,250	23	2:74
	Religious functions (Sunnath function)	5,500	20	4:64
	Festivals	290	3	0:24
	Other causes	400	2	0:33
	Catholic Paravas	House construction or repairs to existing building	25	1	0:28
Marriages		700	2	7:80
Funerals		1,000	1	11:14
Family Maintenance		3,650	11	40:67
Loss in industry		3,450	4	38:44
Loss in business		150	2	1:67

Table No. XLIII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Village total.	House construction or repairs to existing building	13,165	38	5.96
	Marriages	51,680	111	23.26
	Funerals	4,350	16	1.95
	Religious functions and ceremonies	5,650	21	2.54
	To clear outstanding debts	2,750	7	1.24
	Sickness	4,250	14	1.91
	Family maintenance	65,490	245	29.49
	Cultivation expenses	17,000	36	7.65
	Loss in industry	80	2	0.04
	Loss in business	7,625	38	3.43
	Purchase of fishing equipments	44,250	33	19.91
	Confinement	3,065	16	1.38
	Purchase of cattle	1,100	3	0.49
	Educational expenses	900	2	0.40
	Religious festivals	340	4	0.15
	Other causes	450	3	0.20
	Total	2,22,145	589	100.00

The Brahmin family is free from debt and the Vellalas and Muslims are heavily steeped in debt. The average amount of debt is as low as Rs. 50 in the case of Semman and among Pillais the debt is heavy viz., Rs. 2,380 per household.

Prosperity index

14]. The present enquiry has revealed that habit of savings is not prevalent among the villagers and only a handful of persons have made savings either in cash or material. Table No. XLIV shows the prosperity index of households belonging to different communities.

During the past decade, only 20 households mostly belonging to Muslims and Maravars have acquired property; 20 households, 12 Muslims, three Maravars, two each in Idayar, Naidu etc., have cleared prior debts. The number of households which have made savings in cash is 26, 16 of them being Muslims and three Maravars. Eighteen households have purchased prize bonds sponsored by the Government of India. Only three persons have taken Life Insurance Policies in the last decade. Apart from these types of saving, six households have jointed chit funds arranged locally.

TABLE No. XLIV

Prosperity Index

Community	Total number of households	Number of households							
		Cleared debts existed prior to 10 years	Total amount of debt cleared by the households Rs.	Acquired property during 10 years	Made savings in cash	Made savings in Prize Bonds	Taken Insurance Policy	Joined chit fund	Invested capital in any new undertaking or building
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Masavar	119	3	600	4	3	1	...	...	...
Idayar	19	2	1,100	1	1	...	...	...	...
Nadar	11	1	400	1	1	3	1	1	...
Vellala	7	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	2	800	...	2	...	...	...	...
Pandithan	2	1	150	1	1	...	...	...	...
Karayar	3	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Yanman	2	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	500	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other Hindu communities	34	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	136	12	8,500	11	16	12	...	5	1
Catholic Paravas	20	...	...	1	...	1	1	...	...
Total	357	22	12,050	20	26	18	3	6	1

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Religious life

142. As stated earlier, Athangarai presents a complex caste-structure; people following three different religious faiths live together. It is an admitted fact that religion more than anything else, governs the villagers' way of life as well as their thinking and attitude to a very marked degree. While Paravas numbering twenty families are the only Christian community, and the predominating community of Rowthers and Marakkayars follow the Islam, the others are Hindu castes. The hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani is fully occupied by Hindu castes, viz., Maravars, Valayars and Chakkiliyans. The gradation of caste ranks continue to be acknowledged by the villagers and it is the religion or caste which forms a major factor determining the social relations between one another. The Muslims and Paravas have their 'mosque' and 'church' where the 'community prayers' are held with all the members attending. Among Hindus, people worship God in various forms at different times and no fixed hours of worship are followed by them unlike Muslims and Christians.

Muslims

143. Muslims are more religious-minded, faithfully observing all the rites and ritual regulations. The very essence of the Islamic faith is simple; it consists in a belief in one God head, in Mohammed as the Prophet, and the Koran as the sacred book revealed by the God. They do not have belief in plurality of Gods, just as the Hindu notions. *Koran contains the teachings of the Prophet and youngsters, both boys and girls, are taught in the teachings of Koran in the mosque. Detailed instructions have been given in Koran regarding the way of life personal conduct to be observed by the followers of Islam.*

Namaaz

144. Mass prayers are attended by Muslims and 'Jumma Namaaz' or Friday Prayers attract almost all the male members including boys in the village. There is a certain amount of compulsion for attendance and fines are levied by the 'Jamad' for the defaulters. Muslims are having a regular and fixed

time-table for daily prayers; Islam enjoins on all Mohammedans above the age of 12, prayer five times daily at the hours specified, fasting during the time of Ramzan and 'haj' or pilgrimage to Mecca (for those who can afford to it). It is said that Musalman Lawgiver commanded 'Namaaz' or daily prayer five times in a day, as indicated below:

- 1st Fajar or The Soobhoo Namaaz to commence at the dawn of day
- 2nd The Zohar at the second watch of the day or mid-day
- 3rd The Assar at the third day watch
- 4th The Muggrib at sun-set
- 5th The Ishaa in the night

The several prayers are considered to be one's duty and the prostrations they make occupy the greatest part of an hour, with those who are devout in their religious exercises. The rites and regulations prescribed by Islamic faith are undoubtedly observed much more scrupulously by the elders than the younger people. The second prayers of Fridays are the significant ones known as Jumma Namaaz and these special prayers are offered in the place of Zohar and Jamad, the caste organisation of the Muslims, had prescribed that all Muslims should attend Jumma Namaaz and they should not go to work on Fridays especially in the afternoon. Fishing is not carried on on Fridays and they attend some odd jobs like repairing nets, and mending the fishing equipments, on these days.

The mosque

145. The mosque is kept always clean and in the whole of village the brightest and cleanest place is the mosque. While entering the mosque, no one should wear shoes or any foot-wear and they should clean their feet and water is stored for this purpose. No decorations are made inside the mosque; no idol or picture of the God is seen inside. The floor is matted and people squat and prostrate before the Almighty. They do so facing the west, the direction in which the sacred city of Mecca is located. The Rowthers and Marakkayars join together while worshipping and no distinction is made. The only difference

in the mode of praying between these two groups is that the Rowthers (Hanafis) place both their hands on the abdomen while praying and the Marakkayars (Shafis) keep their hands on the heart. Verses from Koran are read during the prayers. The mosque services are conducted by any learned man (mostly by a Labbai) and the 'maulvi' resides in a nearby village. A 'Crier' shouts the prayer call five times a day, at the appointed hours. In some other mosques in nearby villages, 'Nagara' or a drum is kept for this purpose and Jamad of Athangarai being a poor one, cannot afford to have one drum. The 'Crier' keeps the mosque clean and he is poorly paid and he lives chiefly on alms, food and clothes given by the villagers.

Religious duties

146. According to the Mohammedan law, the main duties of a Musalman are as follows:—

- (i) to believe in the principal tenets of the faith.
- (ii) to perform five prayers daily.
- (iii) to keep fast at the time of Ramzan.
- (iv) to make the pilgrimage to Mecca.
- (v) to give alms, Zakat.

Of these five laws, the first three are binding on all the Muslims, the fourth and fifth only on the rich persons. It is said that Muslims of wealthy means are expected to make pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca atleast once in their life and to give a part of his money to the poor. The main idea is that alms-giving propitiates the favour of Heaven, consequently this belief is the inducing medium for clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, supporting the poor persons and rendering all assistance that could be done to distressed people. This religion of the Prophet inculcates in the faithful, sense of solidarity and brotherhood which knows no barriers of caste or creed. Muslims are above caste divisions and though these Muslims are really converts, nobody among them remembers the caste from which his forefathers were drawn.

Calendar

147. The Muslims have their own calendar known as *The Hajra* and this Mohammedan era dates from the day after Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina i. e., 15th July, 622 A.D. The New Year commences on the first day of the month of Muharram. The names of the different months and the significance are given below:—

- | | | |
|--------------------|------|--|
| 1. Muharram | ... | The sacred month |
| 2. Safar | ... | The month of the departure |
| 3. Rabi-ul-Avval | .... | First month of the Spring |
| 4. Rabi-ul-Aquar | ... | Second month of the Spring |
| 5. Jamadi-ul-Avval | ... | First dry month |
| 6. Jamadi-ul-Aquar | ... | Second dry month |
| 7. Rajjab | ... | Respected, called often Rajjab-al-Murajjab |
| 8. Shaban | ... | The month of the budding of trees |
| 9. Ramzan | .... | Month of heat |
| 10. Shaw-wal | ... | Month of junction |
| 11. Zeil-Kaida | ... | Month of rest or relaxation. |
| 12. Zeil-Hajj | ... | Month of pilgrimage |

It is said that the months are lunar, consisting of either 29 or 30 days. A week consists of seven days and they commence the new day from dusk. The days are shown below:—

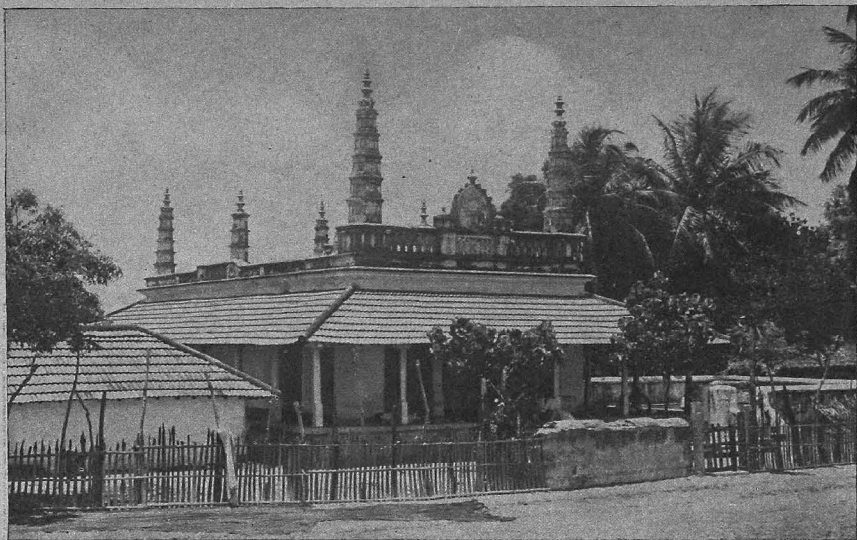
Iftar	...	Sunday	Charshumba	...	Wednesday
Pir	...	Monday	Jumarat	...	Thursday
Mangal	...	Tuesday	Jumma	....	Friday
		Hafta	....		Saturday

Vows

148. Muslims are superstitious, just like Hindus and they also believe in vows. They make vows and to fulfil the vows made to different saints or spirits they make offerings and perform pilgrimage to nearby dargas. It is to be noted that Muslims do have faith in the special powers of the deceased saints and preachers and they call their tomb as Darga. Whenever any person starts to Malaya or any overseas countries, he makes offerings to the darga and have the *Fathihas* (special prayers) read. Muslims of Athangarai frequent Seeniappa Darga, a famous tomb of a saint Seeniappa Rowther near Uchipuli and the belief is that diseases are cured by a pilgrimage to this holy place. It is said that some Muslims make offerings to local Hindu Gods like Muni Ayya and offer vows to those deities also.

Circumcision

149. One of the important ceremonies in Muslim families is the circumcision of the boys. Sometimes



The Mosque — It is the brightest and cleanest place in the whole of village.



The shrine of Mariamman in Idayar street



The Catholic church

it is lavishly celebrated just like marriage. Each and every person is anxious to circumcise his son, when the boy reaches seven or eight years of age. It is a rare thing that boys above the age of 20 have their circumcision and this happens when the boys are sent to Malaya in the early childhood. A circumcision is attended with much pomp and show. Among the rich families, a *pandal* is constructed before the house and the house is white-washed. Music is also employed and people have the mike and loud-speakers also during recent times. For two or three days they have a *gala* time and the boy is rubbed with turmeric and bathed two or three days before the appointed day. At the fixed hour on the appointed day, the friends and relatives are invited to the house. The barber is called in who attends to circumcision. A dinner is served to the guests, who usually give the boy some presents or gifts, either in money or in kind.

