

CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

VOLUME IX

1406

MADRAS

PART VI

VILLAGE SURVEY MONOGRAPHS

5. VILPATTI

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*of the Indian Administrative Service
Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras*

1964

Price: Rs. 5.25 or 12sh. 3d. or \$1.89

CENSUS OF INDIA, 1961

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FOREWORD

Apart from laying the foundation 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; 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 conclusions,' 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 interrelated 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. In the latter half of 1961 again was organised within the Census Commission a section on Social Studies which assumed the task of giving shape to the general frame of study and providing technical help to Superintendents of Census Operations in the matter of conducting Surveys, their analysis and presentation. This section headed by Dr. B.K. Roy Burman has been responsible for going through each monograph and offering useful suggestions which were much welcomed by my colleagues. 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.

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 }
May 24, 1962. }

A. MITRA
Registrar General, India.

PREFACE

An interesting feature of the 1961 Census is the preparation of monographs on selected villages in the State, Sri A. Mitra, Registrar General, India, has in a general foreword given the reader a background of the survey, its scope and its aim. He has also indicated, in brief, the various stages in the expansion of the scheme which has culminated in the production of this volume. The number of villages in the State has been fixed at 40. It is proposed to publish them in a series of volumes and this is the fifth of the series.

As a first step, I should like to give the reader a general idea of this scheme as far as Madras is concerned. In a country of India's size, the approach made to a common problem is likely to differ from State to State in spite of comprehensive central direction. In August, 1959, it was proposed to continue the old Census tradition of conducting surveys, apart from the presentation of Census data in the reports. The suggestion was that it should be possible to study at least 35 villages in Madras State containing basic information about the layout of villages and various facilities and amenities available to the villagers such as educational, medical, postal as well as their social and cultural habits. The villages so chosen should represent adequately geographical, occupational and even ethnical value. If information could be acquired with a certain amount of reality, data relating to the cultivated land and irrigated land income should also be collected. For the selection of villages, the Registrar General laid down three optimum conditions. At least 8 villages should be selected that each of them contained one dominating community with one predominant occupation—like village of fishermen, village of barbers, village of weavers, and village of toddy tappers. At least 7 villages should be selected where Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are numerically predominant. Each village should represent a particular tribe. The last group of the villages should be of the old and settled character far away from means of communication and should contain variegated occupations and ethnic composition. The village should also mainly depend on agriculture. Following this broad criteria for selection, he also laid down the main items of inquiry.

First thing to do was to select the villages for the survey. For this, I wrote to the Collectors enclosing a copy of the Registrar General's letter and requested them to suggest a list of suitable villages conforming to the categories indicated by him. I also found that the villages are generally bigger than those of North India and any attempt to limit the inquiry to the villages having a population of 500 to 700 as suggested by the Registrar General would at least defeat the very purpose of the survey and prevent me from selecting representative villages. I, therefore, decided to select villages of larger size for study. Simultaneously my task was to evolve a proper questionnaire on the basis of which the study of the conditions in various villages of the State could be properly made. For this purpose, one village was selected in Chingleput district, a typical village with one predominant occupation as a pilot project, more to test the questionnaire I had evolved. On the basis of the study conducted in Sunnambukulam, a draft questionnaire was prepared for the socio-economic survey of the villages selected in Madras State. By this time the reports from the Collectors relating to the villages of the three categories were received and from this report, 40 villages representing various considerations such as geographic and regional of the State were selected. Out of the 40 villages selected, 'for the survey' 10 belonged to the first category, 12 villages under the second category and 18 villages to the third category. These villages were approved by the Registrar General, India.

The method of study was as follows :

Research Assistants possessing post-graduate degree were selected. They were sent to the villages along with an assistant and they spent more than a month filling up the individual houselisting schedules containing questions on social, cultural and economic aspects and the village schedule for covering the general aspects. On their return, data containing household schedules and village schedules were tabulated and a set of Tables was prepared. Based on these tables, the Research Assistants drafted their preliminary reports. These reports were scrutinised first by Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations and then by me and a final report drafted. Invariably every village was visited by me and the Deputy Superintendent for collection of additional particulars or for obtaining a general background of the village.

Early in 1960, the Registrar General sent a draft questionnaire with a set of 55 tables for adoption while preparing a socio-economic survey of the village. This questionnaire form was studied and a modified questionnaire

was prepared and sent to Registrar General for remarks with a set of 22 tables. In May, 1960, a regional conference of Superintendents of Census Operations was convened at Trivandrum. At this conference, the socio-economic surveys of villages submitted by me and my colleague in Kerala were discussed and suggestions given by Registrar General for improvement. A set of 29 tables was then suggested by Registrar General for uniform adoption throughout the country.

I again modified the household schedule till then used and prepared a new household and village schedule. At this stage, we received a letter from Registrar General stating that in addition to the 29 tables already indicated, a further set of 55 tables were to be incorporated in the main body of the socio-economic survey. Again I had to modify the number of tables. I finalised 54 tables and this resulted in revision of household schedules and village schedules for the third time. However, before these changes would come into effect, the survey of 22 villages had been completed. The Registrar General was of the opinion that the additional tables need not be prepared for the surveys already conducted. However, an attempt has been made to include as many additional tables as possible for these 22 villages also. After completion of the survey and final drafting of the report, they will be published in 40 volumes, each covering one village. In addition to the narrative portion, the monographs will also contain photographs and sketches on various aspects of rural life which have been taken by the photographer and artists attached to my office. This is the history of the survey.

It is with some amount of diffidence that I present these reports to the reader. I have tried to give a readable presentation of the salient features of village life highlighting those aspects which I consider significant.

In this work, I have been guided throughout by Sri A. Mitra. I have been helped considerably by the critical comments made by Dr. Roy Burman in every report sent by us. The Study Camp held in December, 1962, which was attended by my Deputies was a valuable one to the extent it gave us a proper idea of what should be attempted. But I do not think that we have wholly implemented what was indicated in the Study Camp. In conducting this survey and preparing the reports, I have been assisted by my three Deputies, Sri P. Murari, Sri T.B. Bharathi and Sri J.R. Ramanathan and a body of Research Assistants. The exact role played by them will be indicated in each report.

MADRAS }
December 12, 1963 }

P. K. NAMBIAR

LIST OF VILLAGES SELECTED FOR THE SURVEY

1. Ayyangarkulam †	...	Chingleput.
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.
15. Hallimoyar	...	The Nilgiris District.
16. Kinnakorai	...	"
17. Vilpatti *	...	Madurai Distrct.
18. Sirumalai	...	"
19. Periyur	...	"
20. Thiruvavayanallur	...	"
21. Thenbaranadu †	...	Tiruchirapalli District.
22. Thiruvellarai †	...	"
23. Ariyur	...	"
24. Kadambangudi	...	Thanjavur District.
25. Vilangulam	...	"
26. Kunnalur	...	"
27. Kodiakkarai	...	"
28. Golwarpatti	...	Ramanathapuram District.
29. Visavanoor	...	"
30. Athangarai	...	"
31. Ravanasmudram	...	Tirunelveli District.
32. Pudukulam	...	"
33. Alwarkarkulam	...	"
34. Kilakottai	...	"
35. Odaimarichan	...	"
36. Kuvalaikani	...	"
37. Koottumangalam	...	Kanyakumari District.
38. Kadathucheri	...	"
39. Kottuthalazhamkulam	...	"
40. Kadukkara	...	"

* The present volume (No. 17 of the series).

Already Printed

VILLAGE SURVEY REPORT

ON

VILPATTI

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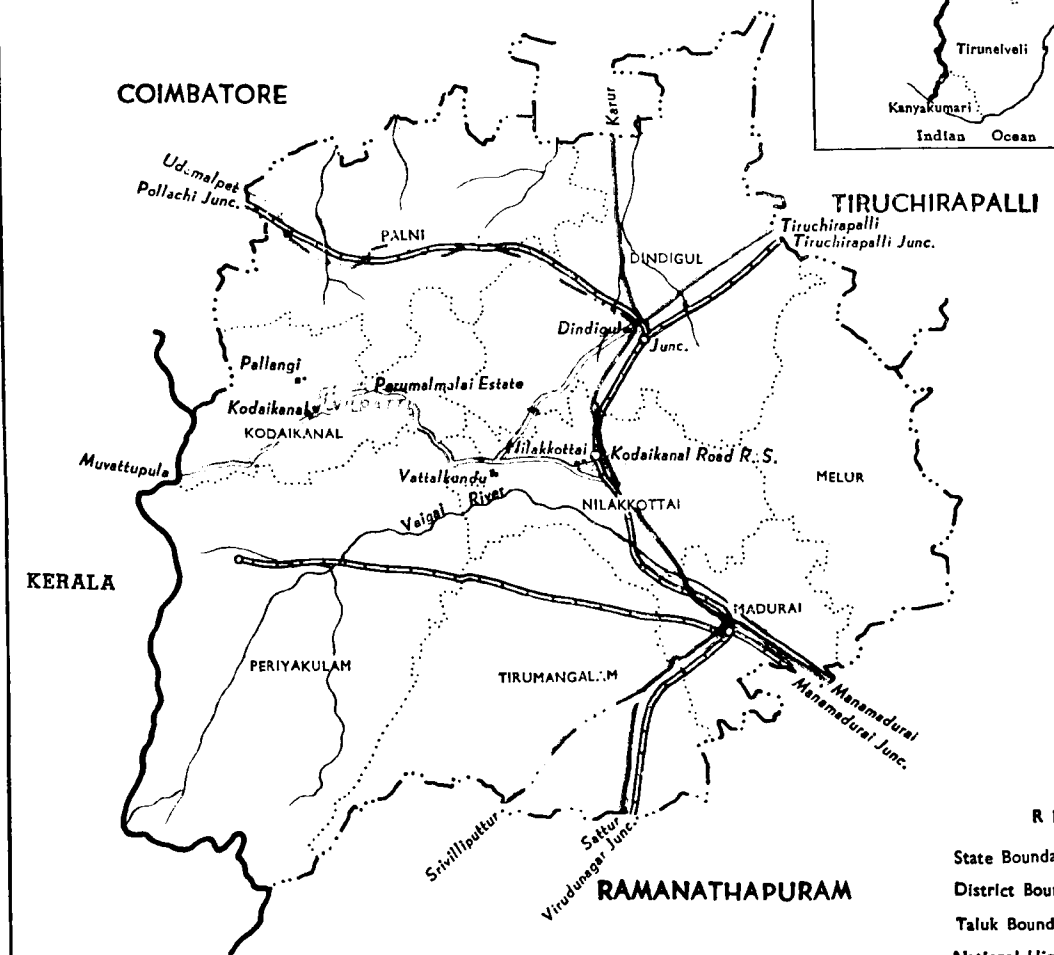
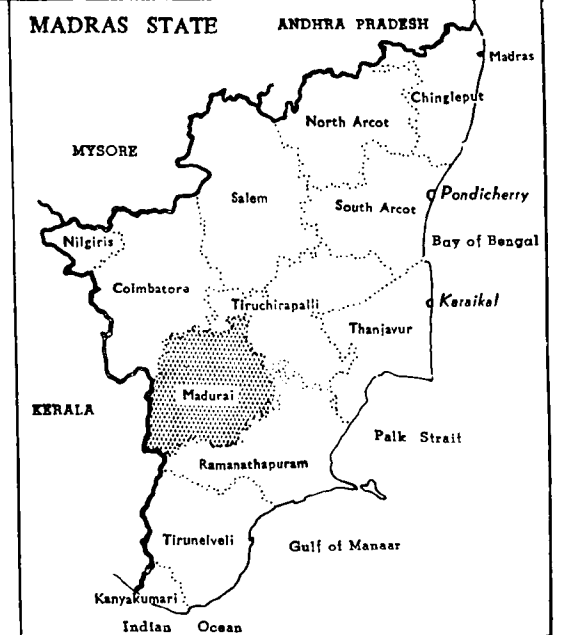
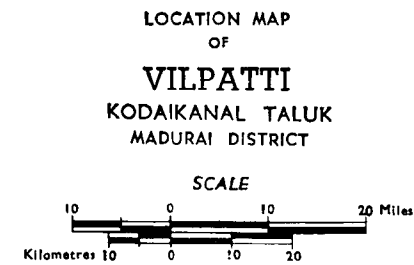
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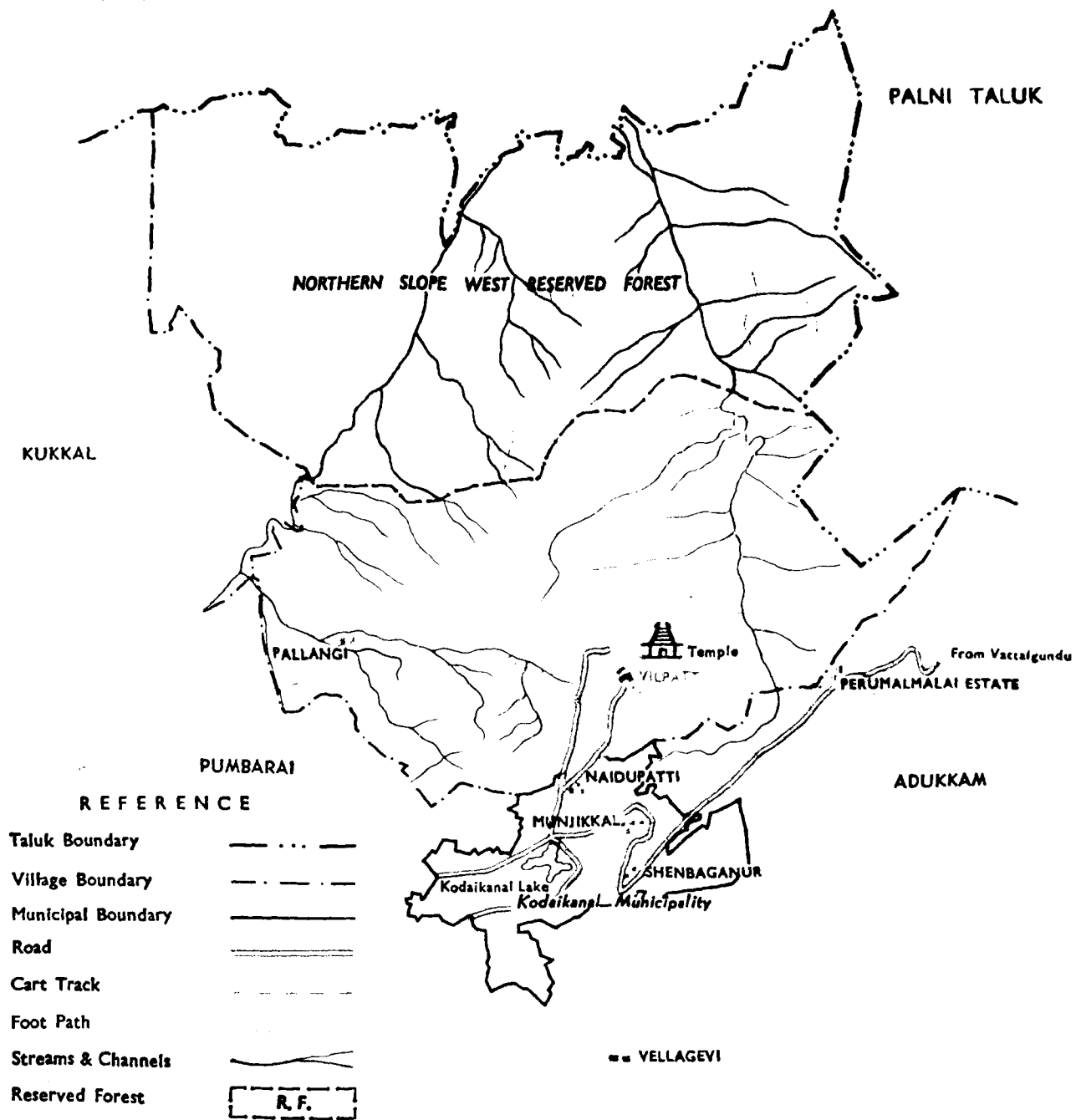
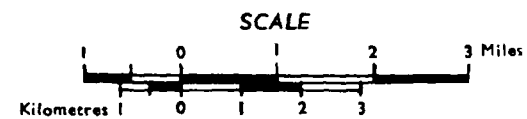
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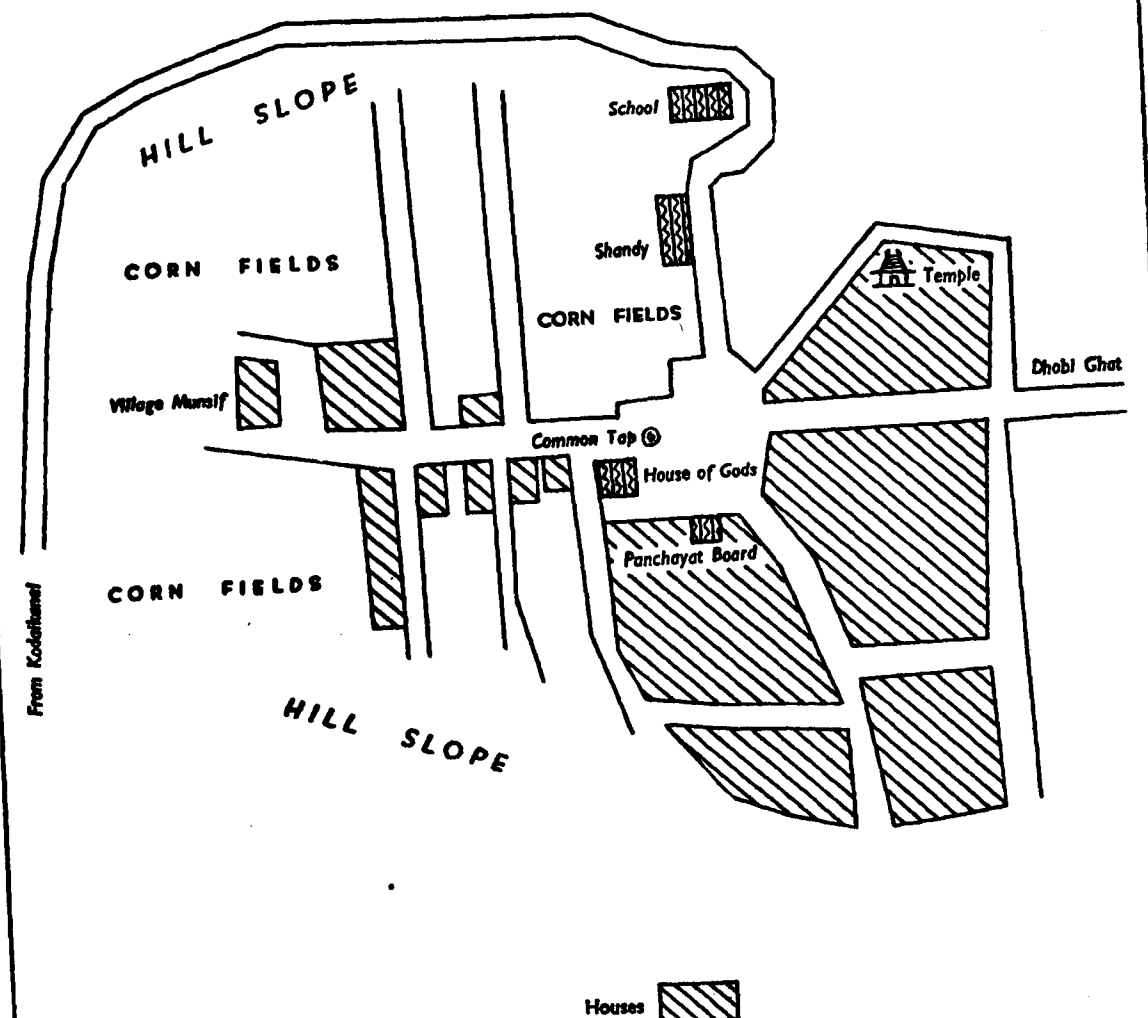
REFERENCE

State Boundary	—————
District Boundary	-----
Taluk Boundary	
National Highways	—————
State Highways	-----
Other Roads	=====
Railway Line (M. G.)	—————
River with Stream	~~~~~

MAP SHOWING VILPATTI AND ITS SURROUNDINGS



SITE PLAN OF VILPATTI KODAIKANAL TALUK MADURAI DISTRICT (Not to Scale)



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Village Setting

Fifty miles to the north-west of Madurai City lies the famous hill resort of Kodaikanal, on the upper reaches of the Palni Hills. It stands on the southern crest of the upper Palni plateau immediately above Periyakulam town and averages about 7,000 feet above sea level. Five miles in the northerly direction in a valley amidst encircling hills, a thousand feet below Kodaikanal lies the village of Vilpatti. The visitor to this village will never forget his initial impression looking down on the tiny cluster of stones and corrugated iron huts as he stands on the edge of the hill nearest Kodaikanal town. He can see the range of hills, azure in the misty atmosphere rising to effect contact with the skyline, a sight superb to behold in the after glow of the setting sun. In the distance between the gaps left by the range of hills one can see the brown plains, now far away, now near, an optical illusion with the cluster of tiny mounds and brownish-green pastures which for all the world look like a land-scape painting.