Festivals

150. The chief festivals of Muslims are Ramzan, Bakrid and Muharram, and these festivals are celebrated by the people with much zeal; while Ramzan is the festival of fast, Bakrid is said to be the feast of sacrifice and Muharram a mourning festival.

Ramzan: This festival falls in the ninth month viz., Ramzan which generally comes during February-March, and this lasts throughout the month. Between 4-30 a.m. in the early morning and the sun-set all the Muslims observe complete fast and devout Muslims avoid all luxuries such as chewing pan, smoking, snuff etc. The fishing activities are also curtailed. In the early morning they take their breakfast before 4-30 a.m. and the fast is broken after sun-set. The observance of fast should be so strict that according to some elders, people should not even swallow their own saliva. But actually young persons are said to take some water or drink in the day time and this is not naturally approved by the orthodox elders. The story connected with this festival goes that Prophet Mohammed acquired the sacred Koran in the month of Ramzan while he did penance in 'Ghar-e-hera', a cave in Mecca and the Koran was believed to be sent by Allah through Gabriel. On the nights during the month of Ramzan, special prayers are offered and the Koran is also read in addition to the usual 'Ishaa Namaaz' (night prayers). On the last night of the month, people throng to the mosque and keep on praying and reading the sacred verses of Koran till 4-30 a.m. when they take sweetmeats.

The fast is broken once and for all and on the next day (i.e.) first day of Shaw-wal month, the festival concludes. People wear new clothes on this day and rich persons give alms to the poor. A common *Namaaz* is conducted on this day where both rich and poor stand together for prayers, shedding the cloak of social status.

Bakrid: As stated earlier, Bakrid is a festival of sacrifice—usually a goat or sheep is sacrificed. This is celebrated on the 10th day of the last month Zeil-hajj (May-June); this festival forms part of pilgrimage to Mecca also. The legend associated with Bakrid runs as follows: In ancient days, there was a prophet named Ibrahim, before the birth of the Prophet Mohammed. Ibrahim was believed to be the person who constructed the City of Mecca. God commanded him that he should sacrifice his only son Ismail and in spite of the efforts of Satan to dissuade him, Ibrahim gave his son as a sacrifice to God. However, life was restored to Ismail by God and He ordained that an animal (cow, bull, goat or sheep) may be sacrificed instead of a human being. It is said that animal sacrifice seems to have come into vogue since then. Bakrid is observed in commemoration of this event, as a day of sacrifice and as a great festival of rejoicings. Namaaz is offered in praise of the God for having restored Ismail back to life, and well-to-do persons give alms to the poor Musalmans. On the 10th day of Zeil-hajj (Bakrid day) people offer prayers very early in the morning without taking their breakfast, as a mark of respect to Ismail. Common prayers are offered to Almighty and Koran is read. It is said that only rich persons offer the sacrifice of goat or sheep independently and poor folk join together, say five to ten families, and make one sacrifice for all. The goat is sacrificed, its head turning towards Mecca; the flesh of the sacrificed animal is to be divided into three portions, one-third to be given to relatives, one-third to the poor and the remaining to be taken by the members of family. It is a curious but welcome habit that during festive occasions, rich persons among Muslims give alms to the poor invariably.

Muharram: Muharram is really a mourning festival, observed on the 10th day of the month of Muharram, the first month of the year in commemoration of the martyrdom of Hussain, the son of Fathima who was the daughter of Prophet Mohammed. The Shi'ahs among Muslims observe this as an occasion of immense pain and sorrow, while the Muslims of Athangarai belonging to the sect of Sunnics do not attach so much grief or mourning

They offer prayers and distribute *Sherbat* or the sweet drink. The following account traces the origin of this mourning festival. Hasan and Hussain were the two sons of Ali, by his cousin Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter. Hasan was poisoned by an emissary of the usurping Caliph; and later his brother Hussain the last victim of the family to the king Yuzeed's fury suffered a cruel death after the most severe trials, on the plains of Karbaalah. This occurred on the tenth day of the Muharram month. The anniversary of this catastrophe is solemnized by the celebration of this festival every year. The plain of Karbaalah is said to be a sacred pilgrim centre to Shiah. Strictly speaking, this is no occasion for festivity and joy. Milad-un-Nabi is another festival of minor importance which is observed on the 12th day of the month Rabi-ul-Auval (August-September). It is on this day in the year 1775 A. D., that Prophet Mohammed passed away after spreading his Gospel and regaining a vast number of followers, under his new faith. Namaaz is performed and life story of the Prophet, his birth, miracles, death etc., are recited. Verses from Koran are also read amidst prayers in the mosque.

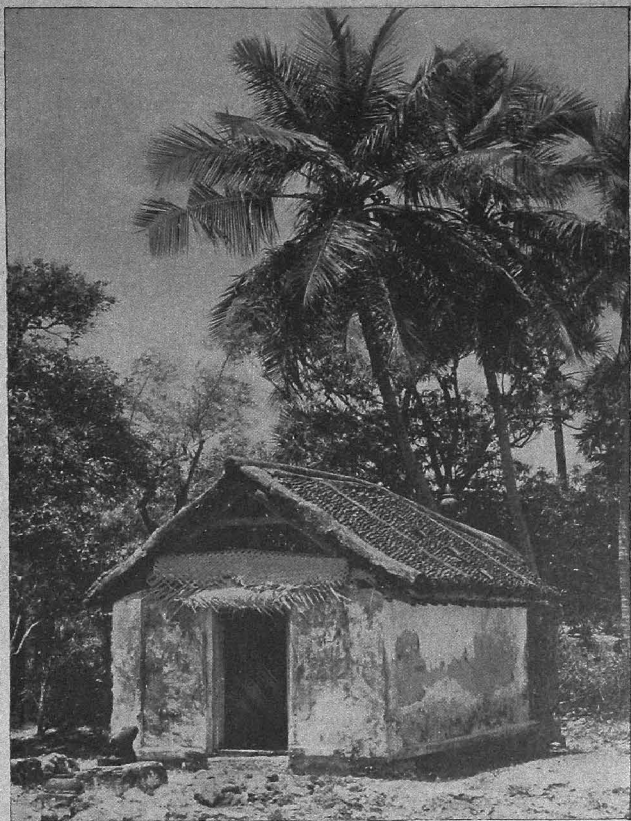
Hindu festivals

151. The Hindu worship God in various forms at different times unlike Muslims; no common and periodical worship is observed and each one worships by himself. Mondays and Fridays are considered to be sacred days in a week and devout Hindus especially Vellalas, and Pandarams, offer special prayers on these days to Vigneswara with *neivedhyam* and offerings of coconuts and plantains. New-moon days (Amavasai) are auspicious especially in the months of Adi (July-August) and Thai, when the special poojas are held. The days of Karthigai are the sacred days when special prayers are made in Siva temples, especially in the Subramaniya Temple, near the choultry. The temple dedicated to Lord Subramaniya is maintained by a Vellala family and the festival of Panguini Uthiram is a famous one in this temple attracting a large congregation in and around the village. The other important shrines are Lord Vinayaga, the elephant-head God, close to the tank of Singarakulam housed in a tiled building, Mariamman temples in the streets of Vellalas, Karayars and Idayars, and Muni-Ayya Temple, dedicated to Munisamy. On the outskirts of the village stands this grand old shrine, amidst huge and tall trees dedicated to Munisamy or Muni-Ayya

which is, in fact, an evil spirit. It is said that this angry god must be propitiated with offerings of goat or fowl and animal sacrifice is still practised. Devotees from distant parts in this district such as Mudukulathur come every year to Athangarai to make offerings to this deity. An elderly Idayar man is the priest of this shrine and the powers of this local God are proverbially great in this region. It is customary among the people, to make some vows to this demon-god and in fulfilment of their vows they go to this shrine and offer *pongal* (cooked rice) coconuts, plantains etc., and animal sacrifice is also done on special occasions. The hair-removing ceremony is also carried out for their children for the fulfilment of vows of parents. Karuppanasamy is another village deity which is chiefly worshipped by Maravars, Nadars etc., and this shrine lies near the Singarakulam.

Mariamman

152. Mariamman, the goddess of small-pox is worshipped by all sections of Hindu community and three shrines of this deity are found in the main village, one each in the Vellala street, Idayar street and Karayar settlement. Mariamman Pongal is observed every year and all the Hindu castes join together in the festivities. Karayars have their own *Pongal* in their Mariamman temple, for a long time; in the festival attached to Mariamman Temple in Konar street, Nadars, Kammalans, Vannans etc., living in that street and nearby lanes join Konars in the celebration. The other major Hindu castes viz., Maravars, Vellalas, Agamudiyars, Naidus etc., arrange for the observance of the festival, in the Mariamman Temple in Vellala street near the Panchayat Board Office. These festivals are conducted every year generally in the months of Purattasi (September-October) or Iyppasi (October-November). These three festivals will be observed in different dates, almost in continuous weeks. Subscription is prescribed for each head of family to meet the expenses for the celebrations and this subscription is a compulsory one. This festival has a wonderful fascination for the Hindu people, especially among women and children. Women look forward to such festivals as a welcome respite from the imprisonment of their homes; they play *Kummi* singing some songs and men sing *Ooyil* a kind of folksong. Whenever epidemics such as small-pox break out, people organise special *Pongal* or festival and offerings are made in large scale to appease the deity. It is the common belief that Mariamman is the deity controlling small-pox.



The shrine of Lord Vinayaga housed in a tiled building



The shrine of Lord Subramanya

153. Drowpathi is another minor deity and the ancient temple dedicated to her, opposite to Karayar settlement is now in dilapidated conditions. It is said that in olden days festivals were regularly conducted by Karayars and other Hindu castes in this temple and statues of Dharma and Drowpathi still stand amidst several broken idols, as a monument of ancient glory. People say that due to certain factions between some local personalities, this festival was discontinued about four or five decades ago and there appears no effort for revival of Drowpathiamman festival. Recently in 1952, the Idayars joined in a common venture of building a temple in their street and this temple is dedicated to Lord Ganesha. The construction of temple was over early in 1962 and the installation of deity with due celebrations had not done for about one year. A small shrine of Ganesha was already there under a tree and poojas are offered to this shrine. Vinayaga Chaturthi is the chief festival in this temple.

Common festivals

154. Just like in any other villages of Tamilnad, Hindus in Athangarai observe all religious festivals such as Deepavali, Ayudha Pooja, Vinayagar Chaturthi, Karthigai, Thai Pongal etc. The last mentioned is the chief festival, which is a harvest festival or Thanks - offering especially among the peasants.

Pongal: The Pongal usually takes place on the first day of the Tamil month of *Thai* (middle of January). In the rural parts, the most anticipated part of the year is the harvest, when sons of soil end months of toil by gathering the produce. This is an occasion of rejoicings and the visitation of friends too. The pongal celebrations usually last for three days, the first three days of the month of *Thai*. It is generally agreed that the month of Margali (December-January) preceding *Thai* is quite unlucky and on the contrary, every day of *Thai* is lucky. The first day of Pongal is a day for entertaining friends and relatives; the second day is the great day of offering Pongal to God and on the third day 'Mattu Pongal' or cow worship is conducted. On the third day, the horns of cows, bulls and buffaloes are painted, saffron water is sprinkled and *Sweet Pongal* or cooked sweet rice offered to them.

Deepavali: The Deepavali or festival of lights is happily celebrated by everybody, especially the children are much fascinated. It falls usually in the second fortnight of October or in the month of

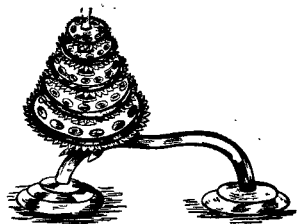
November. On the particular day, people get up very early in the morning and take oil bath before offering puja to God. New clothes are worn by rich as well as poor, young as well as old. Women prepare sweet-meats in their home and visits to neighbouring houses and friends are common on the Deepavali day. Boys and girls play with crackers, as found everywhere.