Means of Communication

2. In order to reach Vilpatti one has to travel a mile and a half along the metalled road from Kodaikanal to Naidupuram and from there trek along the range of hills. On one side of the road, the hill slope rises upwards with its green vastness of shrubs while on the other side there is a drop of hundreds of feet. The road has been blasted through rocks and all along the way one finds artificial caves made by man. From Kodaikanal a traveller can reach Naidupuram only by walk because the town bus plies only during the summer season which coincides with the influx of tourists into Kodaikanal. The last halt of the bus is at the end of the town, opposite to a tea shop set up by an enterprising merchant of Kodaikanal who makes a living by catering to the needs of travellers who arrive at this last stop. From this vantage point one can get a magnificent view of hill slopes upwards on one side while the road to Pallangi tips upward into an incline towards the north. To the right another road branches off to circle the range of hills down to Vilpatti. At Naidupuram a number of pony owners wait expectantly to hire their animals to people who would like to use them to go up the hills. It is likely to be a hazardous undertaking, for even though the ponies are sure footed,

a traveller not used to riding these animals with a minimum of strappings is likely to find himself in difficulties and jolts consequent on a ride up a bridle path painful. By the time he reaches his destination, he aches at every joint and hopes that he would never get up on a pony again. The gravel road from Naidupuram dips downwards running along the rim of the hills and is broad enough for a car to pass. Though it is difficult for a lorry to negotiate it, a number of lorries go to Vilpatti and other hamlets carrying passengers and provisions from time to time. It looks dangerous for the uninitiated to see the huge lorries rumble along this road as it is very narrow at places and only a skilful driver can handle these hair pin bends. Besides, the road is in most parts unmetalled and tends to be slushy during the rainy season and a speeding vehicle is likely to skid. However, no accident of a major type has been reported during the last few years on the road.

Approach to the Village

3. The road up the second mile from Kodaikanal maintained by the Municipality is in a bad condition. The road outside Municipal limits beyond Naidupuram maintained by the Highways department has recently been black-topped and is in a much better condition. All along the way to Vilpatti one could see construction activity going on with some houses coming up with corrugated zinc sheets for roofs. One can also get a view of the serrated hill slopes indicating the growth of paddy and potato which are not only the main crops but the main stay of the cultivators in this locality. In due course paddy and potato would give place to cabbage as the rotation crop and one could see the contrast, the misty blue hills rising from the deep valley and the slopes below cultivated with cabbages in rows as far as one could see. From the third mile onwards one noticed wheat taking the place of cabbage in the fields. Without any warning the mist arrives covering the entire valley with its clinging softness, sometimes not clearing for hours. A chill breeze now enters the valley and quite often brings in its wake the rain. Tall pine trees, slender and covered with a mantle of fine needles cover a great part of the slopes and hills. Thus, we find a vast quantity of thick green vegetation interspersed with wild flowers all over the hill side. The smooth bare rocks glint through this lush verdure



The granite Threshold to be found at the entrance of the village - reported to be the handiwork of the PANDAVAS.

Arjuna, one of the Pandavas, was able to break the bow. Thereupon the King gave his daughter in marriage to him and on hearing that he was none other than the famed Arjuna, he was gratified and pleased. Thus originated the name of Vilpatti—'Vil' in tamil meaning bow and 'patti' place. The present inhabitants of Vilpatti claim that they are descendants of Arjuna. The story is perhaps only an echo of the famous incident in Mahabharatham in which the Pandavas won the hand of Droupadi by their skill in archery. According to another version the people of the village migrated to this place during Tippu Sultan's reign. The Mannadiars a royal race, came here from Karur in the present Trichy district with their Ministers to escape the violence of Tippu Sultan. The Mannadiars who live in Vilpatti are still the dominant caste. Even to the present day they have a group of attendants known as Mantris who serve them in various ways, thus providing some evidence to prove the royalty of the race. Another legend says that those people are in fact the descendants of God Subramania himself who is supposed to have lived amidst them at one time before he ascended the celestial regions. They were idealistic, had noble hearts and a high conception of things. The Gods and Goddesses used to visit them frequently at one time and their village was ideal and perfect. The proverbial land where milk and honey flowed was said to be theirs. But with the passage of time the place had grown decadent. These versions about the original sentiment and etymology of the name may perhaps be rather apocryphal.

Hamlets

9. As already indicated, for purposes of administration Vilpatti consists of Perumalmalai Estate, Vilpatti proper, Attuvampatti, Lourdpuram and Pallangi. The survey is confined to the village of Vilpatti. This village was selected for socio economic survey because it falls within the category of a purely agricultural village, inaccessible by modern means of communication, far away from the district headquarters and comparatively undeveloped. The area of the village proper excluding the hamlets is 2.6 Sq. miles and its population 1,127, the approximate density of the village being 433 per sq. mile. The revenue divisional headquarters is at Periyakulam. The nearest Railway station, Kodaikanal Road, lies 55 miles away. There is a Post Office functioning at Vilpatti, but the nearest Post and Telegraph Office is 5 miles away at Kodaikanal. A Police Station is also at Kodaikanal.

Attuvampatti

10. Attuvampatti is a little hamlet lying three miles away on the western slope while Pallangi lies six miles

still further to west. 8 miles to the east lies the Perumalmalai estate. There is a bridle path stretching across the village to the estate which a very intrepid traveller can take. The other alternative route to the estate is by road. The estate is a large one, its area being roughly 47 acres. Coffee is grown here. Besides this, we find several gardens where fruits and vegetables are grown in plenty. Some of them belong to the estate owners while others are owned by the workers of the estate. Fruits like pears, plums and plantains are grown in plenty. A group of Pulaiyars who migrated to this estate several years back live there working on the estate. A number of houses are scattered all over the plantation in which the estate labourers live.

Mode of Transport

11. As already indicated there are no regular buses plying to Vilpatti. There are no other means of conveyance either. The only means of transport is to hitchhike to the nearest town like Naidupuram across the hills or along the road. Sometimes Ponies are used to carry people and their goods, but it is not a regular feature. Normally the mode of conveyance for the villagers travelling between Vilpatti and Kodaikanal is the lorry. About half a dozen ply between the village and the town and usually take passengers along with freight everyday. According to the Municipal Commissioner of Kodaikanal a proposal is under the consideration of the Government for providing a bus service between Kodaikanal and the surrounding villages within a radius of ten miles. If that proposal materialises Vilpatti will be touched by a bus at least twice a day. A taxi used to conduct a shuttle service until a few months back i.e., till September 1961. But it was stopped for unknown reasons. There is a branch Post Office within the village itself. A Clearance Post Box has been fixed to the wall of the Panchayat Board Office where the people deposit their mail. A Postman visits the place about six times a week. This Post Office has been functioning for the last three years, under the supervision of a Local Postmaster who is also the village Munsiff. A Postman brings the letters everyday from town and takes the mail to the Post Office at Kodaikanal.

Climate

12. The climate of Vilpatti is very salubrious, cold and pleasant during summer, rather chilly and misty but pleasant during winter. The rainy season is between June and August. In September the weather takes a turn for the better and many foreign tourists prefer the September season to the April/May season. The temperature range is between 16°-20°C maximum and 10°-14°C minimum. Rainfall is heavy during the

North-East monsoon, the total annual rain-fall being 60"-64". The language spoken by the people in the village is Tamil. All communities extant in the village speak this language. The Reddiars in addition to Tamil speak a crude kind of Telugu generously interspersed with Tamil words. The institutions found in the village will be referred to in the appropriate portions of this report.

Ancient Monuments

13. There are quite a number of interesting monuments to be found in the vicinity of Vilpatti. We were also taken to a few dolmens found in this place. Some of the tribal folk who were living in the surrounding

forests in former days adopted the custom of interring their dead in big mud pots or urns in the ground and placing stones over it in a peculiar manner. These are the dolmens still to be found in the surrounding hills. Some of these ancient monuments can be found very near Vilpatti which suggest that at some time or other certain tribes must have lived here or in the nearby forests. The monuments of those could still be found in the hills in spite of the disfiguring process initiated by nature and vandals. Yet, they have in them the vestige of their past life and tradition. The Pulayans belong to one such tribe living in the surrounding hills covered with forests, thick and inaccessible.



The gateway of Vilpatti ! More so in appearance than in its usefulness.



The Post Office in its rustic simplicity - The villagers' world is small but widening.
The Post Office has a promising role to play.

CHAPTER II

PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL CULTURE

Distribution of Communities

14. Most of the villages in Madras State have a mixed population and one comes across various communities living together in a village. However, one noticeable feature in almost all villages is the apparent segregation of houses by communities. By this we mean that each community prefers to live together in the same street and though intercaste relationship except possibly by marriage is quite common, they lead a life of their own preferring to get together only when some religious festival or a social gathering takes place in the village. Again the existence of hamlets is a common feature of most villages in the South, as caste segregation is frequently practised. Most of the Scheduled Castes live separately in the hamlets or 'Cheris' as they are called. Thus, one comes across distinct homogeneous units within the main village like 'Agraharams' composed of Brahmin dwellings, Mudaliar Street, Pillai Street, Chettiar Street and so on. This social segregation is not according to the type of occupation practised but only as a result of members belonging to various communities preferring to stay together in separate units. This feature is noticeable in such an isolated place as Vilpatti itself. The distribution of population among different communities is shown in Table No. I.

Relative Strength of Communities

15. The main castes extant in the blocks surveyed, with the distribution household-wise, are as follows :

Community	No. of Households
Brahmins	1
Mudaliars	20
Pillais	56
Mannadiars	23
Chettiars	3
Reddiars	49
Parayan	11
Adi Dravida	9
Arunthathiyar	26
Acharis	15

TABLE No. I

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS AND POPULATION

Religion	Community	Total No. of house holds	Total person	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6
HINDU	Reddiar	49	223	97	126
	Pillai	56	289	140	149
	Mannadiar	23	112	56	56
	Mudaliar	19	106	56	50
	Pannadi	1	7	5	2
	Chettiar	3	13	7	6
	Vannan	1	6	3	3
	Nadar	4	20	12	8
	Achari	15	63	31	32
	Brahmin	1	2	1	1
	Maruthuvar	1	5	3	2
	Naidu	6	33	19	14
	Malayali (S.T.)	1	2	2	...
	Konar (Yadavar)	1	2	1	1
	Kshathria	1	8	6	2
	Parayan (S.C.)	11	49	27	22
CHRISTIAN	Adi-dravida	9	46	24	22
	Arunthathiyar	26	114	54	60
ISLAM	Nadar	1	6	2	4
	Mudaliar	1	2	1	1
TOTAL	Labbai	2	10	6	4
	Sunni	1	6	2	4
	Muslim	1	3	2	1
TOTAL		234	1127	557	570

S. C. — Scheduled Caste : S. T. — Scheduled Tribe:

Besides these, we find certain minority communities like Nadars, Muslims and Konars. There are 5 Nadar households and 4 Muslim households. From this table, it is apparent that Pillais and Reddiars happen to be the numerically dominant communities in this place, their households numbering 56 and 49 in a total of 234 households situated in Vilpatti proper. They are closely followed by Harijans who possess 46 households, 23 households belong to the Mannadiars who, though not numerically dominant, still have a dominant voice in local politics by reason of their social status and legendary background. The population of Vilpatti main is 1,127 of which Pillais number 289 and Reddiars 223 souls. It is thus evident that nearly half the population consists of Pillais and Reddiars. There are 209 Harijans living in the 'Cheri'. There are 112 Mannadiars and 106 Mudaliars also.

General Appearance

16. In general, the people of Vilpatti are medium in height, sun-tanned in complexion and possessing a tonsure of crisp black hair. Of course, the elder members have a tinge of grey in their hair. They are a cheerful lot in spite of their poverty and the hard life they lead. Generally, the men are clad in dhoti, shirt and a turban in the usual fashion of the plains while the women wear the saree with an eye to economy and peculiarly suited to the work they do. They wear no blouse. They cross the pallav of their saree under the arm in the manner of a Coorg women, but with less finesse and the nearest portion of the border is brought over the right shoulder and knotted to the other end which is below the right clavicle. The ends of the pallav are then brought round and knotted near the left hip so as to form a board sash. The women use their fingers to comb their hair which they tie into a knot at the back of the head. Even the young girls wear their hair in the form of a 'chignon' and do not plait their hair. The men generally wear their hair short, but the pujaris of the temples grow long tufts which they tie into a curious knot. Their features are sharp and distinct. They are an affectionate lot who generally take to a stranger when they find out that he has come to understand them and not to display his learning or his wealth ostentatiously. Their outlook towards life as well as their general approach to guests is as bracing as the climate which they enjoy throughout their life. In spite of the fact that their life is very tough and hazardous, there is no trace of pessimism in their mental make-up, though occasionally one comes across stoicism rather than a cheerful optimism.

Settlement History

17. The original inhabitants of this village are supposed to be the hill-folks and the Mannadiars.

Reddiars and the Pillais migrated to this village from the Karur region about 300 to 350 years back. The Mudaliars are said to have come from the Palani region at about the same time. Nobody is able to say with any certainty the exact date or time of the migration. The President of the Panchayat Board, a retired Head Constable, has come from Tirumangalam Taluk and settled in this place, 12 years back, actuated with the motive of selfless sacrifice and dedicated to his task to help the villagers of Vilpatti. We had a talk with him when we could feel the intensity of his purpose. No wonder the people of the village unanimously elected him as President of the Panchayat Board. We contacted a number of venerable old men belonging to different communities to elicit information relating to their settlement history. All except six families were unable to provide precise information relating to migration. Two Reddiar families, two Nadar and two Muslim families stated that they had settled in the village during the present generation.

Harijans

18. As a rule, to the superficial observer, there is not much difference as regards the physical appearance of members belonging to different communities though on the whole, the Mannadiars are taller and sturdier than others. The Harijans, of course, are darker and generally less robust than the others in the village. Among the various communities, the Harijans are the most economically backward. Only 21 out of 46 households own any lands and those who own few scattered bits, laboriously cultivate to the best of their slender means. Fifty-eight of them work as agricultural labourers in the fields of their well-to-do neighbours for cash and in kind. Steeped in debt, they eke out their common place existence in poverty and want. One can see their children playing bare bodied on the roads, unattended and uncared for, building houses of mud on the pathways, the father and mother away, working on the fields of a more fortunate member of the society. The caste Hindus and the Harijans meet each other without any undesirable question of untouchability coming in the way of amicable relationships in the village.

Reddiars-The Prosperous Community

19. The Reddiars belong to the fairly well-to-do section of the population. They seem to possess a natural instinct for bettering their standard of living by hard labour coupled with an intelligent approach towards day-to-day problems. This prosperity was evident from the jewellery owned by their women. They possess cattle and also eat well. The Chettiars,



Vilpatti Farmer and his wife - HARIJAN.



A well-to-do Villager and his wife - MANNADIAR.

Pillais and Mudaliars follow the Reddiars in eking out a comfortable livelihood. The Mannadiars, tall and sturdy though they may be, who claim they are the descendants of the royal race of the Pandavas, are a mixture of two types-the suffering and the self-sufficient. The two Brahmins in the village live in all prosperity functioning as priests but are aloof and follow age-old customs. In this village, the pattern which emerges from this broad canvass is that the majority of the population are poverty stricken and steeped in debt. Only a few are self-sufficient or noticeably above the average.

Birth Customs

20 During pregnancy, the woman is not allowed to go out of the house after dusk, nor is she allowed to sleep alone. She has to be careful about the things she eats. Hot spicy foodstuffs are strictly taboo. During the lunar and solar eclipses, the pregnant mother is not expected to sleep, eat or do any kind of work. It is stated that any violation of this traditional observance would result in there being a disastrous stellar influence on the unborn child. After child birth, the woman is said to be in a state of pollution and is kept separate for a period of 10 days. It is only after ten days that people are allowed to go near the young mother. Certain interesting customs are observed soon after the birth of the child. If the child happens to be a male, a small ceremony is conducted. The parents of the new born babe select a particular individual possessing a good reputation and old in years. This individual visits the house in the company of two others. The child is laid on a new blanket and sweet meats are placed in a tray. In another tray, a small silver bowl containing castor oil is placed along with a silver spoon. The godfather enters and is greeted with a garland. He sits before the child and the ceremony is then inaugurated. The name by which the child is to be called is told to him. He lifts the silver spoon soaked in castor oil and opening the mouth of the child smears the oil on the tongue, uttering the following words. For instance, if the child is to be named Karuppannan, he says, "Oh, Karuppannan, may you never speak falsehood, blaspheme or do anything wrong with the tongue which I bless today. I hope it will be used only for the good of your parents, relatives and those around you. May you be a good man and be elevated in life". He repeats the process of smearing the tongue three times with the oil while he utters these words and so the child is called Karuppannan from that day onwards. The sweet-meats and the flowers are then distributed to the people who were invited to watch the christening ceremony. As far as the selection of names is concern-

ed, they usually choose the names of the village deities, for instance, a male child is invariably called by the different names of their Gods. It is the same in the case of a girl-the names of the Goddesses being given. Among Brahmins, this is a general custom. Minor variations are observed among all other castes except Brahmins, the extent of ostentation differing with the relative social status of the persons performing the ceremony, for example, the Harijans being comparatively poor, spend less on sweet-meats and flowers and invite fewer persons to their ceremony. A wooden bowl and an ordinary spoon will substitute the silver bowl and silver spoon used in a Reddiar or a Mudaliar household. Among Brahmins, the customs attendant upon birth are different. During pregnancy, the woman has to observe certain rules and regulations regarding her movement as well as her intake of food. During the fifth or seventh month, a ceremony called 'Valaikappu' or decking with bangles is performed. The husband or any other male member is not invited for this function. This is purely a hen-party. The mother or the sister of the husband takes the pregnant woman to a temple and purchases various types of bangles to deck the hand of the pregnant woman with these bangles. This is usually a field day for the village bangleseller who can dispose of a number of his dazzling wares to the local belles as well as to the members of the household performing the ceremony. During the ninth month of pregnancy, another ceremony called "Seemandam" or a propitiation ceremony to 'Agni', the God of fire is performed. During this ceremony, the husband of the girl is present. A sacrificial fire is built up and oblations in the form of ghee and fried rice is poured into the sacrificial fire and the husband and wife circumambulate this sacrificial fire. At this time the mother or the bride of the sister of the bridegroom goes to the function with gold jewels to deck the pregnant wife. A pollution period of ten days is observed after the birth of the child when the mother is segregated from all other persons including the husband. On the seventh day after the birth of the child, the cradle ceremony called the "Thottil Iduthal" is performed for the child. The mother and sister of the husband go to the house and deck the new born child with a golden armlet as well as anklets. Only ladies are invited to this function. On the eleventh day, after the pollution period is completed, a priest is brought who sprinkles holy water around the house to remove pollution consequent on the birth of the child and to sanctify the whole atmosphere. This is called the "Punyavachanam" ceremony. On that day, the naming of the child is also performed. In Brahmin households, the names of Gods, if it is a boy or that of Goddesses, if it is a girl, are usually given to the new born babes.

Puberty Rites

21 The rites attendant on puberty are quite interesting as there are certain variations from those practised on the plains. It is generally admitted that among Hindus, the attainment of puberty is an essential qualification for marriage, although before the passing of the Sarada Act, it was not rigidly followed. Even now, in quite a number of villages, marriages take place in the case of girls below the age of 14, although I came across no instance of such a marriage in the village of Vilpatti. As on the plains, in this hill village also, girls attaining their puberty are supposed to be polluted and, therefore, have to observe a period of isolation and can only touch others after cleansing themselves. However the ceremonies performed during this period differ from those followed in the plains. In Vilpatti, a girl on first attaining maturity is given an oil bath, an occasion which calls for rejoicing and the presence of guests and relatives. The girl is then dressed like a bride with large quantities of flowers bedecking her hair and she is kept separately in a room for nine days. A piece of saffron and flowers from her hair are placed under a tile of the roof of the house at an auspicious moment. On the ninth day, the saffron and the flowers are taken out and some milk sprinkled on it. It is then buried and the girl released from seclusion. She is given another bath when guests are not invited to the house and then permitted to enter the rooms in the house after the performance of 'Aarti'-the showing of a plate containing burning camphor before the girl. Subsequently a grand feast is held for relatives and neighbours and presents are given to the girl. The placing of the flowers and saffron under the tile of the roof and the subsequent burial seems to be a peculiar feature of Vilpatti village practised by all communities. Normally on the plains, the girl is secluded from others for periods ranging from ten days to one month and is kept either in a room within the house or in a remote hut, this custom differing from caste to caste. At the end of the pollution period, she is feted out and a grand feast is held along with certain propitiatory ceremonies at which the community priest officiates.