Karthigai: Karthigai is another 'festival of lights' and this falls on the *Karthigai* star of the Tamil month Karthigai (November-December). Devotees of Sri Murugan mostly found in Athangarai celebrate this festival with much devotion. Special prayers are held to Lord Subramaniya and in the Subramanyaswamy Temple, Karthigai is an important festival when poojas are offered in a grand scale. In each Hindu house and in the temples, *Agals* or small open lamps are lighted; even the humblest hut will have at least two lamps on the door step. On the Karthigai night, lights are found everywhere and a great illumination pervades the whole village. The Ayudha Pooja is another major festival which falls generally in the month of Purattasi (September-October). This festival is celebrated in honour of the tools and implements, as the name *Ayudham* meaning tool itself indicates. On this day, every Hindu worships his implements or tools by which he gains his livelihood. Pupils and teacher worship Saraswathi, the goddess of learning, with coconuts, plantains etc. The farmer worships his plough, the artisan his tools and the trader worships his weighing and measuring tools. Poojas are held in the nights with offerings of cocount, plantain and some cooked pulses. 'Vinayagar Chaturthi' is another festival when Lord Ganesha is worshipped as the remover of difficulties from all undertakings. Clay images of this deity are made, consecrated and worshipped with offerings of cocount, plantain, flowers and *Kolukattai*, a kind of sweet-meat specially prepared for the occasion. After the prayers are over, the images are thrown in the river Vaigai. This is a *gala* day in the Vinayagar Temple in Idayar street.

Panguni Uthiram

155. *Panguni Uthiram* is a ten-day festival which is a major one attracting people from neighbouring villages also. This is an annual feature mostly celebrated by devotees of Lord Murugan or Subramaniya held in Panguni month (March-April). The Temple of Subramaniya close to sea-shore is the usual venue wherein this is celebrated. An important part of these celebrations is fire-walking

ceremony, which is popularly called 'Pookuli Iranguthal'. Devotees who had made vows to Lord Subramaniya walk on fire placed in a particular place in front of the temple. This festival is celebrated in such a vast scale during the past forty years and the Vellalas are the chief participants. This temple is also a private temple built by a Vellala family. A Pandaram priest residing in a hut close to the shrine, does prayers daily. Pangui Uthiram festival lasts for ten days when six prayers are held every day. 'Kavadi' is also taken by about ten persons who had made vows. 'Palkavadi' and 'Ilaneer Kavadi' are the special offerings and further people suffering from stomach-ache offer 'Mavilakku' or light on rice-flour to Lord Subramaniya. Some offer silver *Vel* to the shrine, if they had made such a vow. Discreet enquiries revealed that some Catholics and Muslims too offer poojas to Lord Subramaniya during this festival.

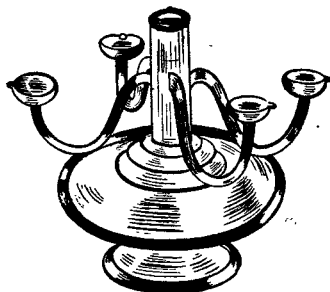


Neideepam

Christians

156. All the twenty Parava families are Christian converts, converts to Roman Catholic faith. No protestant is living in Athangarai. The period of conversion of the Catholic families is not clearly known. The church at the sea-shore on the western corner of the village is an ancient one supposed to have been built by a Dutch mission. The Parish priest is their religious head and he is attached to the Catholic church at Ramanathapuram. He visits the church at

Athangarai on some occasions only. Prayers are normally held by some elder persons among Paravas themselves. Common worship is found among them and Sunday prayers are usually well attended. The people themselves keep the church in a neat and tidy manner. Christmas is of course, the chief festival among them and they conduct mid-night prayers on 24th December and early morning prayers on the next day. They are dressed in new clothes and in every house a nice feast is arranged. Friends and relatives visit to their houses. Apart from Christmas and Easter, there are many Catholic festivals such as Feast of Assumption, Ascension, Corpus Christi which are celebrated with prayers in the church. Prayers are mostly conducted in Tamil; all of them possess a copy of Holy Bible. Parava men and women wear a 'Holy Cross', a badge on their neck.



Aynjudar—a camphor arathi

Expenditure on festivals

157. In villages like Athangarai, expenditure on a religious festival is a 'must' in every home. Three hundred and fifty five households, out of 357 households spend some money towards the celebration of festivals. Four families incurred heavy expenditure, that they are in debt due to spending on festivals; three families of them belong to Muslim community and the fourth family is an Idayar. The range of expenditure on a festival, incurred by the households will be clearly seen from Table No. XLIV.

TABLE No. XLIV

Expenditure on festivals

Expenditure on festivals (Rupees)	Total number of households	Number of households with a monthly income of				
		Rs. 25 or less	Rs. 26 - 50	Rs. 51 - 75	Rs. 76 - 100	Rs. 101 & over
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Nil expenditure	1	...	1	...	...	...
5 & below	14	11	3	...	...	...
6 - 10	31	2	26	2	1	...
11 - 20	141	8	103	19	10	1
21 - 30	97	5	60	23	7	2
31 - 40	4	...	3	1	...	...
41 - 50	57	1	32	12	7	5
51 - 100	10	1	...	5	1	3
101 & over	1	...	...	...	...	1
Total	356	28	228	62	26	12

As many as 141 families or nearly 40 per cent spend an amount between Rs. 11 and Rs. 20 on a festival and 97 households have the expenditure range Rs. 21-30. Only one wealthy household spends more than Rs. 100, on a festival and in 10 households, an amount ranging from Rs. 51 to Rs. 100 is spent on a festival. Only 3.9 per cent of families spend Rs. 5 or less. The range of expenditure spent on festivals by the rich and poor sections of people is indicated below.

Expenditure on a festival (Rs.)	Number of households	Percentage to total
5 or below	14	3.94
6 - 10	31	8.73
11 - 20	141	39.72
21 - 30	97	27.32
31 - 40	4	1.13
41 - 50	57	16.06
51 - 100	10	2.82
More than Rs. 100	1	0.28
Total	355	100.00

Village Panchayat

Athangarai forms a Panchayat which came into force from 1-5-1956. The Panchayat Board

consists of a President, Vice-President and the members who were elected unanimously. The Muslims are numerically and economically a dominant caste and the President belongs to Muslim community and he is the President for two successive terms. At present, there are nine members including President and Vice-President and a lady member has been nominated who belongs to Parava community. The relative economic power and numerical strength of the different communities is fully reflected in the elections, which will be clear from the composition of the Panchayat as shown below.

President — Muslim (master fisherman)

Vice-President — Vellala (cultivator)

Ward	Community and No. of members	Remarks
I Ward	Maravars - 2 Vellala - 1 (Vice-President) Idayar - 1	Hindus and Catholics predominate in this Ward and only some Muslim families are living.
II Ward	3 members, all belonging to Muslim including President	The Ward is fully occupied by Muslims.
III Ward	Maravars - 2	Maravars predominate in this hamlet.

No Harijan member is included in the Panchayat. The inclusion of a woman member has become necessary under the new regulations of Panchayat Union.

Panchayat fund

158. The Panchayat controls a fund derived from taxes but as the revenue of the Panchayat is not adequate, the financial position is not sound. The Panchayat with its poor finance is not carrying out enough development activities. The village is not electrified and nor the Panchayat has done anything for street-lighting. Regarding village sanitation, the Panchayat takes care of street-cleaning and a *Thotti* is employed on a monthly wage of Rs. 15. No drainage is maintained by the Panchayat. The Board has put up seven water supply pumps at street-corners in the main hamlet, besides a public well. In the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani, a well serves the purpose. The approximate annual income of the Panchayat is Rs. 700, the main source being the house-tax. The total amount of house-tax normally expected is around Rs. 300 and the estimates of income as furnished by the President of Panchayat are shown below.

Items of Revenue	Amount (Rs.)
House-tax	300.00
Profession tax	30.00
Vehicles tax	30.00
Stamp duty & surcharge	200.00
Land cess	40.00
Licence fees	50.00
Miscellaneous	50.00
	<u>700.00</u>

House-tax is collected at the rate of Re. 0.13 for the value of hundred rupees, for a period of six months. The assessment according to House-tax Register maintained by Panchayat is shown below.

Assessment rate per half year (Rs. nP.)	No. of houses
0.52	312
0.53 — 1.04	4
1.05 — 2.08	19
2.09 — 4.16	7
4.17 and above	Nil

Most of the houses are small thatched huts, and a very low rate of 52 naye Paise was charged in respect of 312 houses which are valued at Rs. 400 or below. Only seven houses belonging to leading

Muslim Samatties and two Hindu cultivators have been valued between Rs. 1,600 - Rs. 3,200 and the rate of house-tax varies from Rs. 2.09 to Rs. 4.16 per half year.

Administration

159. The Panchayat office is housed in a rented building, where the reading room is also located. The public radio put up by the panchayat in July, 1962 is also kept in this small building. A part-time clerk is attending to the general work of the panchayat and the village head-man is in charge of collection of house-tax and other taxes. The awareness of people on the functions of the panchayat will be clear from the details given in Tables No. XLV and XLVI. The heads of households were enquired of the main functions of Panchayat and the period of its existence and of the 357 persons interviewed, 194 were able to describe the functions while 208 persons were aware of the period of its existence. The cooly fishermen among Muslims and Paravas who toil day in and day out in the sea mostly do not know of the activities of the Panchayat and this will be clear from the figures in Table XLV.

TABLE No. XLV

Information about main functions of panchayats

Community	Number of heads of households enquired	No. that could tell the period of existence of panchayat correctly	No. that could describe the main functions of the panchayat
Maravar	119	72	67
Idayar	19	12	12
Valayar	18	5	5
Nadar	11	4	4
Chakkiliyar	9	1	1
Vellala	7	5	5
Karayar	3	1	1
Asari	3	3	3
Naidu	3	3	2
Vannan	2	2	2
Agamudiyar	2	2	...
Pandithar	2	2	1
Brahmin	1	1	1
Pandaram	1	1	...
Semman	1	1	1
Muslim	136	86	83
Catholic Paravas	20	7	6
Total	357	208	194

Similarly among the Hindu castes, only five Valayans, four Nadars and only one Karayar were able to describe the function of the Panchayat.

Table No. XLVI embodies the opinions of the heads of households regarding improvement or harm by the village Panchayat.

TABLE No. XLVI
Improvement through Panchayat

Community	Number of heads of households enquired	No. according to whom after establishment of statutory Panchayat there has been			No. according to whom after establishment of statutory Panchayat there has been harm by imposition of taxes	No. who are not aware of the existence of statutory Panchayat
		Improvement by the construction of roads	Improvement in sanitation	Improvement in public amenities		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Maravar	119	56	10	...	1	52
Idayar	19	1	9	1	1	7
Valayar	18	5	...	...	...	13
Nadar	11	2	3	...	...	6
Chakkiliyar	9	...	1	...	...	8
Vellala	7	2	3	...	...	2
Naidu	3	...	2	1	...	...
Asari	3	...	3	...	...	...
Karayar	3	1	...	...	...	2
Pandithar	2	1	...	...	...	1
Vannan	2	1	1	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	...	...	2
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	1
Semman	1	...	1	...	...	...
Muslim	136	56	24	...	...	56
Catholic Paravas	20	2	5	...	...	13
Total	357	128	62	2	2	163

It is clear that as many as 163 persons could not express opinion about either improvement or harm through the coming in of the village Panchayat. The activities of Panchayat in the construction of roads, were commended by 128 persons and 62 heads of households had expressed satisfaction over the Panchayat's work in the field of village sanitation. In short, the poor and humble folk who are economically and socially backward do not evince any interest in the affairs of the Panchayat. It is the influential section of the society, for example the leading master fishermen of Muslims and Paravas, prosperous cultivators of Maravars, Vellalas, Konars

etc., who dominate the Panchayat affairs. The Panchayat remains as a council of some elders representing the major castes which are socially and economically advanced. The election of members is also done mainly on the basis of caste and wealth, rather than competence. The less prosperous castes such as Karayans, Valayans, Asaris, Nadars, Naidus do not have any say in these matters.