Marriage Customs

22 Marriage in this village is a social practice which does not seem to possess great sacramental significance to the inhabitants. The ceremony in most cases is a very simple affair and is almost identical for all the communities in the village except the Brahmins. The main difference is that for the Reddiars, Mudaliars, Pillais and Chettiars, a Brahmin priest officiates at the wedding whereas the Mannadiars select a distinguished elder or a community priest from among their own community, or as in the case of Harijans, a Harijan

VILPATT

priest officiates at the wedding. But otherwise, except in case of Mudaliars, Brahmins and Chettiars, the various ceremonies performed are identical in all respects. The bride and the bridegroom are given new clothes and in the presence of the village elders and others, the man slips a bangle on the woman's hand the local Pujari chants a few mantras. The groom pays and a brideprice according to the traditional custom. The bride-price varies according to the caste of the bride and her social status. The following Table will indicate the various bride-prices paid among the different communities:

		Rs. np.
Reddiars	...	21. 00
Mannadiars	...	21. 00
Mudaliars	...	8. 00
Chettiars	...	13. 50
Pillais	...	25. 00
Harijans	...	13. 50

Among Brahmins and Nadars, on the contrary, dowry system is common, the dowry depending on the social status of the bride's parents, the position of the bridegroom in society and the avarice of the bridegroom's parents themselves. Among Muslims, the bridegroom's party give a written undertaking that in the event of divorce, they will pay "Mehtar" or the divorce fee. In Vilpatti this ranges anywhere between Rs. 1,001/- to Rs. 5,000/-

Rituals

23 At first the engagement is gone through in the following manner. Relations of the bridegroom come to the bride's house, armed with trays containing flowers betel leaves and gifts and in the presence of elders, fix the terms and conditions of the marriage, if any, as also the 'Muhurtam' or wedding day. The bride's people graciously accept the gifts and in return provide the visitors with a grand feast. The day prior to the wedding, the bride's people come to the village or if they are within the same village, a place is arranged adjacent to the groom's house where the wedding is fixed and custom has it that the groom's party has to meet the expenses for their stay. The bride's party may consist of 10 or 100 persons, depending on personal inclination and popularity of the bride's parents and the groom's people should be prepared to lodge and board them from the day of their arrival to the day of their departure and it should be to the entire satisfaction of the guests. There is music and merry-making while the arrangements are being made. Usually the village barber who has pretensions to skill on the Nathaswaram, an instrument resembling the North

Indian 'Shehnai' is on duty and playing upon the Muhurtam day. The bride is bedecked with jewels and wears a costly saree. The wedding is performed on all days except on a Wednesday or Saturday. If the wedding happens to fall on a Monday or Tuesday, the bridal couple are made to sit facing east. If it were a Friday or a Sunday, they are seated facing west. On a Thursday, they are made to face north. Usually people are not made to face south as it is considered to be inauspicious. The sister of the bride attends to the needs while the groom is attended to by his brother. In the case of the bride or groom having no brothers or sisters, the nearest kin stands by their side, a female near the bride and a male near the groom and the ceremony is completed in an hour's time. The whole village is invited for the ceremony and a feast is held at the house

of the groom where the wedding takes place. The people having witnessed the ceremony usually depart soon after the function, carrying with them betel leaves and its accessories that are distributed among them. But the relatives and close friends remain behind to partake of the wedding feast. This wedding feast is a grand affair, the more the number of dishes prepared the greater the social standing of the person giving the feast. Is it then to be wondered that marriages constitute the major contributing factor in the mounting debt of a villager? To this general rule, the villager of Vilpatti is no exception. This aspect has been fully discussed by us elsewhere in the chapter relating to income and expenditure. We reproduce a table on marriage expenses presented community-wise for the benefit of our readers.

TABLE No. II

EXPENDITURE ON MARRIAGE

Community	Total no. of households	No. of households according to expenditure on marriage (in rupees)									Remarks
		Nil	50. or less	51-100	101-200	201-400	401-600	601-800	801-1000	1001- & Lower	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Reddiar	49	4	...	...	12	1	25	...	7	...	...
Pillai	56	4	...	1	4	9	19	3	12	4	...
Mannadiar	23	6	...	...	2	1	10	...	1	3	...
Mudaliar	19	3	...	...	...	7	4	...	3	2	...
Pannadi	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...
Vannan	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	4	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...
Achari	15	2	...	...	2	1	6	...	3	1	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Maruthuvar	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Naidu	6	...	...	...	...	...	2	3	...	1	...
Malayali (S.T.)	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Kshatriya	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Parayan	11	4	...	...	1	3	3	...	...	...	...
Adi-dravida	9	6	...	1	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Arunthathiyar	26	4	...	2	14	2	3	1	...	...	...
Christian Nadar	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Christian Mudaliar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Muslims	4	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	...	...
TOTAL	234	35	2	4	36	28	78	7	30	14	...

It will be apparent that expenses on marriages bear no relation to the actual income of the household. Pillais belonging to the richer section of the community spend more on marriages, 4 families spending Rs. 1001 and above. The normal expenditure seems to be in the range of Rs. 401-600, there being 19 families in this category. Two Mudaliar families have spent over Rs. 1000, while 7 Reddiar families have spent between Rs. 801 to 1000. Three Mannadiar families and one Achari family have spent over Rs. 1000 whilst two Muslim families have spent over Rs. 800/- Even the Harijans do not stint their expenditure on marriages, notwithstanding the considerable in-roads made into their resources, the expenses far outstripping the income of the household. On the next day, the bridal couple visit the Subramania Temple at Koilpatti. Except for the Acharis, Mudaliars, Reddiars, Chettiars and Pillais, no other caste makes use of the Pujari's assistance in performing the wedding rites. On a good day, the bride and groom are invited to the bride's house and given a feast. This is called the *Maruveedu*. They are given new cloth presents and a brass pot. In the case of the communities for whom the local Pujari officiates, in addition to the exchange of bangles and garlands, the "Thali" or a yellow string, sanctified by the chanting of mantras as a symbol of marriage is tied round the neck of the bride by the bridegroom. The couple walk three times round the altar containing the sacrificial fire. The couple are blessed by the parents, relations, the *Nattanmaikaran* or village head and the elders of the community.

A Brahmin Wedding

24. The marriage customs of the Brahmins differ very widely from those of the other communities mentioned here. The Brahmins, steeped as they are in ritualism and following the Vedic customs and Sanskrit texts, closely follow the *graha sutras* relating to each section of the Brahmins whether they be Vadamas, Ashtasahasra or Iyengars. The marriage is normally arranged only if the horoscopes-caste and birth of the boy and the girl-agree and also if they do not belong to the same gotram. The horoscopes are examined by professional astrologers. In ancient times, the bridegroom used to pay a small sum of money as bride-price to the girl's mother. But nowadays this has been reversed by the institution of dowry. The more well-to-do the parents of the girl and the better placed the boy, the more the dowry which has to be paid by the bride's father to the bridegroom's parents. The marriage, contrary to the customs prevalent in other communities, is preformed only in the bride's house. The bride's father generally bears the expenditure. In early days the ceremony used to last for four or five days. Nowa-

days it is completed on a day, although in some villages marriages are even now performed over a period of four days. The arrangements for the stay, their food and other wants of the relatives and friends of the bridegroom will have to be met by the bride's father and generally the father of a Brahmin girl goes practically bankrupt after a wedding unless he is relatively well-to-do.

25. The ceremony begins with the *Nichayathar-tham* or betrothal and is followed by the performance of various *vratham*s consisting of oblations to the sacrificial fire by the bridegroom. On the day of the marriage, the bridegroom dresses himself in a yellow dhoti and proceeds on a mock pilgrimage called *Parathesa Pravesam* or *Kasiyatra* but he is intercepted on the way by the bride's father and brought to the marriage dais with a promise that the bride would be given to him in marriage. The bride is brought out decked in all her finery and the pair are placed face to face and made to exchange garlands. The couple then sit on a swing and married women circumambulate them thrice carrying water in pitchers, lights, fruits, betel leaves etc. The couple are conducted into the house and made to sit on the marriage dais. The ceremony proper now begins with an invocation to Lord Ganapathi, the elephant-faced God. The bridegroom then performs the seed sowing ceremony. The next stage is the tying of a thread on the wrist of the bridegroom. The bride thereupon sits on her father's lap with the mother standing by her side. The bride's father places the bride's hand in that of the bridegroom and both the father and mother pour water over the united hands of the couple to the chanting of mantras. With the bride sitting on her father's lap, the bridegroom ties the Thali or the sacred thread on the bride's neck to the accompaniment of music and all the assembled elders bless the couple by throwing sanctified rice on their heads. A "Dharba" or grass belt is passed round the waist of the bride and the couple now perform the *Homam* at the sacrificial fire. The most important function which is considered to be the binding part of the ceremony is the taking of the seven steps. The bridegroom lifts the left foot of the bride seven times chanting certain mantras. This concludes the function and the assembled guests are treated to a grand wedding feast. Towards evening, the bride and bridegroom sit before the sacred fire while Brahmins recite mantras. The couple are then shown Dhruva, the pole star, *Ursa Major* and these are worshipped. It was already indicated that among Harijans the ceremonies are practically the same as those observed among other communities. The only variation is that in Harijan marriages, a priest belonging to the Harijan community will officiate and perform the sacred rites.

Divorce

26. Another interesting feature relating to their marital outlook is the prevalence of the practice of divorce. An unhappy couple are in a position to end their marital relationship at a moment's notice. When a man becomes weary of his marital relationship, he frees himself by giving the woman a sum of money and the permission to do what she likes. He takes to himself another wife. On the other hand, when a woman is desirous of getting rid of her husband, she returns the bride-price paid at the time of the marriage to the man and removing the bangle from her wrist, leaves it on the doorstep and departs. She is free to take a new spouse, if she so wishes. There is no ill-feeling between the estranged pair and sometimes they continue to remain good friends. The Research Assistant who was in charge of the survey had occasion to feel somewhat embarrassed due to her lack of knowledge regarding the prevalence of divorce in this village. While conducting the survey, she came across a man who did not possess a wife with the name mentioned in the house-list. The interview was being conducted in the lane in front of the house with the 'Thalayari' and a few curious by-standers watching the proceedings with amusement writ large on their faces. On enquiry whether he was a widower who had remarried, he answered in the negative. Then he pointed out to a woman standing nearby as a woman who had been his wife. This occasion created some embarrassment to the Research Assistant who remembered suddenly that she had already interviewed and elicited information from that woman that she was another man's wife only a few hours back and to add to the confusion, the other husband was also standing close by her side at that moment. All the four of them seemed to take this situation in their stride and nobody felt that anything was amiss or there was something strange about the whole affair. On the contrary, they were highly amused at the confusion betrayed by the Research Assistant and seemed to spot a joke where there was none. This itself was ample evidence that even divorced pairs could live in amity and bear no ill-feeling in spite of the failure of their marriage. Another peculiar thing which one noticed was the fact that a woman may incidentally or intentionally go astray and bear an illegitimate child and yet not be ostracised for it. In fact she continues to live with her husband while the child is called after the father who takes a keen interest in the child, without displaying any guilt complex. There seems to be some sort of understanding among the people not to take serious notice of such occasional mishaps. I had to tread on dangerous ground when I tried to elicit information about the prevalence of divorce in this village. But I contacted a few people

whose confidence I had won and they unburdened themselves on this institution in the village. According to them, except among the Mudaliars, Acharis and Brahmins, divorce is easy and quite common even now though the husband who wishes to divorce his wife has to pay half the bride-price. Both the husband and the estranged wife are free to marry again. Where the wife expresses her desire to separate, she has to return the bride-price paid at the time of her marriage. Of late, among the younger generation, with increasing contact with the outer world, the influence of urbanisation is having the desired effect and marital ties are much more firm and sacred than earlier. If children are born out of wedlock and the parents agree to divorce, the custody of the children rest with the father, always.

Disposal of the dead

27. When a man dies, his wife breaks the bangle on her wrist and loosening her hair begins to lament in the traditional style. There is a period of mourning and people gather in the house of death to pay their last respects to the deceased. It will be considered a grievous and unpardonable error on the part of those who fail to put in an appearance. In the case of certain well-to-do families, traditional mourners who reside in the village are called for and the lamenting is carried on for hours. After all the kith and kin have assembled and taken a last look at the departed, the body bathed, perfumed and attired in new clothes is placed on a decorated bier, borne out of the village to the accompaniment of a funeral dirge, which has a monotonous rhythm. In the case of those communities who prefer to cremate their dead, the body is taken to a nearby river and burnt on its banks and the ashes scattered to the wind. All of them return home except few loved ones who keep a melancholic watch over the burning pyre as it rages in solitude on the banks of the following stream. In the cases of communities who prefer to bury their dead, the body is carried to the outskirts of the village and there buried among the barren rocks and thick creepers with a stone to mark the grave. This place is the local cemetery. If death overtakes an unmarried person, young plantain saplings are attached to the bier to mark the unmarried state; if it is of a young child, it is carried away on a mat to be buried and not burned. Among the Brahmins and the Muslims, the function is a very solemn affair and the obsequies are performed in silence and not to the accompaniment of music. In the village there are three different burial grounds, one used by the communities like Mannadiars, Nadars, Konars who prefer to bury the dead, one exclusively used

by Harijans and the other by Muslims. Muslims always prefer to have a separate burial ground and do not inter their dead along with others whom they consider non-believers. Harijans, due to social customs, have to bury their dead separately. To such an extent does caste stigma influence customs and manners even to segregation of the dead!

Pollution

28. The house or place where the death occurred is considered to be polluted and the people do not cook in the house for a number of days ranging from 2 to 7. The neighbours do the cooking for the inmates of the house. After removal of the body, the entire place is washed and the inmates are expected to have a head bath. A little lamp is kept burning day and night in the place where the deceased breathed his last for at least seven days. A vessel of water is also placed beside it to appease the departed soul of whatever dissatisfaction it may feel at the sudden change of state. In ancient days, Mudaliars, Brahmins and Acharis used to observe fasting as propitiation to the departed soul, but this ceremony is not observed nowadays. Among these communities, the death anniversary used to be observed in which a priest was called and fed. Among orthodox Brahmins, this custom is followed even to the present day.

Cosmological Beliefs

29. Some of the villagers, especially among the Mannadiars believe in life after death in another sphere while others believe in the transmigration of the soul. They assume that a man who has committed many sins is repeatedly born into this world in varied forms, be it in the shape of an animal, bird, plant or man, and usually continues to do so until his actions upon the earth finally absolve him of his sinful state and entitles him to his heavenly abode. The villagers have many beliefs and quite a number of legends circulate among them. They resort to black magic, both for good and for evil, except that where it is used for the good of the community, it is commonly termed white magic and not black magic. However, the significance of the occult is still in its rudimentary stage and quite a few of the villagers are said to possess not only psychic powers but powers of magic also. Sometimes when the villagers fall ill, they suppose that it is due to the evil eye and they go about remedying by curious methods the natural consequences of an erroneous living. The Pujaris of the temples lead an easy life and with the exception of chanting mantras at the functions and in the temple they do not exert any sort of influence over the people.

On the other hand, Hindu Nadars have a powerful influence over the villagers, but they do not use it always for evil. They look normal and carry on with every day labour, scarcely revealing the power they possess unless interfered with or paid to do a specified act of commission.

Cults

30. One very interesting discovery was the development of certain cults among them like hypnotism and the charming of animals. The village Thalayari is accredited with such psychic powers. He was in a position to trek lonely paths along the mountain slopes without any fear of wild animals or people. This was possible according to the villagers, by the power he possessed to charm wild animals and wild people, so that they could be rendered harmless. Some of the beliefs held by some of the villagers were a little naive at times and at other times positively dangerous in their effect on simple minds. When a man wants to get rid of his enemy, he seeks out a Nadar and gives him the necessary financial impetus to exert his evil influence in destroying the enemy. Various methods are being employed in carrying out this havoc. One of the most popular methods is to identify the victim with a growing tree and cast a spell on the tree. The young tree begins to gradually wither and at the same time the victim falls ill and degenerates in health. Ultimately when the plant dies, the man is said to pass away. This belief is akin to the 'Voodoo' cult practised by some of the South-African tribes. That black magic exists and such evil practices are in vogue doing harm to the people has to be conceded. Possibly these Nadars do possess such terrible powers. Anyhow I did not have the courage either to check the veracity of these powers or practise it on anything.

Black Magic

31. Sometimes when a Nadar is annoyed, he is said to look at the man who caused the annoyance. Thereupon, the person who has annoyed him begins to writhe with physical pain and he continues to suffer until he begs forgiveness and this is granted. I have been told one or two tales to weaken my apparent scepticism about the powers wielded by these Nadars. On one occasion it was reported that a woman who was jealous of her husband's sweet-heart, caused the latter's hair, eye-brows and eye-lashes to fall off by means of black magic. She presumed that this would make her husband forget his love for the other woman. Unfortunately for the woman who let loose the powers of evil, this was one occasion where true love stood the test of disfigurement. There is another superstition in vogue that one could be completely brought under the control



Yet even these bones from insult to protect, some frail memorial still erected high Burial Ground.

of another by the use of philtres or potions. These could be used to induce a person to feel something he normally would not feel. Emotions like love and hate could be temporarily created by the use of such potions. I must, however, inform the reader that such instances were not supposed to have occurred frequently. Otherwise, life would not be so simple or pleasant in this village. The people of the village are too busy living a hard life which gives them no time to think of emotions like love and hate which leads others to indulge in excesses of temptation. Unless motivated by some powerful feeling of hatred, they do not go to the extent of letting loose the powers of black magic or seeking the help of Nadars to carry out some act of destruction. Apparently this power is a myth.

Inheritance

32. The law relating to inheritance rights as practised by these people is very simple. They neither favour the present complicated machinery of inheritance laws nor are they very anxious to engage in any litigation to get what they feel is their rightful share of the property. They very rarely think of law courts and as one man pithily informed me, the income he earns he would rather spend on himself and his loved ones than feed a lawyer many miles away only to find that he has got less than what he originally possessed after a judgement delivered by a Court of Law. The sons of the family get equal shares and the girls get nothing. As a villager put it "Why should they? They are after all to be married and supported by their husbands". The brothers are merely duty bound to get their sisters married. However, if a man has no sons and only daughters, girls share equally the father's property. If there are no children born to the man, the property passes to his wife at the time of his death. If he is a widower and has no children, his property is bequeathed to his brothers and sisters or to the persons living with him at the time of his death. If the deceased leaves behind his wife and children, the property is divided between the wife and sons, each getting an equal share of the property. However, most of the families in this village, being joint families, these technical details are not normally observed. As soon as a man dies, automatically the eldest son assumes the position of authority as head of the household and others continue to obey him. There is no question of shares arising out of the event unless they are all grown up and married in which case the mother either remains in the husband's house or lives with one of her favourite sons. The property of her husband remains with her until the time of her death. Thus the rule of primogeniture is usually followed and the property devolves upon the eldest son. If the eldest

son happens to be a minor at the time of the demise of his father, the mother automatically becomes the guardian. In cases where the man dies without leaving behind any children or wife the property devolves on his brothers.

Minors

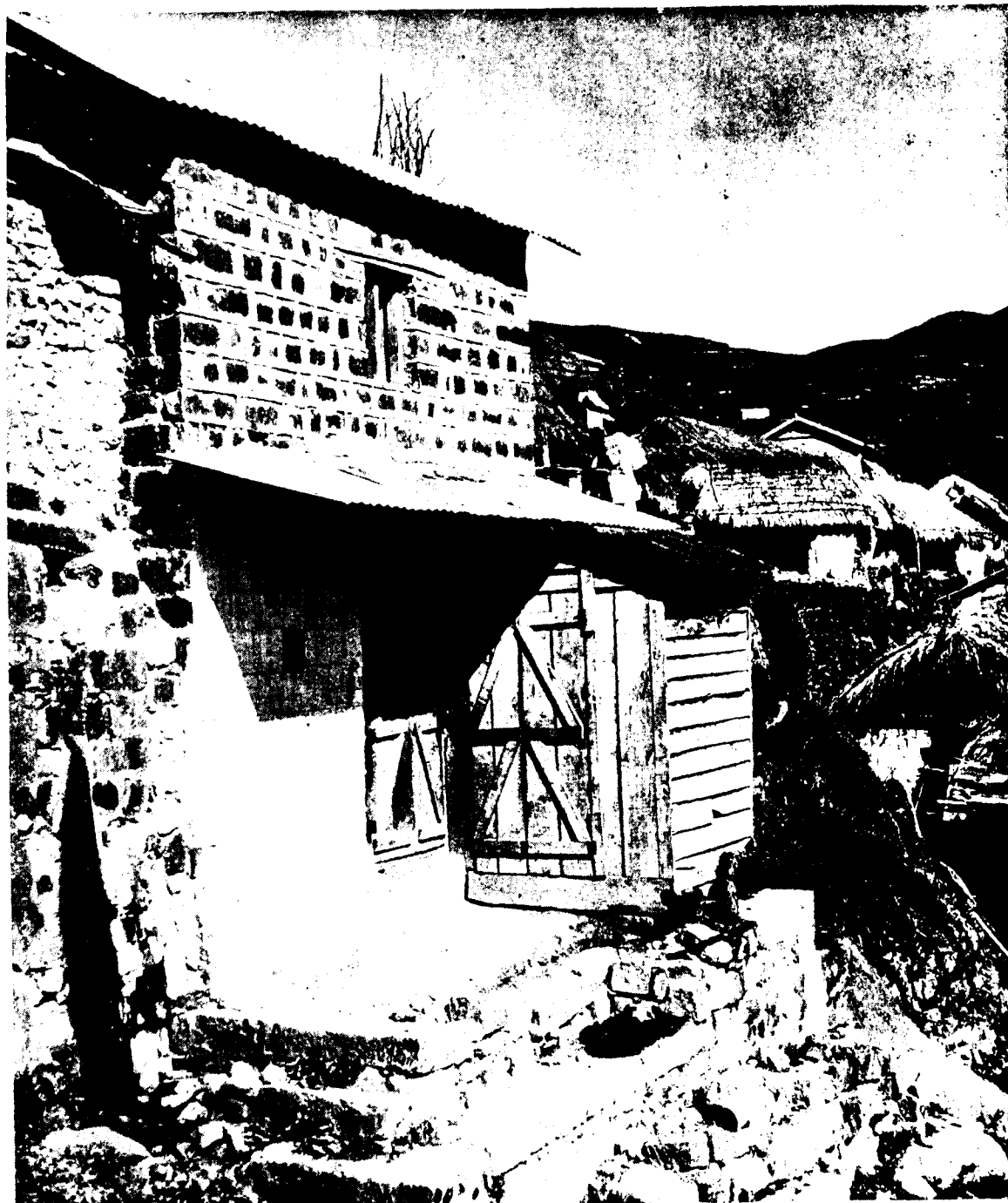
33. Regarding the property of a minor, the mother has a right to sell it, if she so wishes during guardianship, but the sale should be conducted before the minor reaches the age of sixteen and on the ground of acute starvation. At the time of the sale, she has to produce the minor. If it happens to be ancestral property it cannot be sold on any grounds whatsoever. Illegitimate children have no right of inheritance except under certain circumstances. In this village, it is a custom to marry within the family in order to retain property, i.e., to marry sister's daughter, paternal aunt's daughter or maternal uncle's daughter. It sometimes happens that the girl reaches the age of 16 but there is no suitable match for her within the family and so she is married to a close relation who may be just two years old at the time. As a consequence, the bride later goes astray, but she is allowed to do so and nobody objects to it. Thus, illegitimate children are born and bear the name of the two year old father. Later on, when the boy grows up, he marries a girl of his own choice and has children of his own. When he dies, there is trouble in regard to the inheritance because illegitimate children have a legitimate right over the property. Usually the property is then divided between the eldest legitimate son and the eldest illegitimate son. This case has been included only because an event of this nature took place several years back, but now a days, I was informed, that such a situation is not likely to arise.

Consanguinity of Marriages

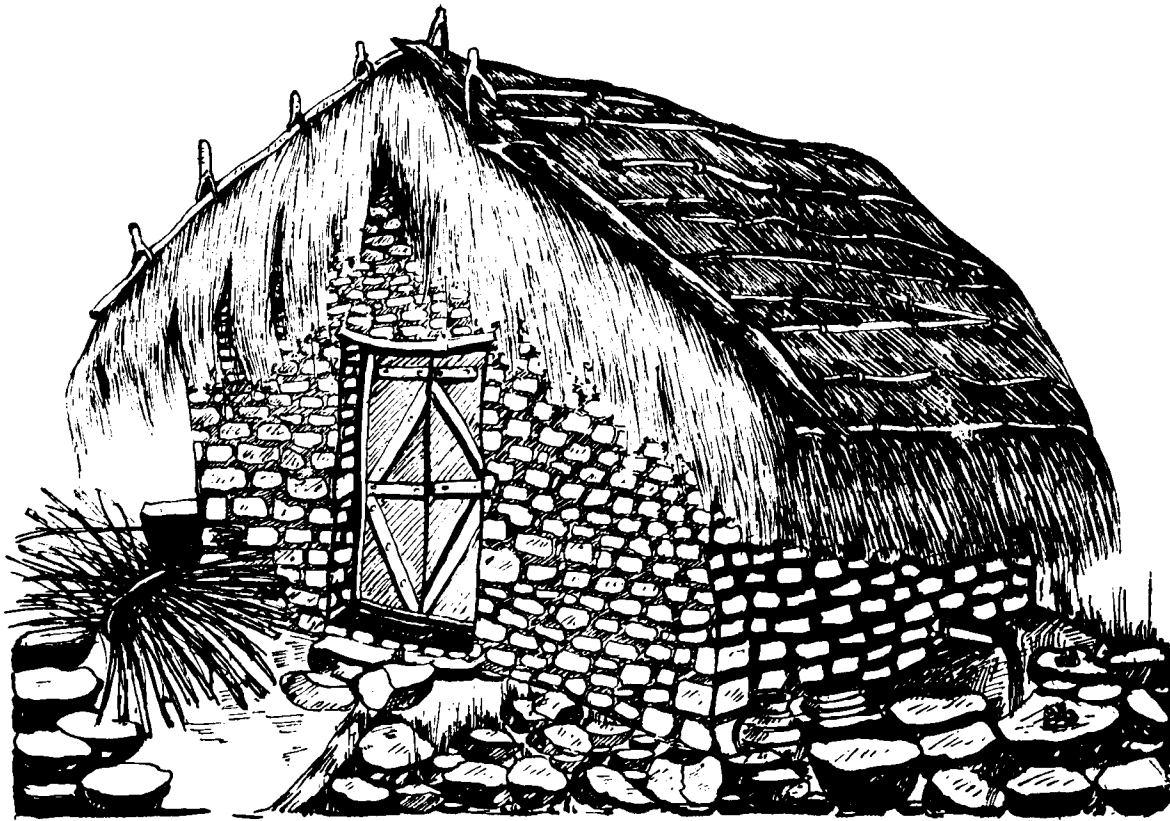
34. People are allowed to marry whom they please, but they cannot marry outside their particular caste. When such instances occur the couple are treated with great contempt and asked to live elsewhere. This usually happens when a caste Hindu marries a Harijan. The children of brothers cannot marry, neither can the children of sisters wed. This is strictly observed by all communities except the Muslims. But generally, it is the custom here to marry within the family. The children of a brother and a sister could and do intermarry. They do not like marrying outside their family circle and the most common alliance is that of cousins.

Family Planning

35. All the villagers whom I interrogated, and I had taken a fairly representative sample among all communities, said that they have heard of Family Planning



The Facade of a Vilpatti house. The uncared-for drainage - the uneven entrance the crude doors, and tin-sheet roofing.



Hut of rocks

measures instituted by the Government of Madras and were not very much in favour of it. In a village like Vilpatti where every hand counts, people lack the desire to limit the number of children per family. They do not think in terms of the number of mouths to feed but rather in terms of the increase in the labour force which may at some future date augment the family income and thus keep the elders free from want when they can no longer feed for themselves. This, coupled with the climate of the place, sets a low premium on attempts to introduce birth control and restriction in the size of the family. Six people in the village, most of them well-to-do, have expressed their willingness to undergo vasectomy operations. Two of them have already undergone the operation of which one proved unsuccessful. Out of the twenty people who were questioned, all of them were aware of the later changes in the Hindu Marriages Act. But none of them knew of the latest changes in the Hindu Succession Act, changes in Inheritance Laws and

the latest Dowry Prohibition Bill. They still follow the age-old customs of divorce, giving of dowry, inheritance of property etc. Some of them even went to the length of stating that the property must only be handed over to the male members and providing for the female members was not quite correct.

Dwellings

36. Vilpatti village being a hill village, the dwellings of a necessity, have to be built with a view to allow as much light as possible in winter and to keep the people warm throughout the year. With this view, most of the houses have been built with stones, mud and tin roofs to permit water to flow down during the rainy season. But the poverty of the people have effectively barred the way towards improved living conditions and in a majority of cases, especially among Harijans, the houses are built only of mud with thatch for a roof. The different types of dwellings in Vilpatti are given in Table No. 3.



Rock-built hut with thatch of 'PUNJAB' grass

TABLE No. III
HOUSE TYPES

Community	No. of Houses	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 only	Bricks	Stones	Others	Huts without walls	Mud Floor	Cement Floor	Wooden Floor	Other types of Floor
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
Reddiar	49	...	...	...	4	45	...	32	...	4	13	...	45	4	...	...
Pillai	56	...	5	...	19	32	...	...	...	35	21	...	26	30	...	...
Mannadiar	23	...	...	...	...	23	...	...	...	...	23	...	23	...	...	...
Mudaliar	19	...	...	...	8	11	...	4	...	8	7	...	12	7	...	...
Pannadi	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	...	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	1	...	2	1	...	...
Vannan	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Nadar	4	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	4	...	...	...
Achari	15	...	1	...	1	13	...	2	...	5	8	...	8	7	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...
Maruthuvar	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Naidu	6	...	...	...	2	4	...	4	...	2	...	...	4	2	...	...
Malayali	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Konar	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Kshathiriya	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Parayan	11	...	...	...	...	11	...	...	...	...	11	...	11	...	...	...
Adi-dravida	9	...	...	...	...	9	...	...	...	...	9	...	9	...	...	...
Arunthathiyar	26	...	2	...	2	22	...	...	...	10	16	...	16	10	...	...
Christian Nadar	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
„ Mudaliar	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...
Muslims	4	...	...	...	1	3	...	3	...	1	...	...	3	1	...	...
TOTAL	234	...	10	...	42	182	...	49	...	74	111	...	172	62	...	...



One of the modern constructions that have lately come up in the village.

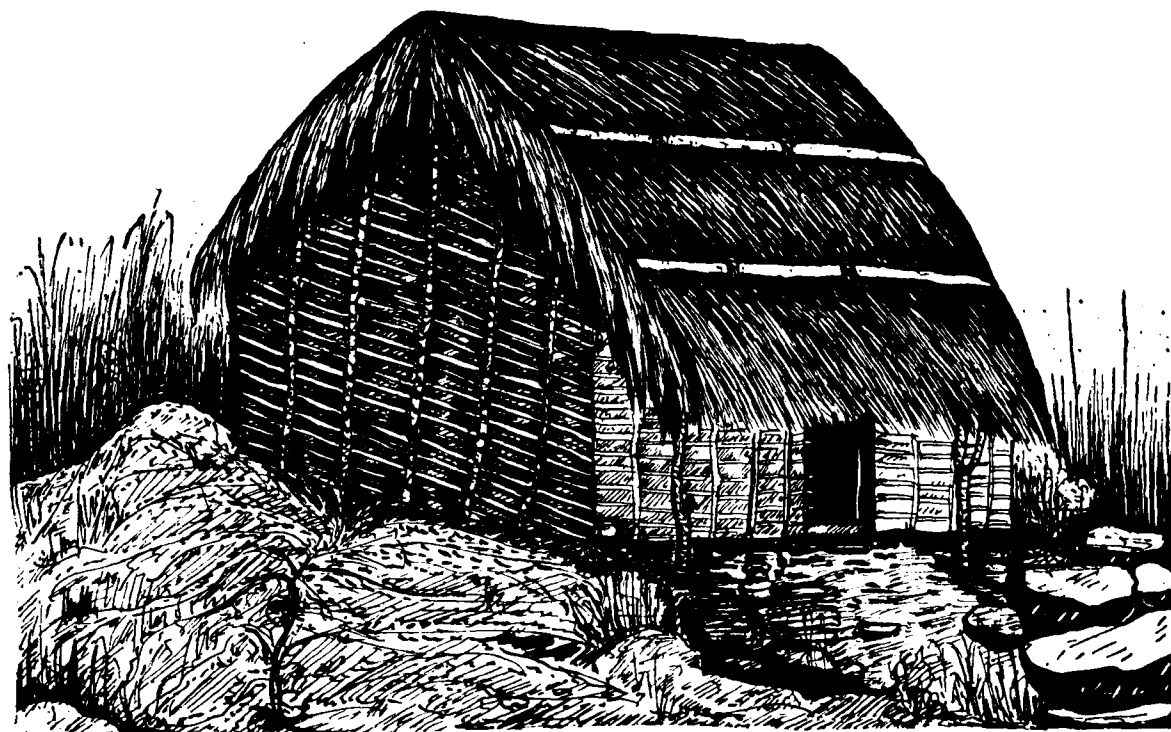
Rites relating to house construction

37. Most of their huts have been built with mud, rocks and thatches which are available in generous quantities nearby. The direction of the house entrance varies according to the site and as a result, house entrance facing in all directions can be found in this village. During particular months of the year, the entrance of a house should face certain directions. For example, during January and February, it ought to face east. So the house will be built during January if the site portion entails an east facing house, as it is supposed to let in the maximum of light and air. They have an inauguration ceremony before commencing the construction. A hole is dug and filled with certain ingredients like ghee, oil, sugar, salt, camphor, saffron etc. During an auspicious hour, on a particular day, some water is sprinkled and a couple of bricks are placed in it. This signifies the beginning of the construction operation and some money is given as 'baksheesh' to the chief mason. After the foundation has been dug and construction has reached flooring level, a formal ceremony of planting the threshold is next conducted to the breaking of coconuts and the chanting of mantras. The chief mason is again paid some money as gift.

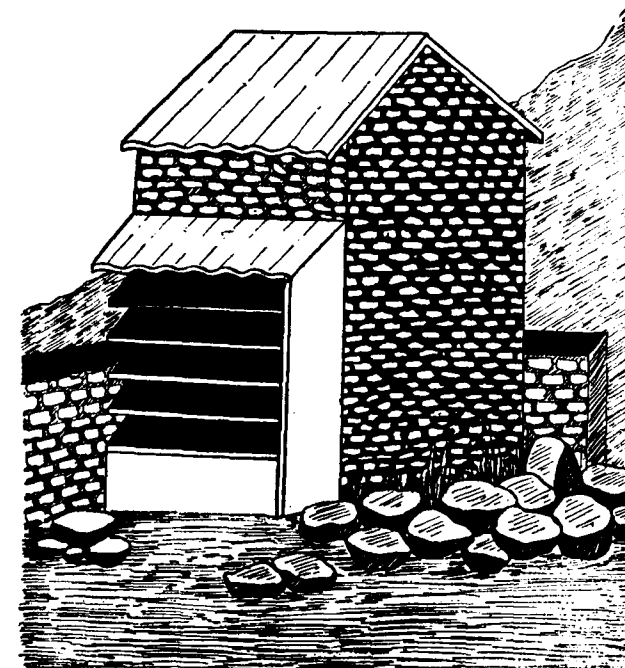
Dwellings suited to climatic conditions

38. Considering the salient points with regard to their abode, we found that the interior was warm

and comfortable. This was possible because the walls were usually built of a kind of thick reed called *Nanal*. The reeds are first interwoven in a particular fashion and then pasted over with thick mud, shreds of brick and cow dung. The final stream-lined finish was possible by a coating of cow dung skillfully diluted to a certain consistency which would give the necessary gloss and also the adhesive propensity to keep out wind and rain. Overhead, thick bamboos form a primary ceiling. On this, the thatch is placed. About two feet away from the ceiling run a number of bamboo reapers from one end of the roof to the other. On enquiry we were informed that this was purposely affixed to the ceiling in order to hang the garlic bunches upside down, so that they remain in that position till they season by the smoke coming from the oven and are ready to be sown in the fields. In a majority of huts, the lack of chimneys is evident. Only in well-to-do houses built of brick and with corrugated zinc roofs we noticed the chimney. On being questioned, the villagers said that their houses were purposely constructed that way so that the smoke having no outlet could pervade the one room that constituted the house and keep it warm, a sort of village air-conditioner. Besides, the smoke settling on the walls and ceilings makes the interior a non-conductor of heat. The grains stored inside also get seasoned and on the whole there is much to be said for this type of arrangement except when the smoke gets too



Hut of Nanal (Reed)



Wooden - boarding for interior warmth

dense and irritates the nasal passages leading to bouts of coughing and a desire to get out to the wide open spaces, as happened to me on one occasion.

Stone houses

39. Generally the houses of the Reddiars and Mudaliars are built of stones with tin roofs. Four Reddiars and thirty-five Pillais, in affluent circumstances, possess houses built of stone, but the members of the other communities including the Mannadiars and the Harijans live only in mud houses. Two Chettiar families and one Muslim family live in stone houses with a tin roof. Some of these stone houses are constructed according to the semi-modern principles of engineering. The walls are built of broken slabs of granite and cemented together. The interior is plastered with cow dung and the same smoke arrangement functions here, except in certain cases. The roof, either of asbestos or corrugated zinc, is at a height of 20' or so. Ten feet beneath this roof a floor forms the ceiling for the room below. The upper partition is normally used as a loft where grains and vegetables are stored and is even used as a sleeping apartment at times when guests descend upon the household without notice. At one corner of the living room below is placed a tiny ladder leading to the loft. At one end of the room there usually is a wooden mantle shelf running from one wall to the other. Outside and above, a balcony adjoins the left and forms a sort of portal,

Except for half a dozen modern constructions made up of stone with tiled roofs and the chimney flues the majority of the houses are built of rock and mud with a thatched roof. About 10-12 houses built of rock had asbestos roofing or corrugated zinc roof. 80 per cent of the houses are built of Nanal thatch and stones. In most of the households except in the Mudaliar, Reddiar, Pillais and a few Mannadiar's households, there is no separate hearth with oven for cooking and this operation is normally done at one corner of the hut. Since there is no fire escape, a long pipe sticks out of an aperture in the wall or through the door into the open to let out the excess smoke, but in the majority of the houses, at the time of cooking, smoke pervades the entire atmosphere and it is common sight to see a housewife sitting placidly near the smoke with tears streaming from her eyes and welcoming guests or members of her household with a cheerful smile and a cry that food would be served within a short while.

Grahapravesam

40. Except among the well-to-do Reddiars and Mudaliars, Grahapravesam ceremony or the ceremony attendant upon entering a newly constructed house is a very simple affair. The members of the household invoke the blessings of their God and entering the new house, boil some milk and then formally take possession of the house. In the case of rich persons, there is a local priest who officiates at the function and along with the boiling of the milk, a feast is also held to which guests and relatives are invited. The new house generally has a festive appearance, decorated with mango leaves and young plantain saplings.

Furniture and Utensils

41. By way of furniture, the majority of villagers possess very little. A few pots and pans made of mud, aluminium or brass constitute their main property. The meagre bits of furniture found in some houses reveal their status. A broken bench or two or a sagging cot made of coir are the only articles to be found in a majority of homes. Occasionally we see a rickety chair or two. But the commendable hospitality of the villager is clearly seen when a distinguished guest or a well known friend comes to the house. The host excitedly calls to his wife to bring out a chair for the visitor and one could see the woman coming out with a rectangular piece of wood used normally in the kitchen for sitting down while eating, called "Manai". In several homes, of the Reddiars, Pillais and Mudaliars we noticed signs of prosperity. In such places one could see a mantle shelf running from wall

to wall containing a number of attractively carved drawers. Here the cots were less sagging and the stools less rickety. A few brass articles as well as glass tumblers were on display on the floor swept and cleaned with a coating of cow dung. Such homes also had a bath attached which was only a small enclosed room with a tub in which water is filled. In the well-to-do houses of the communities, silver articles like tumblers, trays and others are found, but these are not brought out except on festive occasions or when distinguished guests are present in the house. On such occasions, the silver is taken out, washed, brightly polished and placed before the guests. Normally, for eating and drinking, aluminium plates and brass tumblers are used. For storing water, brass pots called "Kudam" in Tamil are used. In a few well-to-do houses large vessels made of brass are used and these are brought out only during marriages, when a large number of guests would be present. Regarding other consumer articles which are considered as luxuries, we found that there were two motor cycles and one motor car, all of them belonging to individuals residing in Attuvampatti, a hamlet of Vilpatti. The car was owned by Sri S. K. Chatterji and



*Brass vessel for
water*



Brass vessel

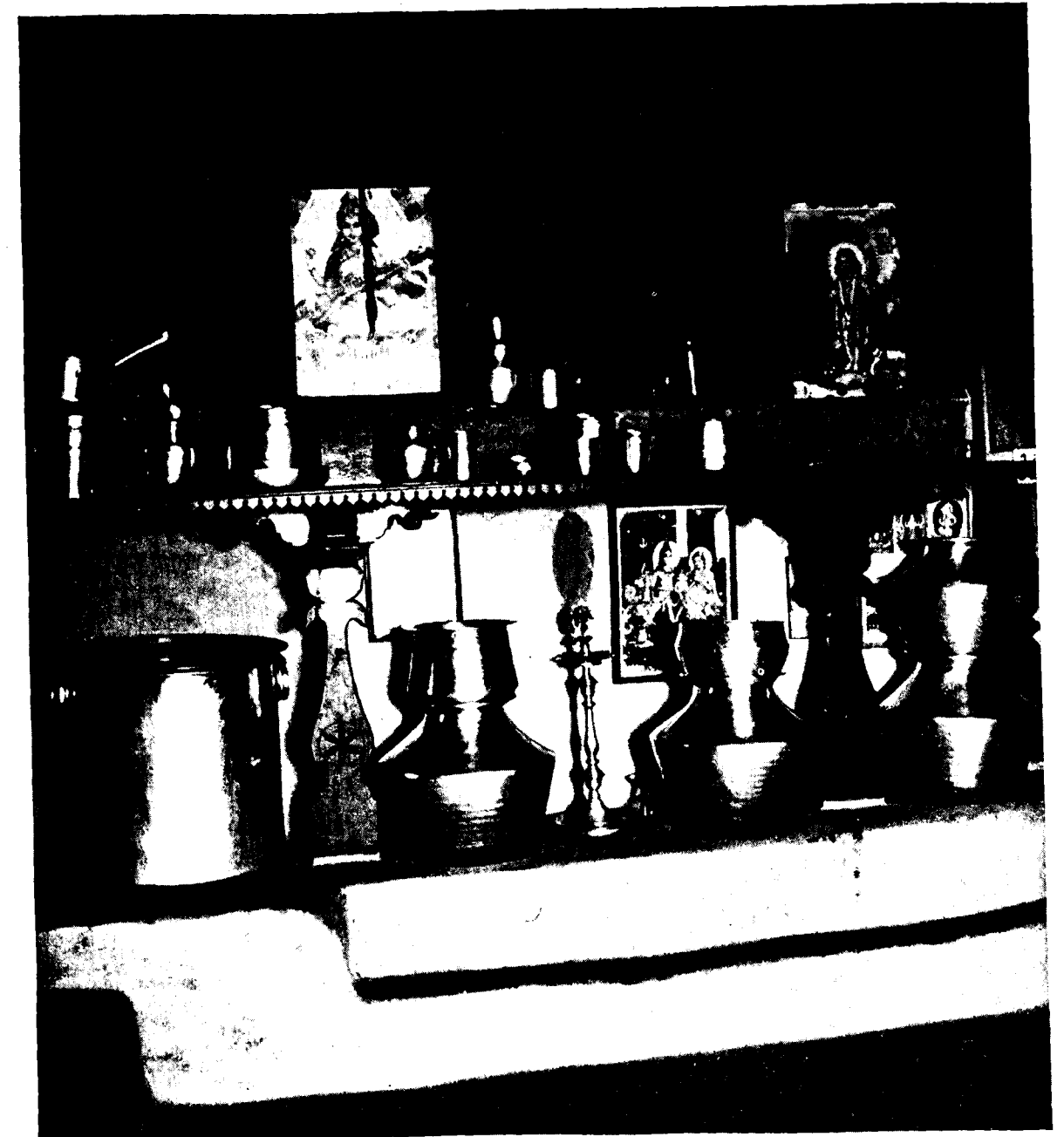


*Bronze lotah
or milk jug*

the motor cycles were owned by Sarvashri Palaniswami Gowder and Esaiah. There were two radios owned by Nadar and Mudaliar, both were purchased five years back. Three gramophones were available in the village all of them old and creaky, of which two were owned by the local tea shops. There were two cycles in the village. Hurricane lanterns were found in several homes as this was essential for various reasons and were treated as an essential item to be owned by the people of the village. Details of possession of furniture and consumer goods are found in Table No. 4.