Caste Panchayat

160. The Panchayat or the 'council of five' is rather an age-old institution. Prior to the introduction of statutory Panchayats, the villages had

'Nattannais' or caste councils to settle the disputes and quarrels and for the preservation of unity. Caste Panchayat exists even to-day among major communities such as Muslims, Maravars, Idayars, Vellalars, Valayars, Nadars etc. Catholic Paravas do not have a caste panchayat but they used to refer their disputes or petty quarrels to their parish priest at Ramanathapuram. The 'Jamad' of the Muslims is the caste council, which enquires into the petty quarrels, disputes, small thefts, assault, adultery etc. Divorce cases are also referred to the Jamad and the caste Panchayats of Hindu castes. Caste Panchayat is only an internal organisation comprising some persons of their own caste, usually elderly and married men, men of above average intelligence, rich persons etc. The 'Panchayatadars' or the leaders among them in the company of all married men or heads of households hear the disputes arising within their own caste. Fines are also imposed after settlement of the cases and these will be added to Temple fund or caste fund as the case may be. In the main village, caste panchayat of Muslims is functioning regularly, as it is attached to the mosque and on every Friday, people are required to meet after the Jumma prayers. The minor communities like Karayans, Naidus, Asari, Agamudiayar, Vannan and Pandithar do not have caste panchayat among them but they used to refer the disputes to the leading people of Maravars and Vellalas. The Chakkiliyans of Servaikaran Oorani have the tendency to take their disputes to the Maravars, who are a dominant caste there. Occasionally, the agricultural labourers who work as tied servants take the cases to their landlords who settle the disputes along with some wealthy persons belonging to higher castes. The depressed classes, like in other villages, have the habit of referring their disputes to the high caste people; Muslims and Vellalas in the main village (and Maravars in the hamlet) very often administer justice in such cases among lower castes.

Jamad

161. The Jamad or caste committee of Muslims retains its power and strength and justice is administered among the Muslim community. Every Friday, all the Muslims are required to attend special prayers and after the prayers the entire congregation sits on inside the mosque, to enquire any disputes raised by any one among them. Jamad comprises all the heads of families of Muslim community and this is said to have existed from ancient times. The family disputes, mostly divorce cases come

before Jamad and the Panchayathadars, mostly the influential master fishermen are hearing and adjudicating between the disputants and generally they are trying to settle matters peacefully and amicably. In order to avoid too many divorces, they used to postpone the hearing to any other 'Friday meeting' or to some months and the time lag may heal the wounds of ill-feelings and emotional temperament and the chances for uniting the couple will be brighter. Sometimes the cases will be prolonged for several months to one year or so.

A Case study

162. A case study of a private dispute which came before the 'Jamad' is described below.

This is an interesting case where a Muslim boy of 19 working in Malaya as a shop assistant claimed divorce, the wife being a small girl of 15. The boy came down to Athangarai from Malaya on a short vacation of three months and he was forced to marry a girl of some wealthy means, somewhat related to him. Though he was half-hearted in this marital alliance, he gave his consent, due to the pressure of opinion in his family and also from the father of the bride. The bride's father had also offered a good amount of dowry. The age of bridegroom was only 18 and the girl was 14 at the time of marriage. The couple had a peaceful domestic life scarcely for two months, when a quarrel arose between the husband and wife. And the boy left for Malaya, all of a sudden and on reaching there he wrote to his father and also to the Jamad, expressing his claim for divorce. Soon after, the matter was brought forward before the Jamad on a Friday and the Panchayathadars decided to postpone the case for six months, with a view to give time for the parties to come to an amicable settlement. But the boy was insisting his intention of divorce and the bride was sent to her mother's home and she continued to stay with her mother. In the meanwhile, her father suddenly passed away. The parents of the bridegroom also made up their mind to insist the claim of divorce before the Jamad, as their son persisted in his claim. After a lapse of six months, the Pachayathadars re-opened the question and finding it futile to try for a reunion of the couple and a final verdict was given sanctioning the divorce on the condition that the amount of Mahar should be paid by the bridegroom, with an additional fine to the mother of bride for having incurred expenses for maintenance of the girl during the

period of separation. The fine was duly paid by the boy in Malaya through his parents and the Jamad declared that the marriage has become void. Both the man and his former wife now remain divorced and they did not remarry.

Divorce cases

163. It is said that some divorce cases will be amicably settled when during the intervening period, the boy will be appeased by the parents or father-in-law, and for this purpose, Jamad is not taking decisions then and there. Generally, disputes regarding repayment of debts will not be entertained by the Jamad and only the disputes which are of domestic nature such as payment of dowry, Mahar, divorce, separation, marriage etc., will be taken for settlement. In the Jamad,

the rich Samatties are invariably the Panchayath-adars and cooly fishermen do not have any influence. Among the Maravars, Vellalas and Nadars, caste panchayats are functioning but not regularly. Whenever any person affected reports to the leading men of their castes, they meet at any place, in a house or before the temple. Only disputes between the people of their own caste come up before it and in the case of any dispute crossing the boundary of the caste, the leaders of both the castes will be invited for discussion.

Awareness

164. Tables No. XLVII and XLVIII clearly bring out the awareness and attitude of people towards caste panchayat and its usefulness.

TABLE No. XLVII

Caste Panchayat

Community	No. of households	No. according to whom caste panchayat exists for								No. according to whom castes panchayats should exist
		Maravar	Idayar	Valayar	Nadar	Chakkiliyar	Vellala	Pandithar	Muslim	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Maravar	119	62	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Idayar	19	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Valayar	18	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	11	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	9	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Vellala	7	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Naidu	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Karayar	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Catholic										
Paravas	20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	136	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	84	...
Total	357	62	2	6	1	1	1	1	84	2

Out of 119 Maravars only 62 have realised the existence and its full significance and others were not able to express their knowledge on their caste panchayat. Even among Muslims 84 persons had

reported the awareness and out of which 82 had described the function of caste panchayat as the settlement of disputes and one was of the idea that organising festival is the chief function.

TABLE No. XLVIII
Functions of Caste Panchayat

Community	Number of heads of households enquired	Number aware of caste panchayat	Number according to whom functions of caste panchayat are		
			Settlement of disputes	Organising festivals	Enquiry about petty thefts
Maravar	119	62	59	3	...
Idayar	19	2	...	...	2
Valayar	18	6	6	...	...
Nadar	11	1	...	...	1
Chakkiliyar	9	1	1	...	...
Vellala	7	1	1	...	...
Pandithar	2	1	1	...	...
Naidu	3	...	...	...	...
Asari	3	...	...	...	...
Karayar	3	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...
Muslim	136	84	82	1	1
Catholic					
Paravas	20	...	...	...	...
Total	357	158	150	4	4

In general, out of 357 heads of households enquired, 158 were found to be aware of the caste panchayat, four of them reported that caste panchayat existed for organising festivals, another four persons were of the notion that petty thefts were settled by the caste panchayats.

Inter-caste relationship

165. Athangarai, being a multi-caste village, has a complex social character. Muslims being

numerically and economically dominant community hold a pervasive influence over the village affairs. Among Hindus, only Vellalas and Maravars are fairly rich cultivators and the other castes like Idayars, Nadars and Naidus are not economically strong. The depressed classes are never wealthy, just as in any other South Indian village and they are usually tied servants or labourers in the fields of upper caste Hindus or Muslims. Valayans mostly depend on Muslims for their living as they

work under a few Muslim households as tied servants. Each community lives its own life, and yet they are mutually dependent. Several castes follow their own traditional calling e. g. Maravars and Vellalas practise cultivation, the Kammalan does carpentry, the barber shaves, the washerman washes, and the Nadar taps palmyra juice. However, people quite often mix together in agricultural activities or trade and

they mutually assist each other. People of different communities have some links between them, such as landlord and lease cultivator, cultivator and cooly; master and servant, trader and customer, creditor and debtor etc., which ignore all barriers of caste or creed. Table No. XLIX below indicates the permissibility and desirability of inter-caste marriages among the different communities in this village.

TABLE No. XLIX

Permissibility and desirability of inter-caste marriage

Community	No. of heads of households interviewed	Number of persons who consider it permissible to join marital tie with		Number of persons who consider it desirable to join marital tie with	
		Same caste	Other castes	Another sub-caste of the same community (Nadar)	Another sub-caste of the same community (Muslim)
Maravar	119	119	...	...	...
Idayar	19	19	...	...	...
Valayar	18	18	...	...	...
Nadar	11	11	...	1	...
Chakkiliyar	9	9	...	...	...
Vellala	7	7	...	...	...
Naidu	3	3	...	...	...
Asari	3	3	...	...	...
Karayar	3	3	...	...	...
Vannan	2	2	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	2	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	2	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...
Semman	1	1	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	1	...	...	...
Muslim	136	136	...	...	1
Catholic Paravas	20	20	...	...	...
Total	357	357	...	1	1

The different types of contravention of marriages occurred in the village are indicated in Table No. L.

TABLE No. L
Contravention of marriage rules

Community	Number of marriages occurred in contravention of caste rules	Remarks
Maravar	...	
Idayar	1	Married girl of the same 'Kilai' or sept.
Valayar	...	
Nadar	...	
Chakkiliyar	...	
Vellala	...	
Karayar	1	Married a girl, an offspring of Vellala father and a Maravar mother.
Naidu	...	
Asari	...	
Vannan	...	
Pandithar	...	
Agamudiyar	...	
Brahmin	...	
Pandaram	...	
Semman	...	
Muslim	1	Married a Christian girl.
Catholic Paravas	...	
Total	3	

There are two cases of inter-caste marriages; one Konar youth has married a girl who belongs to the same sept or Kilai.

Muslims and Hindus

166. In the main village, as stated earlier, Muslims command the numerical majority and they are economically well off. Only the hamlet of Servaikaran Oorani is fully occupied by the Sembunattu Maravars, who are not fairly rich. Muslims by their economic strength command more influence in village affairs. The President of Panchayat is a Muslim for two successive terms from the inception of Panchayat. The Fishermen Co-operative Society has also a Muslim President.

Of course, they are more united and stronger than the Hindus, who are split into different caste divisions. Rivalry exists between Hindus and Muslims in recent days and during the time of socio-economic survey these two religious groups showed their comparative strength in the cause of education. A proposal of raising a building to the local school was started and the Muslims preferred to raise a building within the campus of the mosque, which was not agreeable to Hindus. So the original proposal of constructing a common building was dropped and Hindus came forward to raise another building close to their street and one Vellala donated his land free of cost, and all Hindu castes joined in this venture by contributing money, as well as labour in the construction of school building.

Rigidity of caste

167. In rural areas like Athangarai, caste system is deep-rooted and it exercises profound influence on the occupational pattern and social and cultural life. The arts, crafts, trades, services etc., are completely ingrained and integrated with the frame of caste. It is the caste that determines one's line of profession or occupation and his social standing amidst the village society. The accident of birth somehow decides irrevocably the whole course of his social and domestic relations and it becomes obligatory to follow a particular mode of life in regard to diet, drink, dress, marriage etc. It is the caste which attends to many of the incidents that accompany a man's entrance into the world and which stipulates the method of disposal of a man's body. He is forbidden to eat certain kinds of food and caste prescribes also the manner in which food should be taken and specifies with whom he may not eat. Caste system deals with dress and personal hygiene and it also circumscribes the field wherein he must seek his wife for himself. Inter-dining is generally allowed only among castes of the same level and it is a matter of common experience that a person of low caste such as Chakkiliyan, Semman etc., can take food from people of higher levels but a man of higher caste does not accept food cooked by a person belonging to a lower caste. The upper castes observe these food regulations very rigidly and never they take food or water from inferior castes as the mere touch of those castes defiles and pollutes it. As a rule, we see the lower the caste, the larger is the number of castes from whom it can accept food or drink and so also, the higher the caste the lesser is the number of castes from whom

Death rites

171. Observance of death rites is another factor involving in the social ranking. The castes who burn the dead bodies consider other castes who bury dead bodies, as inferior castes. Invariably all the lower castes bury their dead; the traditional belief according to Hindu rituals, is that burial is a lower form of disposal of the dead than cremation. The caste ranking in the village is thus based on so many factors which are essentially age-old, ritual and not economic.

Family structure

172. The general type of family among rural parts was a joint family in former days but the family structure is in transition nowadays from the joint type to simple family. Among Muslims of Athangarai, joint families are largely found but still the percentage of such families is only 12.5. Table No. LI furnishes the details of simple, intermediate and joint types of families in each community.

Of the total number of 357 households in Athangarai, 221 are simple families comprising

TABLE No. LI
Types of families

Community	Total number of households	Number of households under different types of families			
		Simple	Intermediate	Joint	Other types
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Maravar	119	76	26	7	10
Idayar	19	11	6	1	1
Valayar	18	14	2	1	1
Vellala	7	2	1	1	3
Nadar	11	9	1	...	1
Chakkiliyar	9	5	3	1	...
Karayar	3	3	...	...	...
Naidu	3	1	1	...	1
Asari	3	...	3	...	...
Vannan	2	1	1	...	...
Pandithar	2	1	...	1	...
Agamudiyar	2	2	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	1	...	...	...
Semman	1	1	...	...	...
Muslim	136	78	27	17	14
Catholic Paravas	20	15	2	1	2
Total	357	221	73	30	33

the couple and their unmarried children. Joint families number only 30, where parents live with their married sons and children of theirs also. Seventy three families come under 'Intermediate' type where married couples live with one of the parents living. Here unlike the joint families,

there is only one married couple and there are other relations, anyone of parents (father or mother) with or without unmarried children. The statement below indicates the different types of family according to major religious groups.

Religion	Total No. of households	Percentage of different types of families			
		Simple	Inter-mediate	Joint	Others
Hindus	201	63.7	21.4	6.5	8.4
Muslims	136	58.1	19.1	12.5	10.3
Christians	20	75.0	10.0	5.0	10.0
Total	357	62.2	19.9	8.7	9.2

173. Among catholic Paravas, 75 per cent are simple type families and only five percent are joint families i.e. only one out of twenty families of them is a joint family. Muslims, however, tend to live as joint families than Hindus or Christians; one family in every eight is a joint family among them. There is no joint family among Nadars, Karayars, Naidus and Asaris. In the case of Maravars, who are mostly cultivators, there are seven joint families as against the total number of 119 families. Valayans who are the poor landless labourers tend to live as simple families, as evidenced from the fact that only one among 18 families is a joint family. Generally, cultivators owning lands themselves live together as joint families, for generations together. In such cases, father, mother, married sons with their wives and children, unmarried brothers, sisters, all live under one common roof and with one kitchen. All the lands are held by all together and every male

member works for the family and the incomes of all are pooled. It is a group of simple families living together. But in this village, agriculture is having no scope with no fruitful return, and its impact necessitates the break down of joint families; individual efforts to maintain their own families prevail.

Social awareness

174. The villagers, lead rather a secluded life-caring for nothing occurring outside their little world. Especially the fisherfolk of Athangarai live their tranquil lives, hardly conscious of events happening outside the village. Day in and day out they struggle hard with the fishing nets and boats; they care nothing but to catch fishes and their ideas and ideals are limited within the village itself. They do not read newspapers nor listen to the radio put up by the village panchayat. They are not visiting nearby towns for entertainment or any other purpose. Thus goes the routine life of the fishermen. So also is the case among the humble agricultural coolies. The awareness and range of information of the heads of households were ascertained by way of examining their knowledge of district and taluk headquarters, Panchayat Union headquarters, location of Police Station and major rivers of the district. The results of our enquiry are shown in Table No LII.

TABLE No. LII

Range of Information

Community	Total No. of heads of households enquired	Number of heads of households who know the names of				
		District headquarters	Taluk headquarters	Panchayat block headquarters	Police Station	Principal rivers of the district
Maravar	119	45	105	20	19	114
Idayar	19	4	15	2	3	18
Valayar	18	3	15	3	...	17
Nadar	11	6	8	3	2	10
Chakkiliyar	9	3	9	1	1	9
Vellala	7	5	6	3	4	6
Karayar	3	1	3	1	1	3
Asari	3	1	3	1	1	3
Naidu	3	3	3	3	3	3
Vannan	2	1	2	...	1	2
Agamudiyar	2	2	2	2	1	2
Pandithar	2	2	2	1	1	2
Brahmin	1	1	1	1	1	1
Semman	1	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	1	1	...	...	1
Muslim	136	52	124	16	14	132
Catholic Paravas	20	8	15	3	5	17
Total	357	138	314	60	57	340

Out of the total number of 357 heads of households, only 138 persons are aware of the district headquarters, 314 know the location of Taluk headquarters, 60 the Panchayat Union headquarters and only 57 the location of concerned police station. Though the village is situated on the mouth of Vaigai river, as many as 17 persons were not able to mention the name of the major river of the district. Social awareness is comparatively better among some Hindu castes such as Naidus, Vellalas, Nadars, Brahmins etc., and the depressed classes showed a thorough lack of knowledge about the location of these places.

Untouchability

175. As regards the people's awareness of the prohibition of untouchability under law, most of the persons viz., 211 out of 357 persons are aware of it but among Valayars, Nadars, Karayars etc., the knowledge on this aspect is poor. Untouchability still exists in various forms and the 'Thotti' and Semman live in the farthest corner of the village and they do not take water or bathe in the public well or tank along with caste Hindus and Muslims. The awareness of heads of households on this aspect will be seen from Table No. LIII.

TABLE No. LIII

Awareness of untouchability offences Act

Community	Number of persons interviewed	Number of persons aware of prohibition of untouchability
Maravar	119	68
Idayar	19	8
Valayar	18	9
Nadar	11	6
Chakkiliyar	9	7
Vellala	7	5
Karayar	3	1
Asari	3	3
Naidu	3	3
Agamudiyar	2	2
Vannan	2	1
Pandithar	2	1
Brahmin	1	1
Pandaram	1	...
Semman	1	...
Muslim	136	90
Catholic Paravas	20	6
Total	357	211

176. Table No. LIV relates to the awareness of villagers of the functions of Gramasevak.

TABLE No. LIV

Awareness of functions of Gramasevak

Community	Number of households	Number aware of the functions of Gramasevak	No. that could describe the functions of Gramasevak			
			Fully satisfactorily	Satisfactorily	Unsatisfactorily	Incorrectly
Maravar	119	76	...	76	...	...
Idayar	19	8	...	8	...	...
Valayar	18	11	...	11	...	...
Nadar	11	4	...	4	...	...
Chakkiliyar	9	1	...	1	...	...
Vellala	7	5	...	5	...	...
Karayar	3	1	...	1	...	...
Naidu	3	3	...	3	...	...
Asari	3	2	...	2	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	2	...	2	...	...
Vannan	2	1	...	1	...	...
Pandithar	2	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	1	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	136	72	...	72	...	...
Catholic Paravas	20	8	...	8	...	...
Total	357	195	...	195	...	...

The existence and functions of the Gramasevak of the Development Block scheme are not fully known to the villagers; especially among Muslim fisherfolk, Valayans and Nadars, the lack of knowledge is visible. Taking the village as a whole,

195 persons are aware of the functions of the Gramasevak, out of 357 interviewed.

Table No. LV relates to the awareness of people regarding the changes in Hindu Laws of Succession and Adoption.

TABLE No. LV
Awareness of changes in Hindu Laws of succession and adoption

Community	No. of persons interviewed	Number aware that there have been changes in Hindu Adoption Act	Number that could describe the changes in Hindu Adoption Act correctly	Number aware that there have been changes in Hindu Succession Act	Number that could describe the changes in Hindu Succession Act correctly
Maravar	119	...	...	4	4
Idayar	19	...	...	4	4
Valayar	18	...	...	...	...
Nadar	11	...	...	1	1
Chakkiliyar	9	...	...	...	...
Vellala	7	...	...	2	2
Naidu	3	...	...	2	1
Asari	3	...	...	1	1
Karayar	3	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	...	...	1	1
Agamudiyar	2	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...
Catholic Paravas	20	...	...	...	...
Muslims	136	...	...	7	7
Total	357	...	...	22	21

Nobody in the village is aware of the fact that there were some changes in the Hindu Adoption Act. Out of 357 heads of households enquired, 22 persons are aware that changes occurred in Hindu Succession Act and 21 were able to describe the changes. Generally

the upper castes among Hindus such as Pillais, Naidus, Maravars know the worldly events while the inferior castes like Valayars, Karayars, Nadars, Chakkiliyars, Semman etc., are in complete darkness of the outside happenings.

177. Table No. LVI reflects the general attitude of people in regard to social and political affairs. It will be seen that nobody among Valayars, Chakkiliyars, Karayars, Semman, Pandithars etc., is in the habit of reading newspapers, while four Vellalas

out of seven, and two Naidus of the total number of three households and 16 out of 119 Maravars read daily newspapers. The reading habit among Muslim community is also very negligible; only 16 heads of households out of 136 read daily newspapers.

TABLE No. LVI
General Activities

Community	Total number of households	No. of households in which member or members			
		Reading daily newspaper	Working for social uplift	Taking active part in politics	Joined Co-operative Society
Maravar	119	16	4	3	13
Idayar	19	4	2	1	...
Valayar	18	...	...	...	...
Nadar	11	2	1	...	...
Chakkiliyar	9	...	...	...	...
Vellala	7	4	2	1	1
Asari	3	1	...	...	...
Naidu	3	2	1	1	...
Karayar	3	...	...	...	2
Pandithar	2	...	...	...	...
Aganudiyar	2	2	...	...	...
Vannan	2	1	1	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	...	...	...	...
Catholic Paravas	20	4	2	...	2
Muslim	136	16	3	4	27
Total	357	52	16	10	45

The social education centre run by the Panchayat gets the Tamil daily newspapers and some magazines but they are scarcely used by the majority of people. The voluntary organisations of the Muslim youths and some Hindu caste people in the main village had started reading rooms getting some vernacular magazines and newspapers but they were short-lived. The reading rooms are seldom used by the people and they are practically closed or without newspaper or magazine. Only 10 persons had some interest and taken active part in politics and 16 had worked for social uplift. And even these persons do not evince continued interest and only at the time of general elections they are active, of course, motivated by the external

influence from the neighbouring villages.

Village volunteer force

178. The 'village volunteer force' sponsored by the Block Development Department soon after the Chinese attack on our country, has gained some ground and not many persons are still aware of it. Only a few youths among Nadars, Vellalas, Naidus and Maravars took interest in it and the functions are practically nil. Similar is the fate of the so-called 'Radio Club' sponsored by the village panchayat, to encourage the people, for 'community hearing' of the radio programmes and only 20 persons have joined as members of the club.

Family Planning

179. The idea of family planning or limitation of family has quite a recent origin in Athangarai. Though a backward village, the people are not quite indifferent to the scheme of family planning. The general awareness of people on family planning is quite encouraging; with the introduction of Panchayat Union, the village panchayats were required to propagate the ideas and ideals of family planning and hence most of the villagers now know something on family planning. The heads of households were examined by suitable questionnaire whether they are aware of the family planning centre and whether they are aware that pregnancy can be prevented by deliberate means. Their attitude towards the idea whether they want more children, or do not want more children or whether they are indifferent was also enquired. The results of enquiry have been presented in Table No. LVII.

Attitude

180. The enquiry was confined to only heads of households who are married persons. Out of 266 heads of households interviewed 254 persons were found to be knowing that conception can be prevented by artificial means, but in regard to the attitude towards family planning most of them do not have definite notions. They are mostly indifferent. The attitude of married people as ascertained from the present survey will be clear from the following figures.

Attitude	Number	Percentage
Number of persons who want more children	9	3.4
Number of persons who do not want more children	6	2.2
Number of persons who are indifferent	251	94.4
Total	266	100.0

Only 2.2 per cent of the persons interviewed expressed their disinclination to have more children, 3.4 per cent desired to have more children and as many as 94.4 per cent of people were found to be simply indifferent to this aspect itself.

The attitude of people towards the idea of having more children or not, may depend upon so many factors such as income, number of existing children etc. The following analysis relates to the attitude of people with reference to number of sons or daughters. The number of heads of households who want more children or do not want more children is shown below.