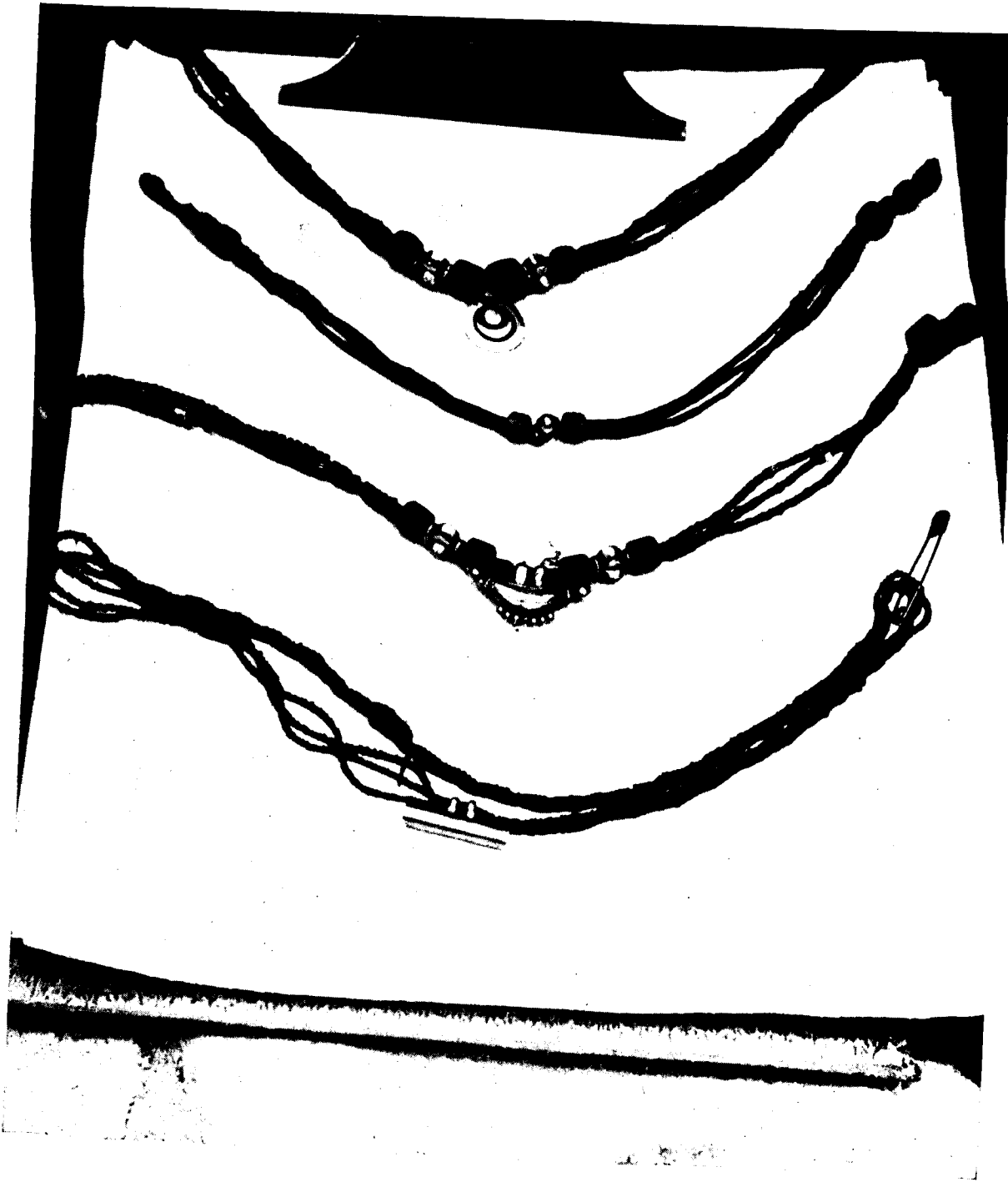
Modern construction



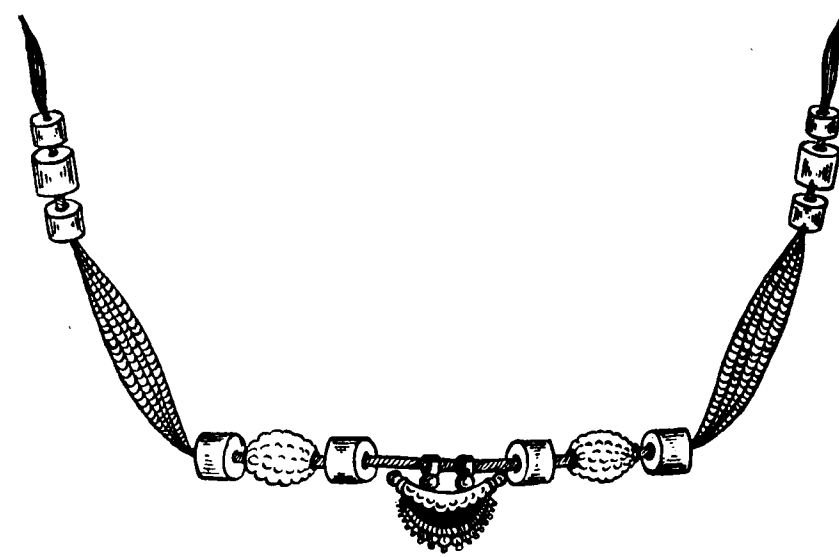
An index of prosperity. The kitchen of a well-to-do Reddiar household - more an exception than a rule.

TABLE No. IV
FURNITURE AND CONSUMER GOODS

No. of households which have acquired in the last 5 years (Furniture)							No. of households which have acquired in the last 5 years (Consumer goods)						
Community	Cot	Bench	Stool	Chair	Almirah	Table	Petromax	Battery light	Lantern	Cycle	Kerosene stove	Radio	Gram- phone
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Reddiar	26	5	6	3	1	...	...	5	6	...	3	...	...
Pillai	33	11	3	4	2	...	...	5	3	1	...	...	...
Mannadiar	13	2	...	...	1	...	1	2	2	1	...	...	...
Mudaliar	11	2	2	3	3	2	1	5	2	...	...	1	3
Christian- Mudaliar	1	1	1	1	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Pannadi	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	2	2	2	2	2	...	...	3	2	...	...	1	...
Achari	9	3	1	3	3	...	...	4	2	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maruthuvar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...
Naidu	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...
Malayali	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Konar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Kshatriya	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Adi-dravida	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Christian Nadar	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
Parayan	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	2	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	107	29	15	16	14	3	3	28	25	2	3	2	3



The THALI - in its variety ! Let they who say it is a symbol of servility for the woman who wears it, be told that it is a sign of security and enduring affection.



Karugumani Thayathu or Necklace of black - beads

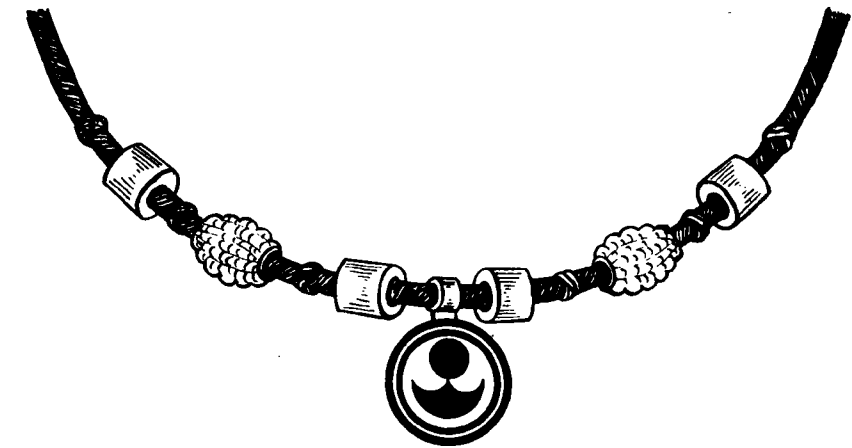
Ornaments

42. An interesting feature of village life is that people spend great sums on ornaments, specially made of gold and channel most of their savings into the purchase of ornaments, whenever it is possible for them to do so. That is why it requires intense propaganda to change this attitude and inculcate in people habits of thrift and saving. Many villagers whom I came across expressed the view that it was safer for them to convert their cash into ornaments rather than purchase securities or National Saving Certificates, as ornaments not only pleased their women-folk, but also were capable of conversion into ready cash or to be pledged with the money lender in exchange for loans. Therefore, it was extremely rare to come across any household without having some ornaments either made of gold or silver. Profuse indeed were the variety of ornaments we came across at Vilpatti. The *Thali* as the symbol of marital bliss and chastity was the main ornament we came across among married women in the village. There were a number odd designs among the *Thalis* which we saw adorning the necks of women. In general, the majority of *Thalis* consisted of black beads strung together on a piece of yellow thread and having a single cylindrical bar of gold or small sovereigns with the figures of Gods or Goddesses intagliated on the metal. To provide variety, there were also red coral beads strung on ends of the gold piece to provide a vivid contrast to the black beads on the yellow thread. Among the more well-to-do, the chain itself was of gold and the size of the pendant was big or small depending on the social



Karugumani (Necklace of black - beads)

status of the women. Both married and unmarried women invariably had necklaces made out of gold, except among Harijans, Acharis and other less well-to-do sections of the community. In addition, other ornaments owned by women consisted of ear-rings which were of the solid gold type known as the 'Katholai' which are worn by the older women in the village, the younger generation preferring to wear pendants or clip ear-rings made of Uma gold or silver. Bangles made out of silver, gold or glass were also a common feature. The visit of the bangle seller to the village which is a regular feature every week, is heralded with delight by the womenfolk and with apprehen-



'Thali' - Pottu Mani (Necklace of gold and coral beads)

sion by the men-folk who have to foot the bill. It is a common sight to find a bangle seller displaying his dazzling wares with a bevy of women grouped around him, each one vying with the other in selecting the best of the glass bangles. Ear-rings are also sported by a number of men in the village, mostly belonging to the older generation as the ear-boring ceremony is done when a child is young, both for men and for women. Among women, the nose-boring ceremony is an additional feature as no devoted Hindu is accepted as such unless he has his ears bored in the case of a man and her nose bored in the case of a woman.

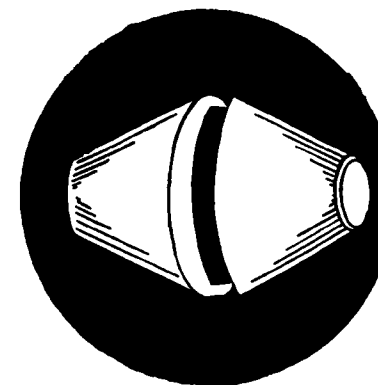
Food Habits

43. The diet of the villagers of Vilpatti mainly consist of rice, wheat and potatoess. They eat other vegetables like cabbages, carrots and radishes, but they generally consume a large quantity of potatoes, because their main output is this tuber crop. Table No. 5

shows the details of diet and food habits. Of the 234 households surveyed, except for 7 vegetarian households, the rest eat meat, fish and eggs. One family in each of the communities, Reddi, Pillai, Mudaliar, Achari, the sole Brahmin, Malayali and surprisingly, Adi-dravida is vegetarian. Garlic and potatoes form the main constituents of the diet of the majority as also fruits which are very cheap and grow in great profusion. Delectable fruits like apricots, plums, pears, peaches and oranges are also consumed in vast quantities in season. However, where there are orchards the majority of the fruits are sent to Kodi town for sale to tourists who throng this place during the summer season.

Prohibition of certain foods

44. The Harijans of the village belong to three main subcastes-the Pallars, the Arunthathiars or Chakkiliyars and the Adi dravidas. The Pallars and Adi dravidas



Katholai (Gold ear ring)

TABLE No. V
DIET AND FOOD HABITS

Community	Total No. of Households	Households taking						Frequency of Meals		
		No. of Vegetarian Households	No. of Non-Vegetarian Households	Rice	Wheat	Grams other than rice or Wheat	Roots including tapioca	One meal a day	Two meals a day	3 meals & more a day
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Reddiar	49	1	48	49	39	8	...	...	10	39
Pillai	56	1	55	56	44	18	...	...	14	42
Mannadiar	23	...	23	23	17	3	...	...	12	11
Mudaliar (Hindu)	19	1	18	19	11	5	...	...	9	10
Mudaliar (Christian)	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	1	...
Pannadi	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	1
Chettiar	3	...	3	3	5	...	...	...	1	2
Vannan	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	1
Nadar	4	...	4	4	3	...	...	...	...	4
Achari	15	1	14	15	13	2	...	...	6	9
Brahmin	1	1	...	1	...	1	...	...	1	...
Maruthuvar	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	1
Naidu	6	...	6	6	6	1	...	...	1	5
Malayali	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	1
Konar	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	1	...
Kshatriya	1	...	1	1	1	1	...	...	1	...
Adi-dravida	9	1	8	9	5	...	...	...	8	1
Arunthathiyar	26	...	26	26	17	4	...	...	15	11
Nadar (Christian)	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	1
Muslim	4	...	4	4	2	1	...	...	1	3
Parayan	11	...	11	11	9	1	...	...	4	7
TOTAL	234	7	227	234	177	45	...	...	85	149



The main quadrangle with ditches which are supposed to be the beginnings of a drainage construction.

in addition to other kinds of meat, eat also the flesh of wild animals and pork. Twenty out of the 26 Arunthathiyar families, eat all types of meat including beef. When a buffalo or a cow dies a natural death, the Arunthathiars are called in to take away the animal. They promptly flay the skin and eat the beef. Our attempt to find out what types of food are prohibited produced interesting results. They are embodied in Table No. 6.

Except for 2 Reddiar families 46 families stated that they do not touch beef. One family tabooed use of pork also. All Pillai families prohibited use of beef but were not averse to pork. Among the Harijans, only 8 families prohibited the use of beef six of whom belonged to the Arunthathiyars who are confirmed beef eaters.

Dietary pattern

45. One hundred and fortynine households out of those surveyed take meals three times a day of which the first meal is normally the breakfast. The cultivators as well as other workers take an early breakfast and then leave for the fields. They work till noon when they eat another meal which consists of rice and vegetables. In the evening, they have their third and final meal which is the heaviest and which may consist of rice, meat and other vegetables. Eightyfive households have the habit of taking two meals a day. From this we can conclude that all the households can afford to have two meals per day if the first meal taken is treated as breakfast. Two households belonging to the Pillai community take more than three meals a day, but possibly this is due to the fact that they include the evening tea with which they may be having some slight snacks as a meal. From our inquiries, we found that among the Harijans, Mannadiars and other communities, the morning breakfast for the cultivator before he proceeds to the field was some cold rice left from the previous night meal or potato mash and buttermilk mixed with it. Among the well-to-do communities like the Reddiars, Pillais and Mudaliars, the morning breakfast consists of rice cakes known as 'Idlis' and coffee. The afternoon meal for all communities including the Harijans is rice. This is one of the peculiar features of Vilpatti, as socio-economic survey, conducted in other places reveal the fact that for a majority of communities the staple diet was ragi or cumbu gruel. However, one reason for all the inhabitants in this village taking to a rice or potato diet must be the non-availability of millets and the over abundance of potato and other tuber crops.

Drinking of Tea

46. Quite a number of them chew betel leaves and one would be surprised to meet anyone without a wad

of betel leaves tucked securely under his cheeks. But the luxury of smoking is indulged only in very rare cases. About two decades back, tea or coffee was unknown in the village and people were content only with rice gruel or some buttermilk or in some houses an occasional glass of milk, whenever they felt thirsty. Nowadays, tea shops have sprung up everywhere and tea packets as well as coffee are available in the provision store situated in the village. Tea and coffee drinking has now become a favourite pastime. One can always see a group of idle young men clustered round a table in the tea shops sipping a glass of hot tea. Tea and coffee now form part of the normal diet in almost every household, except that of a few Harijans, Mannadiar and Achari families. Whether this item of luxury is due to the betterment of the economic condition of the people or whether it is a shift in taste consequent on the impact of urbanisation, an influence which might have permeated into this village from Kodaikanal town, five miles away, we are not able to say with any amount of certainty. However, the tea shops sprung up only in recent times and tea and coffee drinking is increasingly adopted in households which afford it. This is peculiar not to Vilpatti alone but to many villages in Madras State. One interesting explanation for this was afforded to me by an old Mannadiar of the village. He told me that the climate of Vilpatti being rather cold, drinking something hot was needed to keep them warm. Before prohibition, drink was available in plenty and people used to adopt that method to warm themselves, but on the introduction of prohibition, drink was denied to them and they have to turn to a cup of tea to seek solace and comfort. This sounds a rather plausible explanation. If the constituents of their diet as well as the number of meals per day be an index to the relative prosperity of communities, we can safely say that Reddiars, Pillais and Mudaliars and a few Mannadiars form the most affluent sections of the community.

Health and Sanitation

47. On entering the village, to one side we find a courtyard which is used as a shandy from time to time. This place is normally used to accommodate the excess of visitors to the village or the large influx of animals which come during the festival season. To the left of this open space starts the irregular lanes of houses and here one enters the main quadrangle of the village which is a dirty and muddy place. To one side of this courtyard stands the Panchayat Board building, the most presentable of all the constructions in the vicinity. Adjacent to this Panchayat Board building are a few provision and tea shops which cater to the needs of the people.



The village well - Sanitation measures pay long run dividends.

TABLE No. VI
PROHIBITED FOODS AND DRINKS

No. of households reported as prohibited								
Community	Food-Beef	Food Pig & Beef	Food Mutton & Beef	Drink	Drink	Drink	No. that did not report any food to be prohibited	No. that did not report any drink to be prohibited
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Reddiar	46	1	...	...	...	...	2	...
Pillai	56	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mannadiar	19	...	...	...	...	...	4	...
Mudaliar	16	...	...	...	...	...	3	...
Christian Mudaliar	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Pannadi	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Achari	14	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Maruthuvar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Malayali	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Konar	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Kshatriya	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Adi-dravida	1	...	...	...	...	...	8	...
Arunthathiyar	6	...	...	...	...	...	20	...
Christian Nadar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Parayan	1	...	...	...	...	...	10	...
TOTAL	180	3	3	...	...	...	48	...



The oft-quoted village tap - Also the Stock Exchange of rumours and gossips.

Unhygienic conditions

48. At the centre of the courtyard is the tap which used to bring water to the entire village till November 1961. However, an overhead tank was constructed and formally opened on 26th November 1961 and a system of taps now bring water to various sectors of the village. There is no drainage system and in the rainy season the streets are apt to be very muddy and dirty. One could often find so many boulders on the road as there is no regular paved pathway anywhere in the village. To the east of the village lies the Harijan colony with its dirty lanes and row of houses. Most of these houses are so narrow and small that it is a surprise so many souls could be accommodated within each. The people in this village live under most unhygienic conditions. Children defecate wherever they like and there being no provision for garbage disposal, people throw rubbish and dirt everywhere while a great number of flies infest the area. Further, in most houses there being no provision for bath rooms, people go out in

the open to wash themselves after calls of nature. This leads to a deterioration in the situation. Cattle sheds are not separated from the house and so cattle are tethered in the backyard of the house itself and flies infest the dung which is not deposited into the manure pit from time to time.

Medical Aid

49. But in spite of the fact that the people live in such unhealthy conditions, it is really surprising that they appear a healthy lot and are not susceptible to most of the common diseases prevalent in the Plains. One possible reason could be that the climate and the hardy life which these people live must have endowed them with high resistance to disease and permit them to live in such unhealthy surroundings in which a new comer would quickly fall sick. Table No. 7 indicates the number of medical cases in the course of the year and the type of medical treatment obtained by the patients.



Open - air toilet - No lofty desire for communion with nature - only for want of bathrooms.

TABLE No. VII
MEDICAL CARE

Community	No. of Maternity cases					Ordinary medical treatment			
	Confined in hospital	Confined by bringing doctor home	Confined by qualified midwife at home	Confined by un-qualified 'Thai' at home	Confined without assistance at home	Allopathic	Ayurvedic	Homeopathic	Combination of more than one system
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Reddiar	47	3	21	...	...	48	...	6	...
Pillai	54	5	20	...	...	55	...	5	...
Mannadiar	21	3	13	...	...	23	...	5	...
Mudaliar	18	2	6	...	...	19	...	4	...
Christian Mudaliar	1	1	1	...	...	1	...	1	...
Pannadi	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	...	2	...	...	3	...	...	...
Vannan	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...
Nadar	4	1	4	...	...	4	...	1	...
Achari	15	3	9	...	...	14	...	2	...
Brahmin	1	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Maruthuvar	1	...	1	...	...	1	...	1	...
Naidu	6	...	5	...	...	6	...	2	...
Malayali	1	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Konar	1	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Kshatriya	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Paraya	10	1	1	...	...	11	...	2	...
Adi-dravida	9	...	1	...	...	9	...	2	...
Arunthathiyar	26	...	18	...	...	26	...	2	...
Chirstian Nadar	1	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Mudaliar	4	...	4	...	...	4	...	...	...
TOTAL	226	19	110	...	...	231	...	34	...

when the rays of the morning sun pouring through the mist reflect on their granite surface.

4. To the extreme south of the village, a narrow track winds up the hill. It undulates its way through the corn fields and then enters the narrow gully. Here one has to cross a narrow but turbulent stream of icy cold water. The narrow path leads on and on and half way over this hill, one comes to the most dangerous part of the climb, the track being a series of climbs, the black slippery soil providing only unsure footing. To one side is the vegetation and the other a sheer drop. The track is at places only a foot and a half wide interspersed with huge boulders at frequent intervals where a tired traveller can rest his weary limbs if he chooses to. The valley extends for miles and down one can see the Perumalmalai ranges stretching across the horizon. A number of coffee estates are found in these ranges. Perumalmalai has the distinction of being the highest peak of the Palni hills and on this peak is a Great Trigonometrical Station used by the Survey of India for conducting their regular surveys.

Subramania Temple

5. The track finally winds up the metalled road leading to the famous Subramania Temple. Many people including tourists from Kodaikanal come to see this beautiful construction, intrigued by its interesting origin. It is an exact replica of the original Subramania Temple situated at Koilpatti, a hamlet lying about four furlongs from the main village of Vilpatti. The tradition has it that the original Subramania Temple was built by the Pandavas during their exile. The temple to which we allude was constructed by Lady Ramanathan, the wife of a famous scholar and philanthropist of Jaffna who failing to get the necessary permission to renovate the original temple constructed its replica on this hill top. A more detailed description will be found elsewhere in this monograph. This rock-built temple with pillars intagliated with beautiful carvings is the show piece of the countryside and the mist often plays around it, imparting to it an exquisite ethereal appearance, while a profusion of lovely flowers shed their wild fragrance in the broad courtyard. At one end, to the east of the temple, is the sanctum sanctorum containing the bronze statue of Lord Subramania. Its simple but fine architecture attracts tourists and devotees every year and throughout the season they come in hundreds to pay their homage to the Lord.

Gateway of Vilpatti

6. The road finally round the hill and over a little bridge. We now stand within the village of Vilpatti itself. An imposing granite entrance said to date back

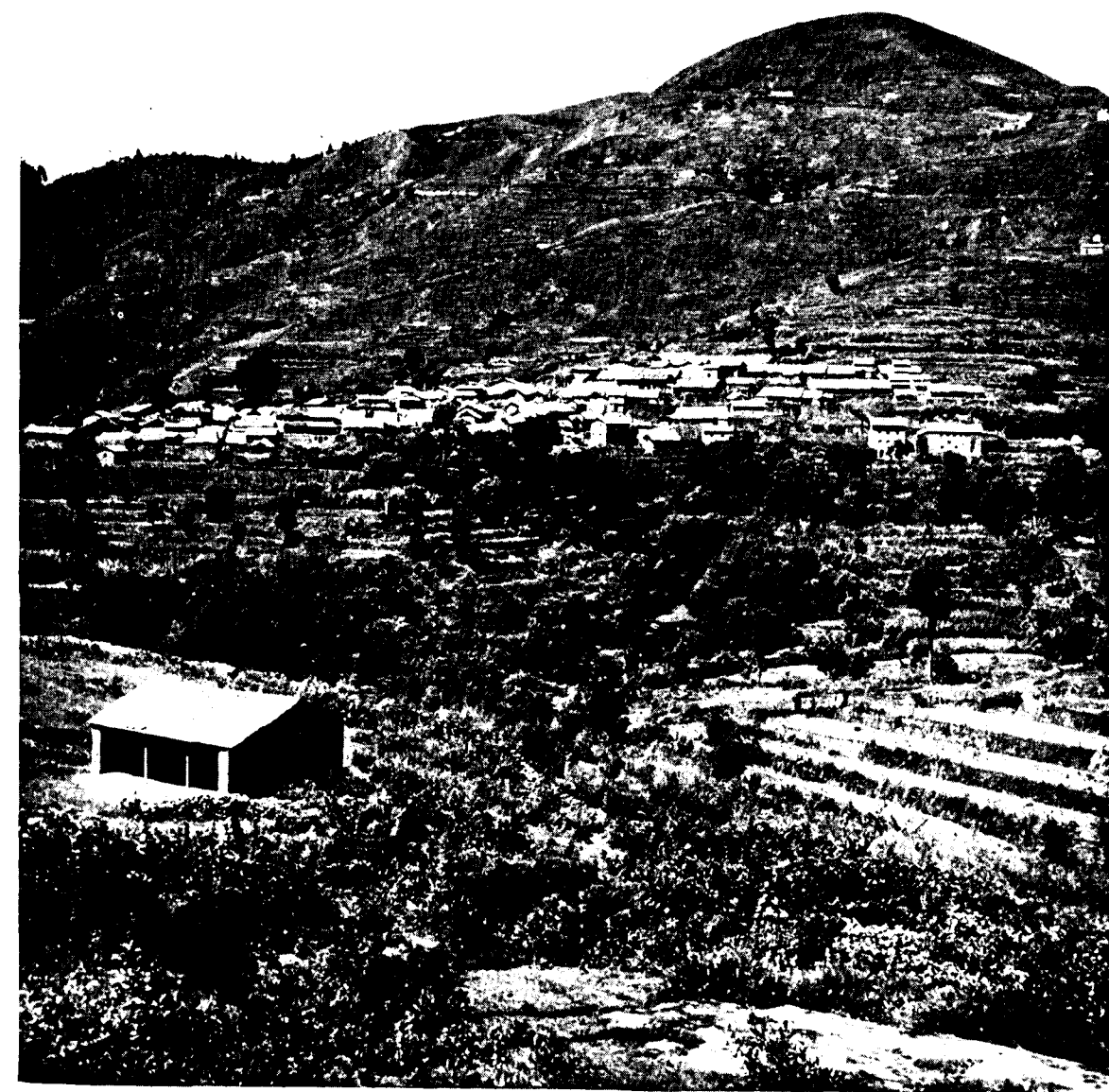
to the time of the Pandavas stands before us untouched by the hand of time. There are three gateways of this kind to the village. One is situated about a furlong from the village to the north, another is the entrance to the main quadrangle while the third lies two furlongs away to the south-east, beyond the dhobi ghat, alongside the road leading to the hamlet of Koilpatti. Originally it seems there was a wall running round the village so that nobody could enter the village unless they came through one of these entrances. The superstition had it that they should pay proper obeisance to the persons who constructed these gates before they could enter the village proper. It was stated that according to the legend current in the village no wicked element could cross the thresholds. At one time this place was so sacred and the people so pure at heart that any sinner stepping on to the precincts would at that instance fall dead on the spot. But now the wall has been broken down and an entrance made for the free passage of motor vehicles. An old man informed us that due to the respect they have for Shri Jayaraj Nadar, a philanthropist who has done much for the villagers, this was done to allow his lorries to enter the quadrangle.

Location of Vilpatti

7. Vilpatti village lies between $10^{\circ}16''$ and $10^{\circ}17''$ of the northern latitude and $77^{\circ}30''$ and $77^{\circ}31''$ of the longitude in the taluk of Kodaikanal of Madurai district. It lies at an elevation of more than 6,000 feet above sea level. To the west lies the Pallangi village and to the east lies the Perumalmalai estate, one of the largest estates in Kodaikanal taluk, both hamlets of Vilpatti. Its other hamlets are Koilpatti and Attuvampatti. Our Survey is however confined to the main village Vilpatti itself. Within the village the majority of houses are found closely clustered according to the linear cluster or assemblage type, with a regular open space and straight streets provided between parallel rows of houses. At the same time a number of huts are also found scattered on the slopes of hills which form groups of hamlets attached to the main village. They are akin to the isolated homesteads or small clusters found in most hill regions.

Legends

8. There are some interesting legends regarding the origin of the village. In this place there was located a powerful bow which could not be used, as no man was strong enough to bend it, let alone use it. The Raja of the place had a daughter who was known for her chastity and beauty. She stated that she would wed only a person who could use the bow. It so happened that Pandavas who were in the period of exile came to this place in the course of their wanderings. The famous



Ever in tune with the voice of the Mountain - The setting of VILPATTI.

TABLE No. XVIII
DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

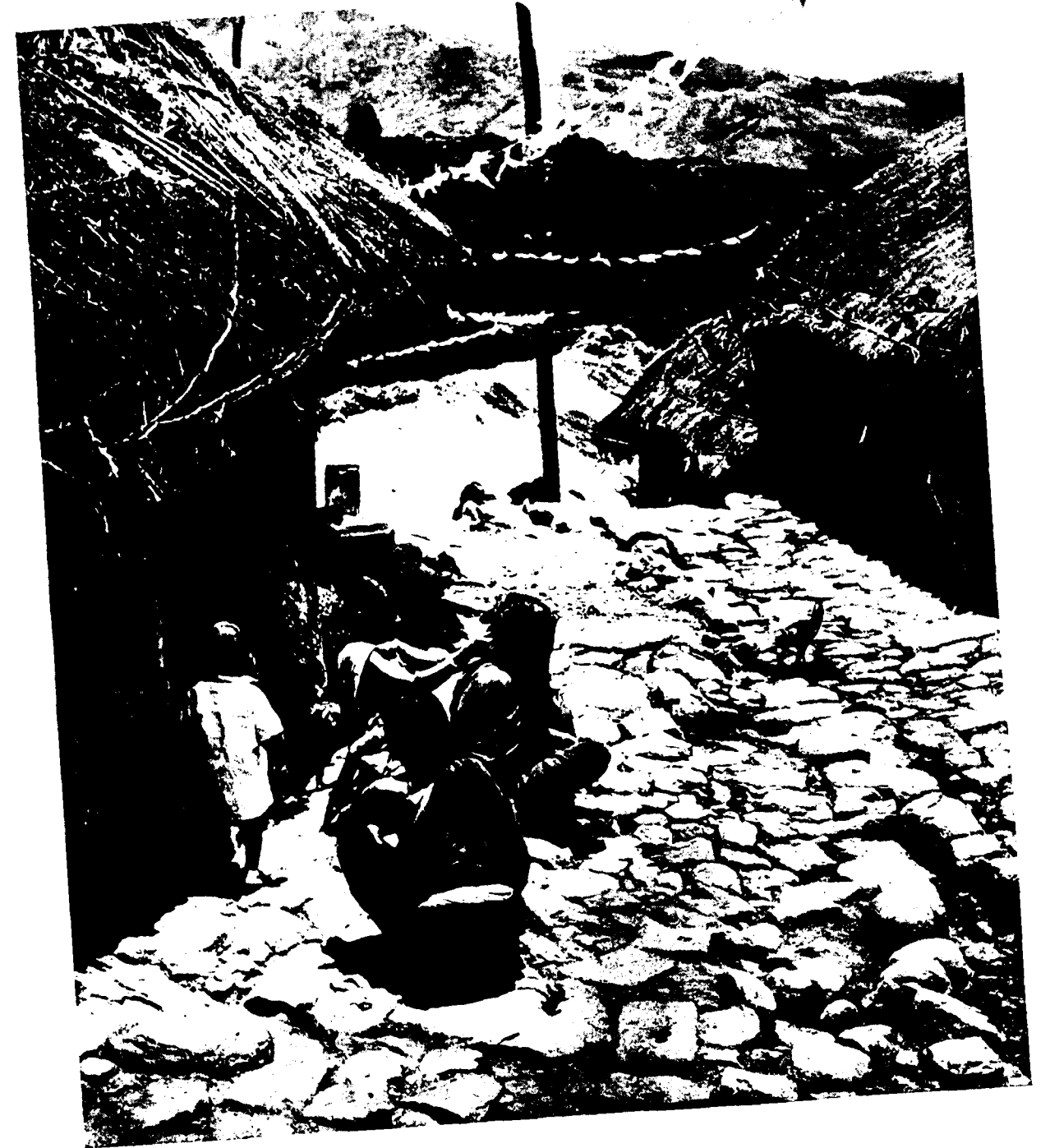
Community	Total No. of households enquired	Number of Households Secured							Number of Households Derived Benefit				
		Better Irrigation Facilities	Better types of cattle	Better seeds	Better Implements	Better manure	More land for Cultivation	Use of pesticides	Improved methods of cultivation like Japanese cultivation	Land Improvement measures like reclamation conservation consolidation,	National extension-service or Community project	Received Demonstration in Improved agricultural practices	In activities, works of community project by contribution land, Labour Cash or Materials
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Reddiar	35	3	15	17	16	29	2	15	...	...	...	...	...
Pillai	44	8	25	22	18	32	3	14	...	...	...	...	...
Mannadiar	20	3	9	13	3	13	...	4	...	...	...	...	...
Mudaliar	12	1	6	6	3	12	1	4	...	...	...	...	...
Pannadi	1	1	...	1	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	...	1	3	1	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	3	1	2	2	...	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	11	...	5	8	3	7	...	4	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maruthuvar	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	5	2	1	3	3	4	2	3	1	...	...	...	...
Malayali	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konar	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kshatriya	1	...	...	1	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Parayan	6	...	2	5	2	6	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Adi-dravida	7	...	2	6	4	6	...	2	1	...	...	...	...
Arunthaiyar	11	1	3	9	4	10	...	6	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar (Christian)	1	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mudaliar (Christian)	1	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Muslim	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	165	21	71	98	60	131	9	58	3	...	...	...	...

Out of 265 people who fell sick due to various minor and major ailments, 231 preferred the regular allopathic treatment whereas 34 preferred to be treated by homeopaths. There was no doctor living in the village and since a Primary Health Centre was not located anywhere near, people had to go to Kodaikanal town to get treatment. According to the present arrangements, twice a week a medical van comes from Kodaikanal with the doctor, but the people are not satisfied with the treatment and prefer to take the patients to the hospital in the town. This at times proves to be a very difficult matter as ambulances cannot reach this place very easily. In many cases they resort to self-administered specifics which very often than not worsens rather than alleviates the situation. This difficulty is felt to a large extent in maternity cases. Out of 355 maternity cases in the village, 226 were confined in the hospital at Kodaikanal, 19 were delivered by bringing the doctor home whereas 110 were confined by a qualified midwife at home. The lack of a lady doctor or a trained midwife was very keenly felt in this village. Pregnancy cases had to be taken to Kodi in the absence of the

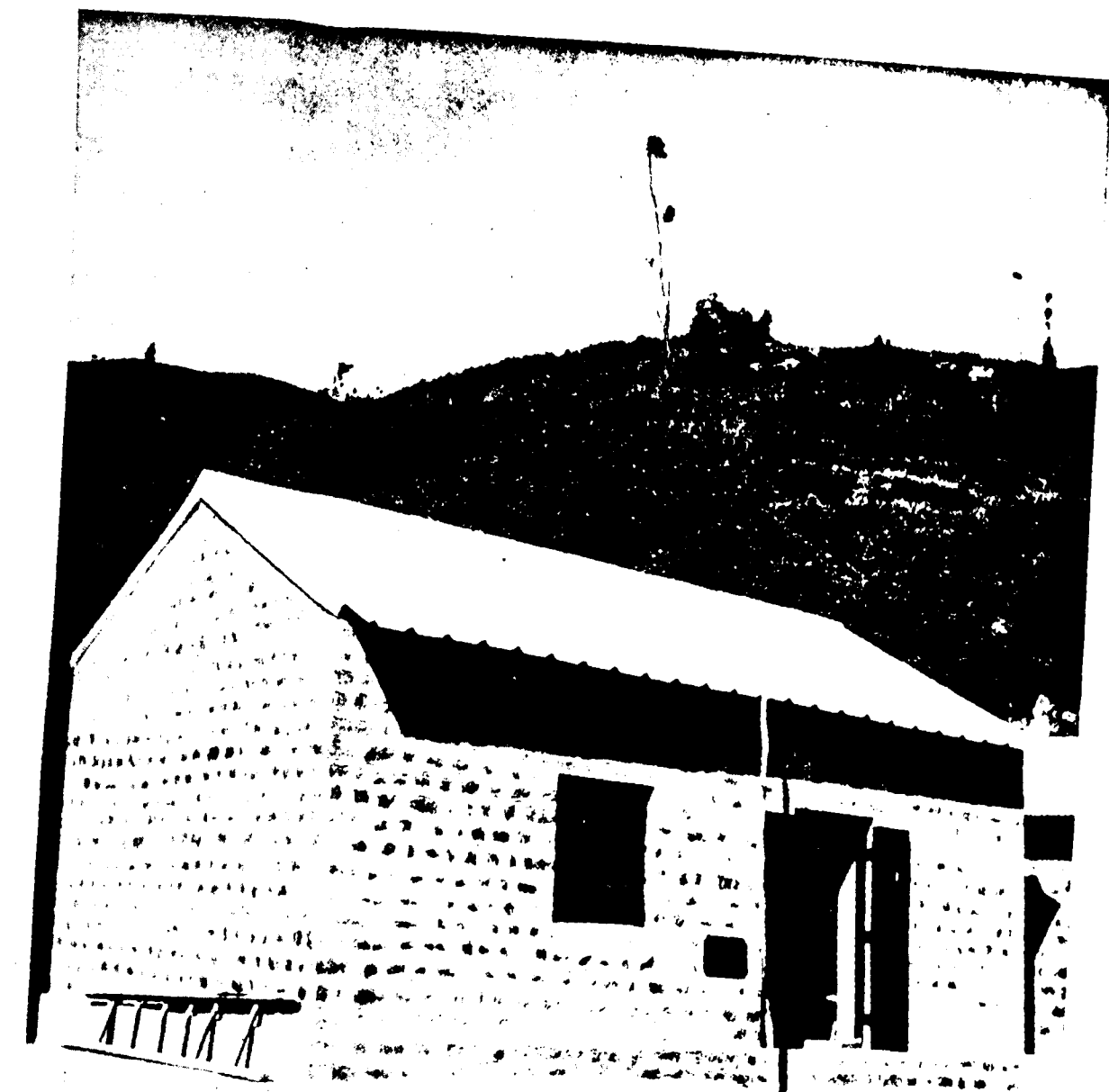
doctor who frequently could not visit the village in time. A qualified midwife had to be procured from Kodaikanal for cases which were not difficult. Ayahs or untrained midwives who happen to be wives of the village barbers could always be called upon to assist at the time of delivery except where expert knowledge was required.

Absence of Epidemics

50. As indicated earlier, there is no proper drainage system here and dirty water was found to stagnate everywhere. At the time of our visit, the villagers were busy digging a sort of ditch in the main quadrangle which they stated was the beginning of a pucca drainage system. In spite of the lack of qualified medical assistance, this village was singularly fortunate in not having any epidemic strike at the people in recent times. Common ailments like cold, influenza, dysentery and diarrhoea were prevalent. But serious epidemics like smallpox, plague or cholera were conspicuous by their absence.



The unsophisticated Boudoir - Everything in the warmth of sunshine.



The new school building constructed by the villagers.

CHAPTER III POPULATION

Population growth

51. According to the 1961 population figures, the total population of Vilpatti inclusive of hamlets of Pallangi, Attuvampatti and perumalmalai Estates is 3,189 composed of 1,597 males and 1,592 females. This population is distributed among 712 households. During the 1951 Census the total population of the village inclusive of original hamlets was 1,838 composed of 892 males and 946 females. The population has increased during the decade by 1,351, viz., 73% and the total number of households has increased from 403 to 712. This represents an increase of 309 households during the 10 year period. Following is the statement of births and deaths during the decade for Vilpatti village.

Year	BIRTHS			DEATHS		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
1951	28	24	52	14	18	32
1952	27	39	66	11	15	26
1953	40	42	82	20	14	34
1954	41	29	70	13	16	29
1955	48	30	78	16	18	34
1956	47	52	99	(Not available)		
1957	53	50	103	19	13	32
1958	54	43	97	12	17	29
1959	...	...	(Not available)	...	...	...
1960	58	48	106	20	13	33
1961	46	66	112	13	18	31
			865			280

Birth and death rates

52. According to the statistics, the births during the decade 1951-61 minus the year 1959 amounted to 865. Since figures of deaths were available only for nine years, by estimation method, the total deaths for the decade works out to 311. Therefore, the natural increase which is given by subtracting the total number of deaths from the total number of births is 554. The mean population for the decade 1951-61 which is given by the average of the two populations 1951 and 1961, i.e., $\frac{P_{1951} + P_{1961}}{2}$ is 2,514. According to avai-

lable birth rates, the mean decennial birth rate works out to 34.41 and the mean decennial death rate to 12.37. Therefore, the mean decennial natural increase rate is 22.03. The mean decennial growth rate which is given by the formula $\frac{P_{61} - P_{51}}{P_{51/2} + P_{61/2}} \times 100$ works out to 53.7% or 5.37 per annum. Allowing for migration-cum-registration error of 3.17% for the region as arrived at by the Director of Public Health, the growth rate for the village is very high when we compare it with the rates for Kodaikanal taluk and Madurai district. The growth rate for Kodaikanal taluk is 23 which compares favourably with the natural rate of increase for Vilpatti village. The birth rate for Madurai is 27.35% and the death rate is 13.83% giving a natural increase of 13.52%, but the decennial growth rate for this district is 10.47% which is less than the natural increase rate, possibly because of out-migration to other districts or outside the State from other taluks in Madurai district. It is interesting also to compare this increase with the growth observed in Kodaikanal town, only five miles away, and Thandigudi another panchayat where there are a number of coffee estates and plantations. According to 1951 and 1961 Census figures, the population of Kodaikanal increased from 10,941 to 12,860 representing an increase of 17.5% and that of Thandigudi from 1,787 to 2,285, i.e., 28%. Compared to the phenomenal increase of Vilpatti village, the rate of growth in these areas appear normal. The only explanation seems to be the sudden increase of houses and households in the area, the increase being marked in the hamlets of Attuvampatti and Perumalmalai Estates. Three estates in Perumalmalai with their regular plantations have attracted a large number of outside labourers as is evident from the huts and shacks dotting the hill slopes in this area which has accounted for the increase in the number of houses and consequently a population increase to the tune of nearly 54% (Mean decennial growth rate). Our study is, however, limited to Vilpatti proper. During our survey which was conducted in May 1961, the population of Vilpatti proper was 1,127 composed of 862 males and 865 females. We have purposely avoided instituting any detailed comparison between the previous figures in 1951 and 1961 as we do not have the correct particulars for the areas covered by our survey.