Category	Total number of persons	No. of persons		
		Wanting more children	Wanting no more children	Indifferent
Persons having more than three children	78	...	3	75
Persons having 1-3 children	70	4	2	64
Persons having all daughters	38	...	...	38
Persons having all sons	59	4	1	54
No children at all	21	1	...	20
Total	266	9	6	251

Of the total number of 78 heads of families with more than three children, nobody had expressed the desire to have more children, while three of them had expressed their disinclination to have any more children and the remaining 75 persons did not respond in either way i.e. about 96 per cent are completely indifferent to this question at all. Table No. LVIII furnishes the number of heads of households wanting more children or no more children as classified by their family incomes.

TABLE

Information and Attitude towards family planning

Community	Number of heads of households		No. of heads of households wanting more children already having				
	Aware of family planning centre	Aware that pregnancy can be prevented by deliberate means	More than three children	1-3 children	No son	No daughter	No children
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Maravar	91	89	...	1	...	1	...
Idayar	12	12	...	...	...	1	...
Valayar	13	13	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	9	9	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	7	7	...	...	...	...	...
Vellala	5	5	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	2	2	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	3	...	...	...	...	...
Karayar	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Pandithar	2	2	...	...	...	...	...
Agamudiyar	2	2	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Semman	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Catholic Paravas	10	10	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	97	95	...	3	...	2	1
Total	258	254	...	4	...	4	1

TABLE

Attitude towards family planning

No. of heads of the households wanting more children, having monthly income of

Community	No. of heads of the households wanting more children, having monthly income of				
	Rs. 101 and above	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 25 or less
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Maravar	1	...	...	1	...
Idayar	1	...
Valayar
Nadar
Chakkiliyar
Vellala
Asari
Naidu
Karayar
Pandithar
Agamudiyar
Vannan
Brahmin
Pandaram
Semman
Catholic Paravas
Muslim	1	1	...	4	...
Total	2	1	...	6	...

No. LVII

with reference to number of children

No. of heads of households wanting no more children already having					No. of heads of households who are indifferent				
More than three children	1-3 children	No son	No daughter	No children	More than three children	1-3 children	No son	No daughter	No children
(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
1	1	...	...	...	26	26	9	21	6
...	4	2	3	4	1
...	6	4	1	1	1
...	4	2	...	1	2
...	2	1	...	...	1
1	1	...	1
...	2	...	...
...	1	1	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...
...	1	...
...	2	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	1	...
...
...	1	...	...
...	1
...	5	1	2	6	...
1	1	...	1	...	26	24	19	19	7
3	2	...	1	...	75	64	38	54	20

No. LVIII

with reference to monthly income

No. of heads of the households wanting no more children having monthly income of					No. of heads of households who are indifferent having monthly income of				
Rs. 101 & above	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 25 or less	Rs. 101 & above	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 25 or less
(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
...	1	1	...	...	2	6	16	60	4
...	1	2	11	...
...	1	9	3
...	1	1	7	...
...	1	3	...
...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...
...	2	...
...	1	1	...
...	1	...	...
...	1	...	...
...	2	...
...	1	...	1	...
...	1	...
...	3	1	9	1
1	2	...	7	9	16	62	1
1	1	2	2	...	9	21	41	171	9

TABLE

Attitude towards family planning

Community (1)	No. wanting more children, the age of the heads of household (male) being				
	Above 50 years (2)	41—50 years (3)	31—40 years (4)	21—30 years (5)	20 years or less (6)
Maravar	...	1	...	1	...
Idayar	1	...
Valayar
Nadar
Chakkiliyar
Vellala
Asari
Naidu
Karayar
Pandithar
Agamudiyar
Vannan
Brahmin
Pandaram
Semman
Catholic Paravas
Muslim	1	2	2	1	...
Total	1	3	2	3	...

TABLE

Attitude towards family planning

Community (1)	No. of heads of households wanting more children the age of the child bearing woman being						
	Above 40 years (2)	36—40 (3)	31—35 (4)	26—30 (5)	21—25 (6)	16—20 (7)	Less than 16 (8)
Maravar	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Idayar	1	...
Valayar
Nadar
Chakkiliyar
Vellala
Asari
Naidu
Karayar
Pandithar
Agamudiyar
Vannan
Brahmin
Pandaram
Semman
Catholic Paravas
Muslim	1	...	3	1	1	...	...
Total	1	1	3	1	2	1	...

No. LIX

with reference to age of the head of household

No. wanting no more children the age of the heads of the household (male) being					No. of heads of the households who are indifferent				
Above 50 years (7)	41—50 years (8)	31—40 years (9)	21—30 years (10)	20 or less years (11)	Above 50 years (12)	41—50 years (13)	31—40 years (14)	21—30 years (15)	20 years or less (16)
1	...	1	...	...	16	14	31	27	...
...	3	3	2	6	...
...	3	...	5	4	1
...	1	2	5	1	...
...	1	1	...	2	...
...	...	1	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
...	1	...	1	...
...	2	...	...
...	1	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...
...	2	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...
...	5	3	4	2	...
2	1	...	...	...	30	17	29	19	...
3	1	2	...	...	62	43	83	62	1

No. LX

with reference to age of the child bearing woman

No. of heads of households wanting no more children the age of the child bearing woman being							No. of heads of households who are indifferent						
Above 40 years (9)	36—40 (10)	31—35 (11)	26—30 (12)	21—25 (13)	16—20 (14)	Less than 16 (15)	Above 40 years (16)	36—40 (17)	31—35 (18)	26—30 (19)	21—25 (20)	16—20 (21)	Less than 16 (22)
1	...	1	...	...	...	...	15	12	15	17	25	4	...
...	3	3	2	1	3	2	...
...	1	2	3	1	4	2	...
...	2	1	4	1	1	...	...
...	1	1	...	1	1	...	...
...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	1	...	...
...	1	1	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
...	1	...	1	...	...	...
...	1	1	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	4	3	3	2	2	...	...
2	...	1	...	...	...	...	29	12	17	16	20	1	...
3	...	3	...	...	...	...	57	36	47	44	57	10	...

TABLE

Attitude towards family planning

Community	No. of heads of the households wanting more children duration of marriage being				
	Over 20 years	16—20 years	11—15 years	6—10 years	5 years or less
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Maravar	1	...	...	1	...
Idayar	1
Valayar
Nadar
Chakkiliyar
Vellala
Asari
Naidu
Karayar
Pandithar
Aganudiyar
Vannan
Brahmin
Pandaram
Semman
Catholic Paravas
Muslim	2	3	...	1	...
Total	3	3	...	2	1

181. The different types of attitude of people with the varying income levels are analysed below.

Monthly income	No. of persons	No. of persons		
		Wanting more children	Wanting no more children	Indifferent
Rs. 25 or less	9	...	...	9
Rs. 26 to 50	179	6	2	171
Rs. 51 to 75	43	...	2	41
Rs. 76 to 100	23	1	1	21
Rs. 101 and over	12	2	1	9
Total	266	9	6	251

In all the categories the persons who are indifferent to the aspect of family limitation predominate. In the lower income group of Rs. 25 or below,

all the nine persons did not express any desire either to have more children or to have no more children. In the next income bracket of Rs. 26—50, out of 179 such persons 171 or 95.5 per cent are indifferent and only 3.4 per cent want more children. In the highest income group of Rs. 100 or more, nine persons out of a total of 12 were indifferent, two desired to have some more children and one expressed his desire for not having more children. From the above figures there does not seem to be any correlation between the economic standards of people and attitude towards family planning, in this village. The relative attitude of people towards family planning with reference to factors such as age of husband, age of wife and duration of marriage will be clear from Tables No. LIX, LX and LXI.

No. LXI

with reference to duration of marriage

No. of heads of households wanting no more children duration of marriage being

No. of heads of households who are indifferent

Over 20 years (7)	16—20 years (8)	11—15 years (9)	6—10 years (10)	5 years or less (11)	Over 20 years (12)	16—20 years (13)	11—15 years (14)	6—10 years (15)	5 years or less (16)
1	1	...	...	...	22	6	11	26	13
...	...	...	...	...	3	4	...	...	5
...	...	...	...	...	2	2	1	4	4
...	...	...	...	...	3	1	3	1	1
...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	1
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
...
...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	2	6	1	4	1
2	1	...	...	...	33	14	18	23	7
3	3	...	...	...	69	47	36	66	33

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

182. Athangarai village was a famous sea-port, noted for its chank fishery and had considerable trade in tobacco. The Raja Choultry is a work of architecture where travellers and pilgrims to Rameswaram and Dhanuskodi were fed. But, to-day Athangarai retains no shadow of its glory. It is no longer a port. At present it is not lying on the pilgrims-route to Rameswaram and the choultry is not used, though, feeding still goes on. The building is now in a decayed and ruined state and its brick and stone walls remain as a witness to the glory that has departed. Athangarai is now an insignificant fishing village.

183. The analysis of the social and economic features of this village leads to an impression that it is a poor and backward village. The economic resources are limited. With no dependable source of irrigation, agriculture is a gamble which depends on uncertain and capricious rainfall and poor fertility of soil. Mat-weaving is their secondary occupation but it proves as not a gainful occupation. Cultivation is quite uneconomic and a 'son of soil' has rightly remarked during our enquiry 'உழுதவன் கணக்குப் பார்த்தால் உழக்கு கூட மிஞ்சாது' (meaning if the peasant counts the cost, he would not find a gain of even a quarter measure of grain). The plight of landless labourers is deplorable; the wages are

miserably low, and they find no full employment for about six months in a year.

184. The position is not bright even for fishermen. The fishermen of Athangarai, from time immemorial, follow the traditional mode of in-shore fishing with the age-old shore-seine net, *Karavalai* and their catch continues to be poor. Their canoes and tackle are antiquated. The fishermen are quite ignorant and they continue to be dominated by some master fishermen who control the fishing industry. Debt is an universal feature among them and the master fishermen contrive to get their coolies into debt and thus have a powerful hold over them. Literacy levels are still low and though some efforts are made in raising the literacy rates, much remains to be done. Until the time of the survey, not much work has been done by the Block Development Organisation and even the small improvements effected by them will not make any difference in the over-all general backwardness. In one direction, the village has improved to some extent; it is connected by a motorable road and buses are now plying to the town of Ramanathapuram. It is hoped that this road, though not in good order, will pave the ground for greater contact with Ramanathapuram and other market towns and for the betterment of social and economic conditions of the villagers.

A. DURATION OF RESIDENCE :

4. (a) For how many generations, counting from head of the household backwards, has the household been residing in this village ?
- (b) If the head of household has migrated to this village, together with the household, where was his ancestral home ?
(Specify taluk, district and State).

B. RELIGION :

5. (a) Religion :
- (b) Sect :
- (c) Tribe or Caste :
- (d) Sub-tribe or sub-caste :
6. (a) Is there a deity or object of worship or a sacred plant in the house ? (Answer Yes/No).
- (b) If ' Yes ', where is the deity or object of worship located in the house ?
- (c) What is the name of the deity or object of worship or sacred plant and what is the form of worship ?
- (d) Other than this, what is the principal deity of the household ?
7. Do you know that untouchability in any form has been prohibited under Law ? (Answer Yes/No).

C. MARRIAGE :

8. (a) (1) Has any marriage in contravention of caste or tribal law taken place in this household ? (Answer Yes/No).
- (2) If such a marriage has taken place, give details about the marriage.
- (b) With what castes or tribes other than the caste or tribe of the household is marriage.
- (1) Permissible.
- (2) Desirable.
- (c) Was dowry given on the occasion of the marriage of the son ? (Answer Yes/No.) If ' Yes ', mention amount—cash and kind.
- (d) Was dowry given on the occasion of the marriage of the daughter ? (Answer Yes/No.) If ' Yes ', mention amount.