Sex ratio

53. In 1951, females exceeded males by 54, giving the sex ratio of 1,060. This trend has been reversed according to the 1961 Census records for the whole village including the hamlets. Now males outnumber females by 5, the present sex ratio being 996 females per 1000 males. In any out-migration, male members migrate to other places, in search of work leaving their families behind. This strengthens our presumption about an inward migration of labourers into the estates situated at Attuvampatti and Perumalmalai. The following figures for Vilpatti proper indicate the sex ratio by different age groups.

Age Group (years)	Males	Females	Sex Ratio (No. of females per 100 males)
0— 4	82	91	111
5— 9	79	61	77
10—14	68	64	94
15—19	41	45	110
20—24	46	53	115
25—29	51	57	112
30—34	38	36	95
35—44	69	61	88
45—59	58	74	128
60+	25	28	112
Total	557	570	1,042

Normally one should expect the sex ratio curve for the different age groups to be smooth and steady. It is noticeable that high female ratios are found in the age

groups 15-29 and 45-60 plus. The sex ratio is rather low in the ages 5-14 and 30-44. The lack of a smooth and steady curve may perhaps be due to distortion in age reporting and the lumping of ages at 0 and 5.

Age structure

54. Of the 1,127 persons surveyed, it was found that 173 were in the age group 0-4 of which 82 were male and 91 female children, 272 in the age group 5-14, composed of 147 males and 125 females, 367 in the age group 15-34 of which 176 were males and 191 females and 262 in the age group 35-59, 127 of which were males and 135 females. 25 males and 28 females were 60 years old or more. The proportion of people who were over the age of 60 to the total population worked out to 5% which was rather high considering the normal life span of people living in Indian villages. It is estimated that the average longevity of a male in India is only 45. Perhaps the bracing climate of the Kodaikanal hills and the hard life they lead has something to do with this longevity. Another significant point to be noted from these figures is the preponderance of females over males in the age groups 15-34 and 35-59. The number of female children in the age group 0-4 was also higher than that of male children.

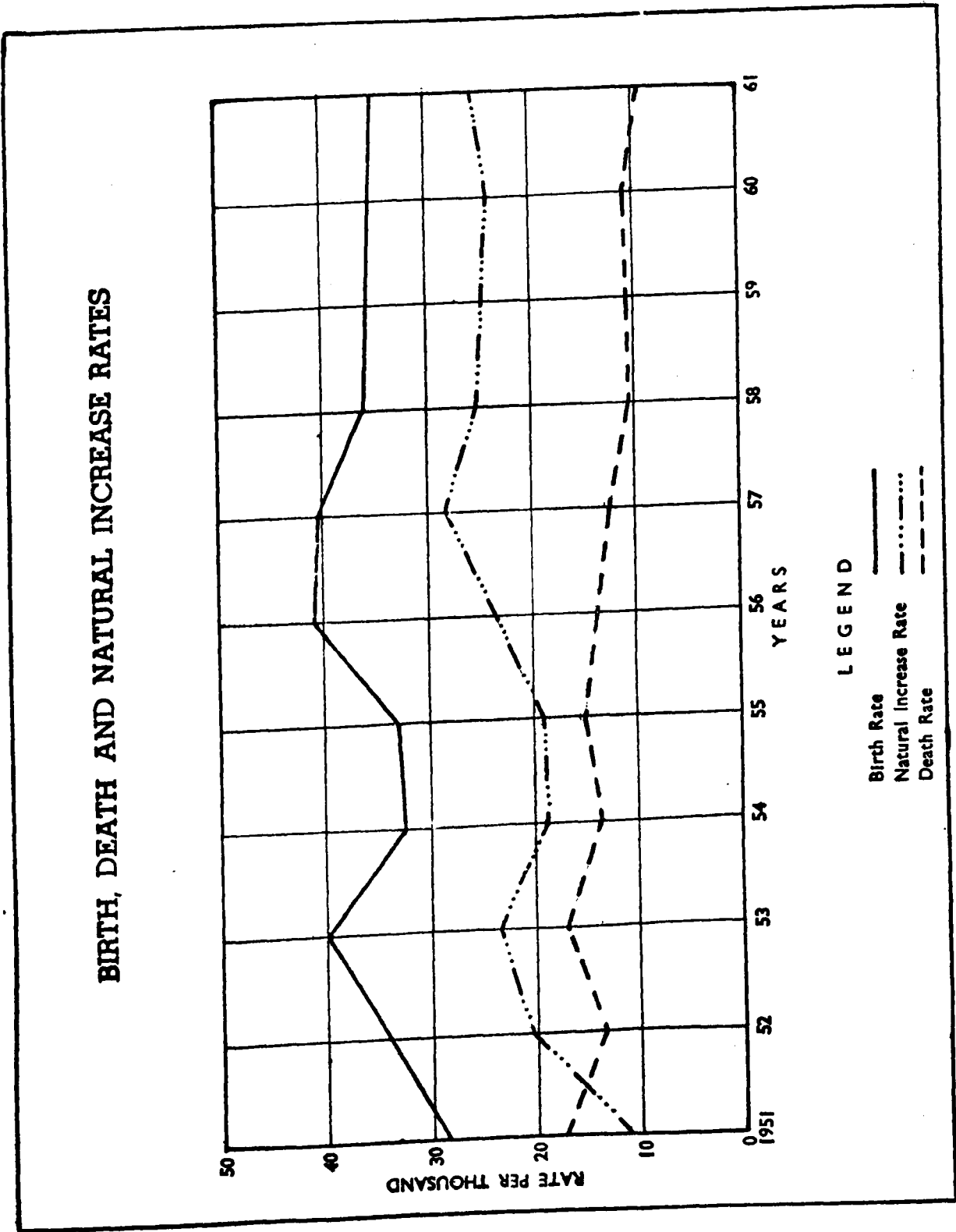
Marital status

55. Considering the marital status of these people, we find that among males, the usual marriageable age is between 20 and 30; few were found to have been left unmarried after the age of 30. Table 8 classifies the population by age and marital status.

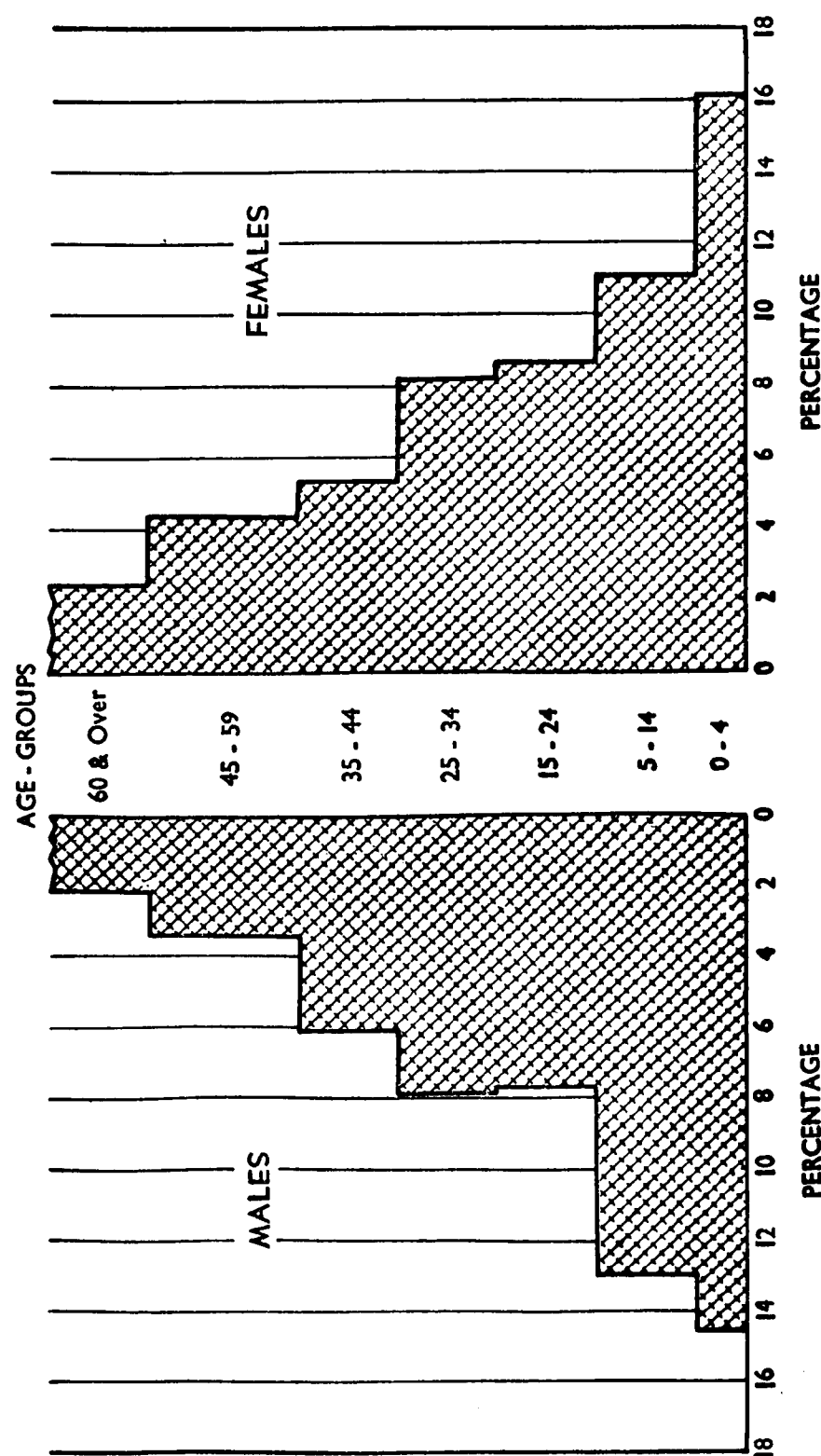
TABLE No. VIII

AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Age group (in years)	Total population		Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or Separated	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
All ages	557	570	307	258	233	226	12	81	5	5
0 — 4	182	91	82	91	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 — 9	179	61	79	61	...	...	...	...	...	...
10 — 14	168	64	68	64	...	...	...	...	...	...
15 — 19	41	45	39	27	2	17	...	1	...	...
20 — 24	46	53	24	8	20	44	1	...	1	1
25 — 29	51	57	11	5	39	50	...	2	1	...
30 — 34	38	36	1	1	34	31	2	4	1	...
35 — 44	69	61	1	1	67	46	1	11	...	3
45 — 59	58	74	1	...	53	33	3	41	1	...
60 and over	25	28	1	...	18	5	5	22	1	1



AGE PYRAMID



POPULATION

Out of the total population surveyed, it is found that 307 males and 258 females were never married. Subtracting the population in the age group 0-14 whom we presume to belong to the non-marriageable category, we find that 120 of the marriageable age group had never married at the time of the survey. Of these 66 belong to the age group 15-19, 32 to the age group 20-24, and 16 to the age group 25-29. From the figures of married people of which there were 459, it was found that 17 women had married when they were 15-19 years old, 44 between 20-24 and 50 in the age range of 25-29. Hence the conclusion that normally the marriageable age for the male is 20-30 and for the female is 15-25 in this village. This differs slightly as between communities. It is evident that Reddiars, Pillais and Arunthathiyars prefer to marry off their girls after they attain the age of 15, Mudaliars and Mannadiars wait till they reach the age of 20. There were 81 widows and 12 widowers in the surveyed section of the population. The majority of the widows were in the age range of 50-60. One possible reason for the low proportion of widowers may be the prevalent custom permitting widowers to marry again whereas social sanctions are raised against widow remarriage. There were only five males and five females in the village who were divorced or separated. This is a very low proportion and one reason for the low proportion of divorces may be due to the peculiar custom prevailing in the village permitting divorcees to marry again or to live with some other person of their own choice.

Size of households

56. Of the 234 households surveyed, 7 households were single member households, 63 contained 2-3 members, 117 households had 4-6 members, 41 households had 7-9 members and there were 6 households containing 10 members and more. The average size of a household in the village seems to be one containing 4-6 members. Table No. 9 indicates the varying size of household among the different communities. The normal size of a household varied as between communities. In a household belonging to Pillais, we usually found 5-6 members consisting of the husband, wife and children. A mudaliar household consisted of 5-6 members. Among Mannadiar and Chettiar households, 4 was the average. Among Reddiars it happened to be 4.5. In the case of Nadar, Naidus and Acharis, the average was slightly less than 5 members per household. Among Harijans the average size of the household was roughly 4-5 members. These 234 households on the whole enjoyed possession of 293 rooms as may

be seen in Table No. 10. There was no household without a regular room. 190 households lived in houses with only one room. 31 households were grouped together in houses containing two rooms. 8 households lived in three rooms each and there were only 5 households living in houses containing four rooms. From this, it is evident that a house with one or two rooms was more common in this village and the majority of the households stayed in houses with one or two rooms. Of the 49 Reddiar families, 42 stayed in houses with only one room and six in two-roomed houses. Among the Pillais 40 stayed in one-roomed houses, ten in two-roomed and six in three-roomed houses. Twenty one of the Mannadi and 11 of the Mudaliar families stayed in one-roomed apartments. But three Mudaliar families stayed in houses with more than four rooms. Except one Harijan family all the other Harijans stayed in huts with only one room. One Asari and one Naidu family stayed in houses with four rooms or more. Thus well-to-do households stayed in one-roomed or two-roomed houses and very few went in for bigger houses. The Harijans were per force huddled in one-roomed huts.

Literacy and education

57. The number of literates who have studied beyond the primary or basic educational levels can actually be counted on one's fingers as they do not number more than a handful among the vast concourse of intelligent people. From Table No. 11 it is readily seen that the village contains only six persons who have passed their matriculation of which only two have reached the Intermediate class, one being a Kshatriya and the other a mudaliar. Among the Matriculate three belong to the Pillai community and one is a Brahmin. Illiterates number 791 in the surveyed population of 1,126 of which 290 are males and 501 females. Thus it is found that females outnumber males by two to one in the matter of illiteracy. This is mainly due to the fact that parents are not interested in sending girls to school. As a matter of fact, they do not even bother if male children do not attend school properly. Though there are two schools in the village, one situated in the village itself and the other three furlongs away on the hill slopes, it is rather unfortunate to note that only a minority avail of the opportunity afforded to them. The majority of the literates are, however, found in the age group 5-14, there being altogether 142 literates composed of 94 males and 48 females of which 27 males and 20 females have studied upto the Primary or Junior Basic Standard. The Matriculates and the Intermediates are found in the age group 15-44 except one Brahmin who is over 60 years

TABLE No. IX
SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD

Community	No. of house- holds	Single member			2—3 Members			4—6 Members			7—9 Members			10 Members & over		
		Households	Males	Females	Households	Males	Females	Households	Males	Females	Households	Males	Females	Households	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
Reddiar	49	4	1	3	14	12	20	22	52	60	7	25	29	2	7	14
Pillai	56	...	...	...	16	21	23	28	71	70	8	29	32	4	19	24
Mannadiar	23	...	...	...	5	6	7	13	30	32	5	20	17	...	...	...
Mudaliar	19	...	...	...	3	4	4	8	15	21	8	37	25	...	...	...
Christian Mudaliar	1	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pannadi	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5	2	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	...	...	...	1	2	1	2	5	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	7	6	1	5	2	...	...	...
Asari	15	1	...	1	4	4	5	10	27	26	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maruthuvar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	10	7	2	9	7	...	...	...
Malayali	1	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konar	1	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kshathriya	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	6	2	...	...	...
Parayan	11	...	...	...	3	4	5	8	23	17	...	...	...	...	...	...
Adi-dravida	9	...	...	...	1	1	1	7	19	18	1	4	3	...	...	...
Arunthathiyar	26	2	...	2	11	13	15	6	17	14	7	24	29	...	...	...
Christian Nadar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	4	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	4	...	...	...	1	2	1	3	8	8	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	234	7	1	6	63	74	85	117	292	293	41	164	148	6	26	38

TABLE No. X
HOUSEHOLDS BY NUMBER OF ROOMS AND BY NUMBER OF PERSONS

Community	Total No. of Households	Total No. of rooms	Total number 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	
				No. of House- holds	Total No. of family members	No. of House- holds	Total No. of family members	No. of House- holds	Total No. of family members	No. of House- holds	Total No. of family members	No. of House- holds	Total No. of family members
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Reddiar	49	57	223	...	...	42	173	6	40	1	10	...	...
Pillai	56	78	289	...	...	40	174	10	70	6	45	...	...
Mannadiar	23	25	112	...	...	21	99	2	13	...	...	...	...
Mudaliar	19	34	106	...	...	11	61	6	29	...	...	2	16
Christian Mudaliar	1	4	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
Pannadi	1	1	7	...	...	1	7	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	3	13	...	...	3	13	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	1	1	6	...	...	1	6	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	4	7	20	...	...	2	12	1	4	1	4	...	...
Asari	15	22	63	...	...	10	38	4	21	...	...	1	4
Brahmin	1	1	2	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maruthuvar	1	1	5	...	...	1	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	6	9	33	...	...	5	24	...	...	...	...	...	...
Malayali	1	1	2	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	1	9
Konar	1	1	2	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kshatriya	1	1	8	...	...	1	8	...	...	...	...	...	...
Adi-dravida	9	9	46	...	...	9	46	...	...	...	...	...	...
Arunthathiyar	26	27	114	...	...	25	107	1	7	...	...	...	...
Christian Nadar	1	2	6	...	...	...	...	1	6	...	...	...	...
Muslim	4	4	19	...	...	4	19	...	...	...	...	...	...
Parayan	11	11	49	...	...	11	49	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	234	299	1127	...	...	190	847	31	190	8	59	5	31

TABLE No. XI
LITERACY AND EDUCATION BY COMMUNITIES

Community	Total Population			Illiterates		Literates with-out educational standard		Primary or junior basic		Matricula-tion or higher secondry		Intermediate or P.U.C.	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Reddiar	223	97	126	49	113	23	6	25	7	...	...	...	...
Pillai	289	140	149	58	135	34	9	45	5	3	...	...	...
Mannadiar	112	56	56	27	52	15	2	14	2	...	...	...	...
Mudaliar	106	56	50	24	46	16	1	15	3	...	...	1	...
Pannadi	7	5	2	4	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	13	7	6	3	4	1	1	3	1	...	...	...	...
Vannan	6	3	3	2	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	20	12	8	2	2	3	1	7	5	...	...	...	...
Asari	63	31	32	13	28	11	3	7	1	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	2	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Maruthuvar	5	3	2	1	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Naidu	33	19	14	6	13	3	1	10	...	...	...	...	...
Malayali (S.T.)	2	2	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Konar	2	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kshatriya	8	6	2	3	...	...	1	2	1	...	...	1	...
Parayan	49	27	22	23	21	3	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Adi-dravida	46	24	22	20	22	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Arunthathiyar	114	54	60	46	56	6	2	2	2	...	...	...	...
Christian Nadar	6	2	4	...	...	1	2	1	2	...	...	...	...
Christian Mudaliar	2	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	19	10	9	2	3	2	5	6	1	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	1127	557	570	283	504	125	35	143	31	4	...	2	...

old. On scanning the Table, it would be easy to state that the educational policy of the Government has had little effect on this village and say that most of the villagers are illiterate and that literacy has not permeated into this village to any appreciable extent. But before passing judgement, it would be interesting to see the advance in the literacy rate during the last ten years. According to the 1951 figures, the crude literacy rate for Vilpatti works out to 6.80% the percentages being 12.67 for males and 1.27 for females. According to the latest 1961 literacy figures, the rates are 25.36% for the whole village, 49.15% for males and 1.51% for females. This shows a stupenduous rate of achievement, the crude literacy rates having increased four-fold during the decade. For the population taken up for the Socio-economic survey itself, the effective literacy rate works out to 35% which means a real improvement over the 1951 figures. The increase in literacy seems mainly to be confined to the male section of the population, the increase in literacy between the two decades being nearly 36.48% whereas for females the increase is negligible. This only strengthens our view that female education is comparatively neglected in this village whereas there is increasing awareness of the benefits of education and literacy among at least the males section of the population. Further, the keenness for studying and the opening of the High School at Kodaikanal has lit a spark of ambition in the breasts of young men in the village who are aware that if they study well and avail themselves of the scholarships and other benefits provided to them, it will be possible for them to better their prospects and break away from their traditional occupation of agriculture and take to fresh avenues of employment which is open to them due to the nearness of Kodaikanal town. However, a lot still remains to be done, especially in the sphere of female education. Even among females, of late, women have had an awakening and are trying to become literate as will be evident from scanning the Table on education. All the females in the age group 35-60 plus are illiterates whereas 50% of the female population are literate in the age group 5-29.

Village School

58. The new school to be found in the village is the Lower Elementary School which has been recently built by the villagers themselves. It is to this school that the young children of the village go. The other school situated on the hill slopes is the Higher Elementary School. To complete their Secondary Education, children of this village have to go to Kodaikanal town. There are four teachers in these two schools, three

of whom are women and the fourth, a man. Two of the women teachers reside in Vilpatti itself while the third comes from Naidupuram. The school master comes from Kodaikanal daily. The schools are controlled, one by the Panchayat Union Council and the other which is a management school, by the Roman Catholic Mission. The Lower Elementary School constructed by the villagers themselves is the Panchayat School and the appointment of teachers and day-to-day administration is all the concern of the Local Panchayat, subject to the overall control of the Panchayat Union Council. The Roman Catholic Mission school found on the slopes is housed in an old building. Formerly the Lower Elementary School was also housed in this building. The Panchayat Board President informed us that the Government had paid through the Block Development Office part of the amount necessary for the construction of the new school while the villagers themselves had contributed by way of cash and labour to make up the rest. The teachers were being paid formerly by the Government and now from the Panchayat Union funds. The total number of children studying in these two schools are as follows:

Age	Males	Females
5-9	140	98
10-14	23	13
	163	111

The new admissions during the year 1960-61 and 1961-62 were as follows:

Year	Boys	Girls
1960-1961	15	10
1961-1962	43	25

In addition, in the Higher Secondary School at Kodaikanal town, the following were the statistics of pupils coming from Attuvampatti and Vilpatti for the year 1961-62.