- (e) Are you aware of the fact that the taking of dowry has been prohibited according to a recent piece of legislation ?
9. Have you any objection to contract marriages for persons of your household with persons of same social and economic status as yours but belonging to the following communities. [Mark with a (V) the names of the communities against which you have no objection] (communities to be listed in the village):—

D. INHERITANCE :

10. (a) Do you know that there have been changes in recent years in Hindu Adoption Act ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) If yes, what do you think are the salient features of recent changes ? (List of salient features to be prepared.)
11. (a) Do you think that there have been changes in recent years in Hindu Succession Act ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) If yes, what do you think are the salient features of such changes ? (List of salient features to be prepared.)
12. (a) What relatives, including male members and widows and daughters, married and unmarried, inherit property on the death of a married male person belonging to the same caste as your household ?
- (b) What is the share of each such member ?
13. Are you in favour of inheritance of property by daughters equally with sons ?

E. PROPERTY :

Land.

14. If the household possesses land fill up the following :—
- (a) (1) Own lands.
- (2) Land held direct from Government under tenure less substantial than ownership.
- (3) Land held from private persons or institutions.
- (4) Land given out to private persons or institutions.
- (5) Land held on lease.
- (6) Others.

Total ...

- (b) Total area under cultivation :
- (c) Area comprising homestead :
- | (d) Name of crop | Quantity obtained
last year | Quantity
consumed | Quantity
sold |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| (i) Paddy | | | |
| (ii) Wheat | | | |
| (iii) Cholam, Ragi, Cumbu | | | |
| (iv) Pulses including gram | | | |
| (v) Sugarcane | | | |
| (vi) Barley | | | |
| (vii) Vegetable | | | |
| (viii) Jute | | | |
| (ix) Chillies | | | |
| (x) Tobacco | | | |
| (xi) Oilseeds | | | |
| (xii) Cotton | | | |
| (xiii) Ginger | | | |
| (xiv) Fodder or bamboo or cane | | | |
| (xv) Fruits | | | |
| (xvi) Other agricultural crops (Maize, Jowar, Bajra, etc.) | | | |
- (e) What is the organic manure used ?
- (f) Do you use chemical fertilisers ?
- (g) Do you use any new agricultural implement which has been taught to you for the first time in the last five years ?
- (h) Do you borrow agricultural implements from others at the time of cultivation ?
- (i) Do you take help of neighbours at the time of sowing or harvesting ?
- (j) Do you assist your neighbours and receive help at the time of cultivation in the shape of manual labour ?
15. How much did your father own at the time of his death ?
- (a) Land in acres.
- (b) Houses and other property.
16. (a) Do you own any cattle or poultry ? Give numbers.

- (i) Milch cattle.
 - (ii) Draught bullock.
 - (iii) Cows, goats, sheep, pigs, duck/geese and fowl, buffaloes.
- (b) How much milk or milk products do you sell?

17. *Fishery*—

- (a) Does the household own any tank?
- (b) If fish is reared, was any quantity sold last year? (Answer Yes/No. If 'yes', mention quantity.)

F. **INDUSTRY** :

18. Do you conduct any industry? If yes, is it traditional?

- (a) What are the products? Quantity produced and quantity sold last year.
- (b) Which of them do you sell to neighbours or in the market?
- (c) Have you taken up this industry for the first time in the course of the last five years?
- (d) Have you adopted any new tools or instruments for running this industry? If so, name the details of the tools and instruments.

19. Name the art or craft in which you have earned proficiency.

20. When and how did you learn the art or craft concerned?

- (a) Do you consider further training necessary? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) If yes, describe the type of training you desire.

21. (a) What was your father's occupation?

- (b) If you have changed your father's occupation, why have you done so?
- (c) Were you forced for lack of choice into this occupation? (Answer Yes/No.)

22. (a) Have you yourself changed your occupation from another kind to this one? (Answer Yes/No.)

- (b) If yes, explain why you have changed your own occupation?
- (c) Are you content with the present occupation?

- (d) If not, what other work you are doing ?
23. (a) Are you content with the present occupation ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) If 'No', what other work you are doing?
24. What kind of work would you like your son to do ?
25. (a) If you are engaged in trade or business, mention the commodities dealt in.
- (b) How do you get your finance ?
- (c) What is your approximate profit ?

G. INDEBTEDNESS :

26. If head of household is in debt—
- (a) Mention amount of debt outstanding.
- (b) Is the household in debt ? If 'Yes', fill up the following :
- (a) Cause—
1. Purchase of land.
 2. House construction or repairs to existing building.
 3. Marriages.
 4. Funerals.
 5. To give dowry.
 6. To clear outstanding debts.
 7. Sickness.
 8. Confinement.
 9. Family day-to-day expenses.
 10. Household cultivation.
 11. Industry run by household.
 12. Business run by household.
 13. Festivals.
 14. Others.

Amount
Rs. nP.

(b) *Source of debt—*

1. Relatives.
2. Friends or neighbours.
3. Village money-lenders.
4. Professional money-lenders from outside.
5. Government institutions.

Amount

Rate of interest

6. Co-operative Credit Societies.
7. Land Mortgage Banks.
8. Other Co-operative Societies.
9. Others (Specify).

H. EDUCATION :

- (a) How much did you spend last year on the education of your children ?
- (b) Does any member of the household regularly read a newspaper or listen to news broadcast ?

I. COMMUNITY :

- (a) Does the head of the household know headquarters of district, taluk, panchayat union council and Block Development Office ; location of the Police station under the jurisdiction of which the village is ?
- (b) Does the head of the household know the names of the principal rivers flowing through the district ?

APPLICABLE TO ZAMIN VILLAGERS AND THOSE RECENTLY SETTLED :

29. (a) Do you think that abolition of zamindari and intermediary rights has resulted in any good to you ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) If yes, indicate how you have benefited.
- (c) If no, why have you not been benefited ?
30. (a) Have you benefited from any scheme of land reclamation or land development or any other form of Land Reform ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) If yes, explain how have you benefited.
31. (a) Is there a Co-operative Society in your village ? If yes, how many are there ? If no, do you desire to have one ?
- (b) If yes, are you a member ? (Give the name of the society or societies.)
- (c) If no, why are you not a member ?
32. (a) Is your village covered by the Community Development Project ?
- (b) Do you know what are the functions of Grama Sevak ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (c) If yes, describe his functions.

33. (a) Have you benefited from the Block Development Office ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) If yes, how have you benefited ?
34. (a) Is there a panchayat in your village ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) If yes, how long has the panchayat been in your village ?
- (c) What are the main functions of the panchayat ?
- (d) What are the main parties in your panchayat and which caste is leading the panchayat ?
- (e) Has there been any improvement in your village since the panchayat was established ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (f) If yes, what have been the improvements ?
- (g) Has there been any harm after its establishment ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (h) If yes, what were the evils ?
35. (a) Has any caste or tribe of your village got a separate panchayat of its own ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) If yes, what are the main functions of this caste or tribal panchayat ?
- (c) Since the statutory panchayats are functioning, do you think these caste or tribal panchayats should still continue ? If yes, why should they exist ?
36. (a) Is there a family planning centre in your area ? (Answer Yes/No.)
- (b) Do you know that man and wife can prevent conception of a child by deliberate means if they wish to do so ?
- (c) Does the head of the household wish that no more children were born to him ? or does he wish for more ? or is he indifferent ?

J. DIET :

37. (a) How many times a day do the members of the household take their meals ?
- Are they vegetarians or non-vegetarians ?
- (b) What are the usual items of diet at each meal ?
- (Specify whether rice, wheat, grams, roots etc.)

- (c) What are the foods or drinks prohibited?
 (d) Does the household take sugar/tea or coffee?

K. UTENSILS :

38. (a) What utensils are used for preparing food and for storage of drinking water?
 (b) Of what materials are important utensils made?
 (1) Earthenware
 (2) Aluminium
 (3) Copper
 (4) Brass
 (5) Eversilver
 (6) Silver

L. FUEL :

39. What fuel is ordinarily used for cooking?
 40. How do they procure it?

M. FURNITURE AND ORNAMENTS :

41. (a) Does the household possess a bedstead chair/table / mirror / bench / local cot/wall shelf/almirah/stool. (cross out those not found)
 (b) Is the household using any new kind of furniture for the first time in the last five years?
 (c) If so, what are they?
 (d) Does the household use mosquito nets?
42. List all the ornaments used by (a) men and (b) women. Give the local names and mention whether gold or silver or brass or any other material is mainly used. Give drawings.

N. HOUSES :

43. Give details about the house materials.

Roof—

- (1) Mud roof.
 (2) Country tiled.
 (3) Mangalore tiled.
 (4) Terraced (pucca roof).
 (5) Zinc sheet.

- (6) Tin roof.
- (7) Asbestos roof.
- (8) Corrugated iron roof.
- (9) Wooden roof.
- (10) Straw or grass roof.
- (11) Leaf roof.
- (12) Others.

Wall—

- (1) Mud wall.
- (2) Bamboo wattled wall.
- (3) Mud plastered bamboo wattled wall.
- (4) Wall of twigs and branches.
- (5) Wall of twigs and branches plastered with mud.
- (6) Reed wall.
- (7) Mud plastered reed wall.
- (8) Wooden wall.
- (9) Brick wall.
- (10) Straw or grass wall.
- (11) Leaf wall.
- (12) Stone wall.
- (13) Others.

Floor—

- (1) Mud floor.
- (2) Cement floor.
- (3) Wooden floor.
- (4) Stone floor.
- (5) Lime and mortar floor.

Number of slopes—

- One.
- Two.
- Three.
- Four.
- Five.

Number of slopes (Contd.)

Six or more.

Without slope.

44. (a) Give a plan of the house and compound showing the main places, the material of the roof, walls and doors.

(b) Total number of rooms in the house.

NOTE :—Give sketches and photographs wherever possible.

O. CONSUMER GOODS :

45. (1) (a) Does the household possess hurricane lantern/petromax or hazak / battery torchlight / kerosene stove / bicycle/ gramophone/radio set ?

(Cross out those which do not apply.)

(b) Has any of the items been acquired for the first time in the last five years ?

If yes, which are these articles ?

(c) Does the household use toilet soap/ washing soap ?

(d) Are clothes sent to washerman ?

POSSESSIONS :

(2) Does the household possess—

(a) Car.

(b) Bullock cart.

(c) Jutka.

(d) Ponies.

46. (A) *Maternity cases* :—

(1) Cases hospitalized.

(2) Number of cases.

(a) Confined in hospital.

(b) Confined by bringing doctor home.

(c) Confined by qualified midwife at home.

(d) Confined by unqualified 'Dai' at home.

(e) Confined without assistance.

(B) *Medical treatment* :

What is the medical system followed ?

(1) Allopathic.

(2) Ayurvedic.

- (3) Homeopathic.
- (4) Combination of more than one of these.
- (5) Others.

(C) *Medical consultation :*

Where do you go for medical consultation ?

- (1) Public hospitals or dispensaries.
- (2) Private hospitals or dispensaries.
- (3) Private doctors.
- (a) Allopaths.
- (b) Homeopaths.
- (c) Others.

(D) *Vaccination :*

How many members of the family have been vaccinated ?

- (1) At least once.
- (2) Within the past six months.

47. *Income :*

Total family income per mensem from—

- (a) Land.
- (b) Industry.
- (c) Business.
- (d) Occupation.
- (e) Others (specify source).

48. *Average monthly expenditure—*

What is expenditure on

(A) *Food :—*

(1) *Cereals and pulses—*

- (a) Rice.
- (b) Other grains.
- (c) Dhall.
- (d) Total.

(2) *Vegetables —*

- (a) Potatoes.
- (b) Tapioca.
- (c) Onions.
- (d) Coconut.

- (e) Others.
- (f) Total.
- (3) *Non-vegetarian*—
 - (a) Meat.
 - (b) Fish.
 - (c) Egg.
 - (d) Others.
- (4) *Milk*.
- (5) *Ghee and oils*—
 - (a) Ghee.
 - (b) Oils.
 - (c) Total.
- (6) *Condiments*—
 - (a) Chillies.
 - (b) Tamarind.
 - (c) Others.
 - (d) Total.
- (7) *Sugar*—
 - (a) Sugar.
 - (b) Jaggery.
 - (c) Total.
- (8) *Coffee and Tea*—
 - (a) Coffee.
 - (b) Tea.
 - (c) Total.
- (9) *Liquor*.
- (10) *Tobacco*—
 - (a) Smoking.
 - (b) Chewing.
 - (c) Total.
- (11) Other foods including refreshments.

Total under food :

- (b) *Education*.
 - (1) Fees.
 - (2) Books.
 - (3) Uniform.
 - (4) Others.

(c) *Clothing.*

(d) *Fuel.*

(e) *Marriage.*

(f) *Festivals.*

(g) *Miscellaneous.*

(1) Dhoby or soap.

(2) Barber.

(3) Travelling.

(4) Medical fees and medicines.

(5) Religious observances.

(6) Amusements.

(7) Provident Fund and other compulsory savings.

(8) Payments of debts.

(9) Remittances to dependants residing elsewhere.

(h) *Others.*

Total.

49. (a) Has the household secured during the last five years ?

(1) Better irrigation facilities.

(2) Better types of cattle.

(3) Better seeds.

(4) Better implements.

(5) Better manure.

(6) More land for cultivation.

(7) Use of pesticides.

(8) Improved methods of cultivation like Japanese method.

(9) Land improvement measures like land reclamation, soil conservation and consolidation.

(b) Have you received demonstration in improved agricultural practices ?

(c) Have you participated in activities of Community Project by contribution of land, labour, cash or material ?

50. *Prosperity Index*—

(1) Have you cleared any debt which existed prior to 10 years from the income of the household ?

- (2) If yes, specify the amount so cleared,
- (3) During the last ten years—
- (a) Have you acquired any property ?
- (b) Have you made any savings in cash or in the shape of ornaments, etc.?
- (c) Have you invested capital in any new undertaking or building ?
- (d) Have you opened a voluntary account in any post office savings bank or any other bank ?
- (e) Have you invested in N.S.C. or prize bonds or other forms of rural saving campaigns ?
- (f) Are you a member of any chit fund or other indigenous funds except where it is wholly from any debt incurred for the purpose and/or the proceeds of any sale of property ?

51. *Extra-curricular activities*—

Has any member or members of this household—

- (a) Worked for social uplift.
- (b) Taken active part in politics.
- (c) Joined any co-operative society.
- (d) Joined any club, library, dramatic party or other cultural organisation in the village.

SOCIAL DISABILITIES :

52. (A) Do you have free access to —

- (1) Shop, hotel or restaurant.
- (2) Temple or place of worship.
- (3) Any other place of public resort.

(B) Do the following render you their services—

- (1) Brahmin priest.
- (2) Barber.
- (3) Washerman.
- (4) Any other village servant.

(C) Are you avoided by Caste Hindus in regard to —

- (1) Touch.
- (2) Serving cooked food.
- (3) Serving water.

APPENDIX II

CENSUS 1961—SOCIO ECONOMIC SURVEY

Village Schedule

Name of Police Station/Taluk

Name of District.

Name of village:

L.C.No. of village.

Area of the village :

No. of Households.

What is the religion which majority of the villagers profess ?

Name the caste to which the majority of the villagers belong :

1. Topography of the village :

(a) Is the village situated on a plain/on an undulating surface/on a plateau/on a hillock/or at the bottom of a depression ?

(b) The system of grouping of houses—average distance between two clusters of houses—reasons for such grouping e. g. whether on account of the nature of the surface of land or on account of the social customs.

(c) Internal roads—Tanks—Village common—any stream or other extensive source of water—proximity or otherwise of any jungle—Approximate number of shade-bearing trees and how they are arranged.

2. What is the local legend about the village ?

3. Detailed description of average house of the members of each caste/tribe, religious group, occupational group in the village.

4. Name and distance of Hat or Hats to which surplus produce of the village is taken for sale.

5. Name and distance of the nearest railway station and bus route.

6. Distance by road from Thana and sub-division headquarters.

7. (a) Distance of the post office from the village.
- (b) Distance of the Telegraph Office from the village.
- (c) Can money be sent through that Post Office?
8. Religious practice followed by members of each caste, tribe and religious group in the village. The description of the religious practice in each case should begin with the name or names under which the Supreme Being is known and then proceed from ceremonies that might be observed in respect of a person from sometime before he is born and end with the funeral rites after his death.
9. Give details of places of common religious worship, if any.
10. Describe community festivals, if held in the village.
11. Dress commonly worn by the villagers with special reference to peculiarities on account of Caste, Tribe or religious sanction or economic status.
12. Number and types of schools in the village.
13. Describe Social Recreation Centres, if any.
14. State of Co-operative movement in the village. (Number and names of Co-operatives)
- 15-A. Details of crime statistics for the past ten years.

Year	Place of crime	No. and nature of crimes	Remarks
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15-B. Prohibition Offences.

Year	Place of crime	Number	Remarks
------	----------------	--------	---------

16. Details of births and deaths for the last ten years.

Year	Month	Births		Deaths		Natural increase	
		Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females

A brief note on the cause of death :

17. Details of village lands classified by crops :

Year	Name of crop	Extent of land
------	--------------	----------------

18. Total population of the village in 1931, 1941, 1951 and 1961.
19. Is the village electrified?
20. School statistics in detail.
21. What are the common diseases in the village?
22. Give your impressions of cleanliness.
23. Drainage and sanitary facilities—A note.
24. What is the source of drinking water?
25. Is outbreak of epidemic frequent and what are the preventive and curative efforts taken to combat them?
26. Is there a Primary Health Centre or Maternity ward? Which is the nearest hospital?
27. Is widow remarriage allowed by different castes?
28. What are the sources of irrigation in the village? Give number and types and brief note thereon including the number of pumpsets.
29. Give the number of temples/mosques/churches in the village.
30. If there is any Co-operative Society in the village, give a detailed note on it.
31. Total livestock in the village as per the 1956 Census and the present position.
32. Is there a Key Village Centre in the village? If no, which is the nearest Veterinary Hospital?
33. Is there a cattle pound in the village?
34. Do the villagers tattoo their bodies?
35. Do they favour female education?
36. Are there any ancient monuments in the village? If yes, give a note on them.
37. Give the current proverbs in the village.
38. Give a note on the panchayat.

Village disputes referred to different authorities last year

I	II			III	IV	V	VI
Nature of adjudicating authority	Leading members of each disputant party			Nature of dispute	Decision of the adjudicating authority	Nature of Sanction	REMARKS : (Whether the decision was enforced, whether there is preference for adjudication by particular authority in particular type of case, place of trial etc.)
	Caste Panchayat	Name	Caste				

Caste Panchayat

Informal Panchayat

Statutory Village Panchayat

Court

Others (Specify)

Cultural life of the village

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Names of clubs, libraries, drama parties or other cultural organisations in the village	U When established	Rough proportion of members belonging to		Office bearers	Brief note on basis of membership (subscription, signing of pledge etc.)	Brief note on objective of the organisation
		Different castes	Different occupational groups				Name	Age	Occupation	Age	Education

Recreational and artistic activities enjoyed by the villages

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII		VIII	IX
Type of activity	* Brief description	Where room placed (if outside the village, name & distance of the place)	Frequency & duration (specify whether daily, monthly, seasonal, etc.)	Extent of participation of people of main castes & communities in performance (Many, few, some)	Extent of participation of people of the main castes or communities as audience (Many, few, some)	If activity is in village, do visitors from other village participate?	Approximate No. Role player, audience otherwise	What agency sponsors or finances	Who trains players, etc. (His name, address, caste, occupation)

1. Sports & Games

2. Drama, Music, Dancing etc.

3. Cinemas

4. Films, trip, Puppet show etc.

5. Fairs

6. Festivals

7. Other entertainments

* Indicate nature and reason of celebration.

APPENDIX III

Glossary of Local Terms

S. No.	Local terms	Phonetic transcription	English equivalents
1.	Agal ...	Agal ...	Small open lamp made of mud.
2.	Arai-Moodi ...	Arai Mūḍi ...	A piece of silver usually leaf-shaped, suspended by a waist cord, worn by little girls.
3.	Arathi ...	Āratti ...	A ceremony to ward off evil eye.
4.	Ayudham ...	Āyudam ...	Instrument.
5.	Eruthukarar ...	Erukukkārar ...	Bullock men.
6.	Fathihas ...	Fātihās ...	Special prayers performed by Muslims.
7.	Gotram ...	Gōtiram ...	Exogamous sub-division within a caste
8.	Imams ...	Imāms ...	Spiritual leaders among Muslims.
9.	Ishaa Namaaz ...	Ishā Namās ...	Night prayers of Muslims.
10.	Jamad ...	Jamād ...	A caste council among Muslims which enquires into the petty quarrels, disputes etc.
11.	Kadukkan ...	Kaḍukkan ...	Ear-rings worn by men.
12.	Kaikooli ...	Kaikkūli ...	Dowry among Muslims.
13.	Kamastar ...	Kamastār ...	Choultry keeper.
14.	Karthigai festival...	Kārtihai ...	A festival of lights, celebrated in the Tamil month of Karthigai (November-December).
15.	Kashayam ...	Kashāyam ...	Decoction of medicinal condiments.
16.	Kavadi ...	Kāvaḍi ...	A palanquin-like structure, in which the offerings to a deity are suspended.
17.	Kilai ...	Kiḷai ...	Exogamous sub-division within a caste.
18.	Kolukattai ...	Koḷukkaṭṭai ...	A kind of sweet-meat, made of rice flour and jaggery.
19.	Komanam ...	Kōmaṇam ...	A loin cloth usually worn by men.
20.	Kula deivam ...	Kuladeyvam ...	Clan deity.
21.	Kulavi idal ...	Kulavai iḍal ...	A joyous ululation made by women-folk during marriage.
22.	Kummi ...	Kummi ...	Dancing with the clapping of hands, usually played by girls.
23.	Kuppayam ...	Kuppāyam ...	Bodice worn by Muslim women.
24.	Madi ...	Maḍi ...	Bag of a net which is used for inshore fishing.
25.	Mahr ...	Mahar ...	A kind of bride price among Muslims.
26.	Manavarai ...	Maṇavaṛai ...	Marriage booth.

S. No.	Local terms	Phonetic transcription	English equivalents
27.	Mattal	... Māṭṭal ...	A small chain connecting the ear stud and hair.
28.	Nagarai	... Nagarai ...	A drum.
29.	Nathaswaram	... Nādaswaram ...	A musical pipe.
30.	Navagraha	... Navagraha ...	Nine planets.
31.	Nazhi	... Nāḷi ...	A measure ; one eighth part of a Marakkal.
32.	Neivedhyam	... Naivēdyam ...	Oblation.
33.	Nikha book	... Nikkā book ...	Marriage register of Muslims.
34.	Oorani	... Ūraṇi ...	Tank.
35.	Ooyil	... Oyil ...	A kind of folk song.
36.	Palai	... Pālai ...	A barren soil.
37.	Panchayatadars	... Panchāyattārs ...	A village jury, usually comprising leaders of the caste.
38.	Parisam	... Parisam ...	Bride price.
39.	Pathaneer	... Padanir ...	Palm juice.
40.	Pookuli Iranguthal	... Pūkkūḷi Iṅgudal...	Walking on fire, by devotees during Panguni Uthiram festival.
41.	Ravikkai	... Ravikkai ...	Blouse.
42.	Samatty	... Sammāṭṭi ...	Master fisherman.
43.	Sippi	... Sippi ...	Lime shell.
44.	Sittadai, Thavani...	... Sittāḍṛi Tāvaṇi ...	A small saree of three to four yards worn by young girls.
45.	Taram	... Taram ...	Quality.
46.	Thailam	... Tailam ...	Medicinal oil or ointment.
47.	Thali	... Tāli ...	A sacred symbol of wedlock among Hindus.
48.	Thandatti	... Taṇḍatti ...	Antiquated heavy ear-ornament, made of lac thinly plated over with gold.
49.	Theertham	... Tīrttam ...	Holy water.
50.	Thotti	... Tōṭṭi ...	Scavenger.
51.	Valai	... Valai ...	Net.
52.	Vathai	... Vattai ...	Small boat.
53.	Vel	... Vēl ...	Spear.

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