Class	Attuvampatti	Vilpatti	Total
II Std.	1	3	4
III Std.	1	10	11
VI Std.	Nil	1	1
VIII Std.	1	1	2
Total	3	15	18

Much remains to be done in the sphere of education as is evident from the figures now available with us. A gradual awakening seems to be in progress and an increasing number of children are being sent for Secondary education at Kodaikanal. If this process continues without a reversal, literacy may increase still further in Vilpatti village, notably among the female

section of the population who have to break their age-old traditions, conservatism and inertia before they can rightfully claim their own place side by side with their menfolk. If villagers display the same amount of enthusiasm in sending their children to school as they displayed in constructing the new school building, the outlook for the future seems to be rosy.

CHAPTER IV
VILLAGE ECONOMY

General features of economy

59. Vilpatti, like many other of its sister villages, is predominantly agricultural. As regards its soil conditions, fertile soils are found in abundance in this region. Nearly 60% of the area consists of light redloam while the rest is made up of black peaty soils, rich in humus content. Both the north-east and the south-west monsoons contribute an average annual rainfall of about 64" inclusive of the summer showers. Considering the last four years, the average monthly rainfall here is roughly about 5. 2". This rainfall distribution of over 60" on an average per annum is responsible for the prevalence of orchards and coffee cultivation in this area. However, potato is the largest single crop which is normally grown in this place. The people of the village are *mainly* agriculturists, there being 308 cultivators and 177 agricultural labourers out of 546 workers. Others

like the local goldsmith, carpenters, masons, sculptors, and artists carry on their traditional occupation. Still, their main livelihood is related to the land. Basically they are all farmers and most of them own lands except those who work as agricultural labourers on daily wages, on the fields belonging to others. These labourers have only seasonal employment whilst people owning land work on fields throughout the year. Besides the main crop potato, they grow rice, wheat and a variety of fruits like pears, plums and peaches. Cabbage is grown as a rotation crop after the harvesting of the potato crop.

Working force

60. Tables 12-14 will give the reader some idea about the community-wise distribution of occupation and details about the types of businesses run by various households.

TABLE No. XII
WORKERS AND NON-WORKERS BY SEX AND AGE-GROUPS

Age Group (Years)	TOTAL POPULATION			WORKERS			NON-WORKERS		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
All Ages	1127	557	570	546	309	237	581	248	333
0 — 4	173	82	91	...	...	...	173	82	91
5 — 9	140	79	61	3	1	2	137	78	59
10 — 14	132	68	64	22	8	14	110	60	50
15 — 19	86	41	45	45	25	20	41	16	25
20 — 24	99	46	53	77	42	35	22	4	18
25 — 29	108	51	57	86	50	36	22	1	21
30 — 34	74	38	36	66	38	28	8	...	8
35 — 44	130	69	61	115	69	46	15	...	15
45 — 59	132	58	74	103	57	46	29	1	28
60 & Over	53	25	28	29	19	10	24	6	18

Occupational Structure

Among the cultivators, 33 people of all ages were tenant-cultivators. Eleven people were working as proprietors engaged in retail trade. The other occupations in the village with the total number of persons engaged in each are indicated below:

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Total no. of workers</i>
Temple priest	2
Teacher	1
Clerk	1
Dhoby	3
Hotel proprietor	4
Tailor	2
Carpenter	1
Village official	2
Petition writer	1
	17

Nature of occupation

The majority of the workers are engaged in household cultivation, there being 341 persons engaged in this type of cultivation. Fourteen people are engaged in household business. The normal household business in this village consists of tea-vending, maintenance of provision stores, potato business and other types of businesses, not specifically stated.

Non-workers

Of the 584 non-workers, 130 consisting of 88 boys and 42 girls are full-time students or children attending school; 106 women are engaged in household duties and 160 males and 185 females are dependants, infants, children not attending school or persons permanently disabled and living in the house. The best or if we prefer the strangest feature of this village is the absence of persons seeking employment for the first time or persons out of employment. The absence of beggars and convicts is another noticeable aspect of Vilpatti village.

Community-wise pattern of work

64. Of the 126 workers belonging to the Reddiar community, 85 are only cultivators; 3 have undertaken cultivation, taking lands on lease; 40 are doing general labour. Only one has taken up business. Of the 146 workers found among the Pillai community, 89

TABLE No. XIII
WORKERS CLASSIFIED BY SEX AND OCCUPATION

[illegible]

TABLE No. XIV

WORKERS CLASSIFIED BY SEX, AND INDUSTRY, BUSINESS AND CULTIVATION

Community	Total Workers			Number of Workers engaged in							
				Household Industry		Household Business		Household Cultivation		Others	
				Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
	Persons	Males	Females	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Reddiar	126	59	67	...	...	1	...	44	41	14	26
Pillai	146	82	64	...	...	2	1	57	32	23	31
Mannadiar	52	30	22	...	...	...	...	28	19	2	3
Mudaliar	47	28	19	...	...	...	...	21	12	7	7
Pannadi	4	3	1	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	1
Chettiar	4	3	1	...	...	...	...	3	1	...	...
Vannan	3	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
Nadar	6	5	1	...	...	3	...	2	1	...	...
Asari	26	16	10	2	...	...	...	13	7	1	3
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Maruthuvar	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Naidu	10	9	1	1	...	...	...	7	1	1	...
Malayali	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...
Konar	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Kshatriya	5	4	1	...	...	1	...	2	...	1	1
Parayan	24	13	11	...	...	...	...	9	8	4	3
Adi-dravida	18	12	6	...	...	...	...	8	3	4	3
Arunthathiyar	60	32	28	...	...	...	...	6	9	26	19
Christian Nadar	1	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Christian Mudaliar	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Muslim	8	5	3	...	...	3	2	2	...	...	1
TOTAL	546	309	237	3	...	11	3	207	134	88	100

TABLE No. XV

NON-WORKERS BY SEX AND NATURE OF ACTIVITY

Community	TOTAL NON-WORKERS			NATURE OF ACTIVITY OF NON-WORKERS					
	Persons	Males	Females	Full time students or children attending school		Persons engaged only in household duties		Dependants, infants and children not attending school and persons permanently disabled	
				Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Reddiar	97	38	59	18	9	...	16	20	34
Pillai	143	58	85	21	8	...	30	37	47
Mannadiar	60	26	34	7	3	...	15	19	16
Mudaliar	59	28	31	12	2	...	7	16	22
Pannadi	3	2	1	...	...	...	...	2	1
Chettiar	9	4	5	1	1	...	2	3	2
Vannan	3	2	1	...	...	...	...	2	1
Nadar	14	7	7	5	2	...	3	2	2
Asari	37	15	22	6	2	...	10	9	10
Brahmin	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Maruthuvar	4	2	2	1	1	...	1	1	...
Naidu	23	10	13	4	1	...	6	6	6
Malayali	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konar	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Kshatriya	3	2	1	1	1	...	...	1	...
Parayan	25	14	11	2	1	...	...	12	10
Adi-dravida	28	12	16	2	...	...	3	10	13
Arunthathiyar	54	22	32	4	3	...	8	18	21
Christian Nadar	5	1	4	1	3	...	1	...	...
„ Mudaliar	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Muslim	11	5	6	3	5	...	1	2	...
TOTAL	581	248	333	88	42	...	106	160	185

have taken to cultivation whereas 54 are agricultural and general labourers. Among Mudaliars, 33 have taken to cultivation and 14 to general labour. Of the 52 Mannadiars, 47 are cultivators and 5 general labourers. One Pillai is a tea shop owner and the tailor, carpenter as well as the clerk belong to the Asari community. Among the Harijans, Adi-dravidas, Arunthathiyars and Parayans, who supply 102 workers, 43 are cultivators and except one, the village official, the rest are coolies or agricultural labourers. The Arunthathiyars provide the bulk of agricultural labour, for out of the 60 workers found in this sect, 44 belong to that category. Only 15 are cultivators. Out of the 234 households surveyed, it is found that only in seven households is business-cum-industry combined with cultivation. In 175 households, cultivation forms the main occupation. One household among Reddiars, two among Nadars, one among Mudaliars and one among Pillais combine cultivation and business. Of the four households purely engaged in business, three are Muslim households and one Nadar household. From the Table No. 16 relating to occupational pattern, communitywise, it is evident that without exception, cultivation is practised among all major communities.

A traditional occupation is being followed by the Harijans, Nadars and Muslims. It was also found that the Reddi, Pillai and the Mudaliar communities secure a higher niche on the social scale owning the maximum extent of land in the village. Being rich land owners, they could always take to cultivation and could at least engage agricultural labourers who are normally drawn from the Harijan community. This is evident from the fact that out of the 102 Harijans, 58 are agricultural labourers. That this village has a predominant agricultural bias is apparent from the fact that only six Reddiar households, nine Pillai households and four Mudaliar households are engaged in other forms of occupation. The other persons engaged in the various service avocations are the dhobies, three in number and the koil pusaris, two in number who belong to the Malayali community. The one petition-writer found in the village belongs to the Konar community. Traditional occupations are practised and in this village, I noticed a disinclination to avoid the traditional occupation of their forefathers and take to new avocations. Cultivation from time immemorial happens to be the traditional occupation and people are averse to changing this and taking to other pursuits in life. Even those general labourers found among the Reddiar, Mudaliar and Mannadiar community help in the household cultivation, but take to professional avocations like watchmen, road builders or masons in nearby Kodaikanal. This has its roots in the slow

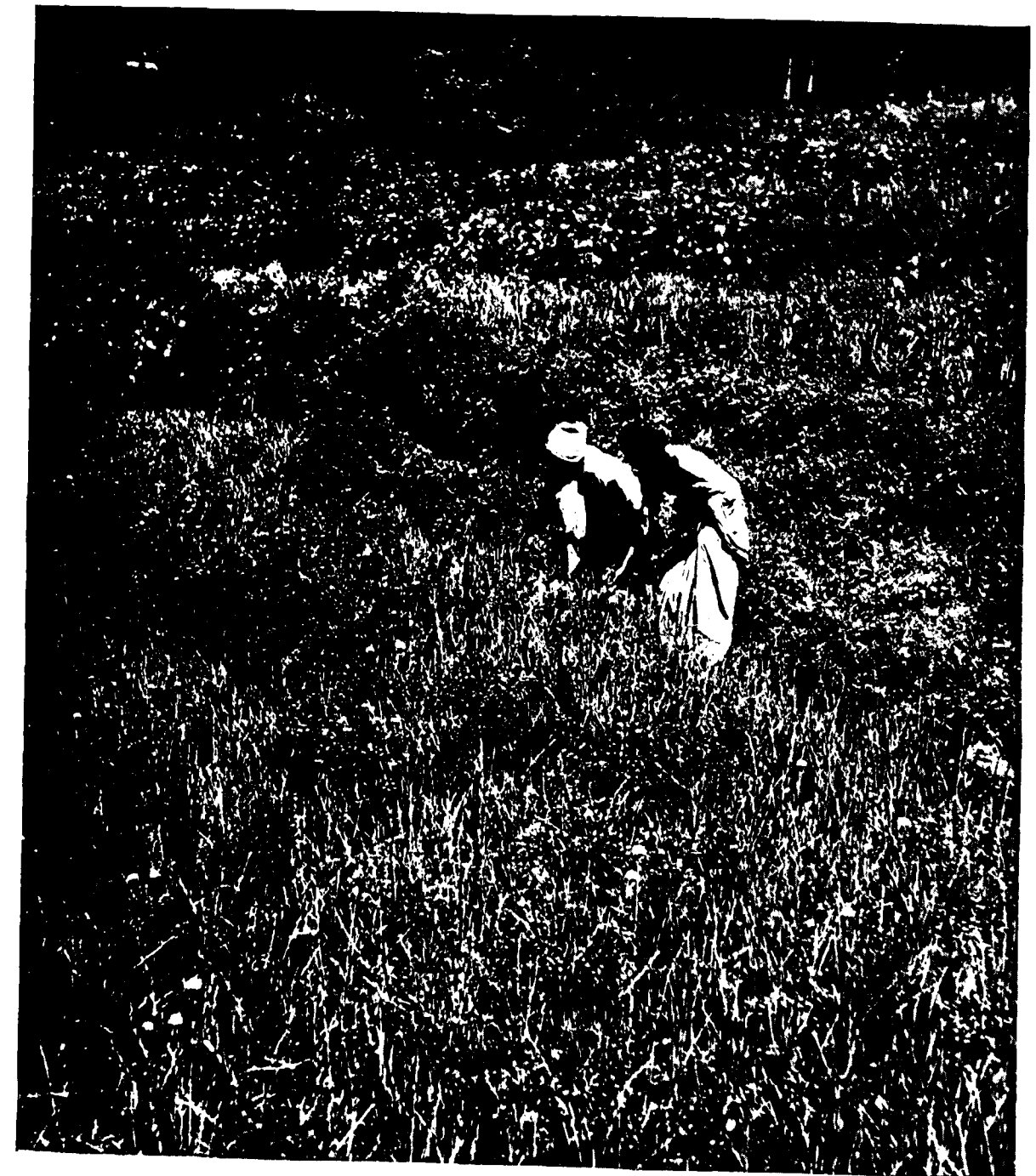
effects of urbanisation being felt due to the proximity of Kodaikanal town. But this will be discussed elsewhere.

Impact of Literacy

65. Literacy and educational standards have a direct bearing on occupational mobility and the occupational pattern of the people. I have attempted a cross tabulation of occupational pattern with levels of education in order to arrive at some concrete conclusions regarding the impact of literacy on occupational pattern in Vilpatti village. It is found that among Mudaliars, 28 of them are illiterate and only 15 of them have studied upto Primary or VIII Standard. There is only one Matriculate among them. Therefore, the only type of occupation they have taken to is the traditional one, which is cultivation. Among the Reddiars also, there are no Matriculates or Graduates and hundreds of them are illiterates, only seventeen of them having reached the Primary or Junior Basic Standards. The traditional occupation is also cultivation. In the entire village, there are only four Matriculates, one belonging to the Brahmin and three to Pillai community. Of them, two persons belonging to the Pillai community are cultivators and the Brahmin is the local Karnam. There are no Graduates in the village and only two have studied upto the Intermediate level. One belongs to the Kshatriya community and he is in business owning a provision store; the other is a Mudaliar. It is thus evident that lack of education, with a number of people illiterate, has set the occupational pattern in the village and it is inevitable that agriculture becomes the mainstay of the villagers.

Mobility of Occupation

66. In spite of the fact that agriculture is the predominant occupation for a majority of villagers, in Vilpatti a few traditional occupations like carpentry, tailoring, goldsmithy and blacksmithy are carried on by individual households. Occupational specialisation in this village has its limits. However, the younger generation during the last twenty years has increasingly taken to other forms of occupation in addition to their traditional one. The majority of the younger sons of agriculturists have taken to trekking to the nearby town of Kodaikanal for their daily work and are gainfully employed in such occupations as drivers, conductors, watchmen and gardeners. They also work as masons and road workers. They leave the village in the morning to their place of work and return home in the evening. This is possible, thanks to the proximity of the town, and permits many agriculturists as well as non-agriculturists to combine their family work or agriculture with secondary employment in Kodaikanal township. The average income of an



An acre of green grass. May be rich in corn –
but certainly richer in hopes.

TABLE No. XVI
OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF HOUSEHOLDS

Community	Total No. of Households	Households engaged in Cultivation only	Households engaged in Industry only		Households engaged in Business only	Households engaged in Cultivation Business &		Households engaged in Cultivation &		Households engaged in Cultivation & Business	Households engaged in Business &		Households engaged in occupations A. L. Others	REMARKS		
			Traditional Industry	Non-traditional Industry		Traditional Industry	Non-traditional Industry	Traditional Industry	Non-traditional Industry		Traditional Industry	Non-traditional Industry		Details of Industries with No. of Households engaged in each	Details of Business with No. of households engaged in each	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
Pillai	56	46	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	9	...	Hotel-1
Reddiar	49	41	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	7	...	Business-1
Mannadiar	23	22	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Mudaliar	19	13	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	4	Tailoring-1	Business-1
Pannadi	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	4	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	Business-3
Asari	15	9	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	1	Tailoring-1	...
															Carpentry-3	...
															Iron smithy-1	...
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Maruthuvar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	Shop-owner-1
Naidu	6	4	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	Tailoring-1	Teashop-1
Malayali	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konar	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kahathriya	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	Potato-selling-1
Parayan	11	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
Adi-dravida	9	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Arunthathiar	26	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14	...	...
Christian Nadar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	Business-1
Christian Mudaliar	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	4	1	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Business-3
TOTAL	234	175	...	...	4	...	...	7	...	9	...	...	...	39	Total Industry-7	Total Business-13



Age - old Implements.
A far cry to the Tractor - age

individual in this village is rather meagre and normally the household struggles hard to make both ends meet, except those belonging to the well-to-do section of the community among the Reddiars, Pillais and Mudaliars. The Harijans normally work for daily wages, but they are unable to earn a steady sum throughout the year. They find work in the field only during certain specified cultivation seasons. Others work for daily wages in spite of owning lands as the lands owned by them are in bits. When they do not find adequate work on their own fields, they work in the fields of others. We came across many houses containing a large number of members who own pieces of land, jointly. Some of the members of the household look after these lands while other members of the family work on daily wages elsewhere. When the season is over and they have no work, these people suffer again. They usually save a certain amount of grain to tide over the days of unemployment and during this period, they live on rice gruel and potatoes.

Agricultural Pattern

67. Vilpatti, as is so often repeated in the course of this report, is a village situated on the mountain slopes and thus has a hilly terrain. As such, the agricultural operations of this village are bound to have distinct native characteristics. The first appearance of the terrain confirms this presumption. En-route to this village and from the village itself, one gets an excellent view of the cultivated hill slopes on all sides of the mountain basin. This serrated view is due to the fact that the land area available for cultivation happens to be a slope. This slope has to be cut into broad steps and the borders of the steps have to be lined with retaining walls to prevent dangers of soil erosion.

Land Utilization

68. The total land area of Vilpatti is 2,904.50 acres out of which 305.38 acres remain unsurveyed. The 1951 Census Hand Book returns a figure of 994.39 acres as the area under cultivation in 1951. The figures available at the time of the present survey are as follows :

Total available area	...	2,904.50	acres
Unsurveyed area	...	305.38	"
Cultivable fallow	...	448.06	"
Uncultivable fallow	...	150.54	"
Cultivated land	...	2,000.52	"

Compared to the figures returned by the 1951 Census, the cultivable land in Vilpatti village has doubled. The extent of cultivable lands available works out to 2,000.52 acres. This increase in the extent of cultivated

land during the decade was due to the encouragement which the Government has given in recent years to villagers to reclaim fallow lands for cultivation. Assignment of waste lands to the villagers has been going on for the past seven years. The Government have appointed a Special Tahsildar for Land Assignment who has been functioning since 1954. Approximately 500 acres of land, have so far been assigned to all villagers around Kodaikanal. The procedure adopted for assignment is as follows. The Special Tahsildar takes up for inspection lands for which 'B' memos or otherwise notices of encroachment have been issued to the cultivating ryots who have encroached upon the land. After examining such of those cases which have been treated as unobjectionable, the Tahsildar proceeds to assign them, after satisfying himself that the ryot is cultivating the land personally. Objectionable cases of encroachment are treated on merits. Cultivation of land with a slope steeper than 1 in 4 is treated as objectionable as it is likely to erode the soil. Cultivation is not limited as vast tracts of land are available which can be assigned to ryots of nearby villages. In the nearby hamlet of Pallangi, there exist about 4000 acres of unsurveyed virgin land which can be assigned to needy ryots of Vilpatti. A Special Tahsildar will be taking up these lands for survey shortly. He told me that the villagers should be willing to cultivate the land themselves and take proper precautions like bench-terracing for soil conservation. The only impediment in the way of the villagers of Vilpatti taking up intensive cultivation in this area is the distance they have to traverse to reach the fields. They have to trek to their fields from the village proper. These lands lie seven miles away, nestling in a deep valley surrounded by thick dark forests. Some enterprising villagers of Vilpatti, about eight in number braving loneliness and distance took to cultivation in selected parts of this virgin tract, cultivating plantains.

Menace of Elephants

69. Unfortunately for them, a few elephants started destroying these plantain trees, lured to the spot by luscious bunches of plantains. When the ryots complained to the Collector, it was decided at first that these elephants could be shot only when they ravaged patta lands and not in their natural habitat. Subsequently, the menace of these elephants having increased beyond control, coupled with the need for expanding cultivation, the earlier orders prohibiting the shooting were rescinded and orders were issued to shoot the one particular elephant which happened to be a constant and unwelcome visitor. The election Deputy Tahsildar of the place, a noted Shikari, made a few attempts to kill this elephant. He, along with a few local Shikaris,

gave chase to it on more than one occasion and once actually got a glimpse of it. Unfortunately, the conflicting rumours about more than one elephant operating in the area, of which only one evinced a particular preference for bananas, prevented the party from shooting the elephant which they sighted, on the spot, for fear of shooting the wrong one. Subsequently, the Collector having called for a report on the further depredations of this elephant, withdrew his earlier orders permitting the shooting of the elephant. Possibly the elephant being a highly intelligent being, realised that its plantain stealing activities had attracted considerable notice and decided to discreetly withdraw from the scene of activities and search for other plantain groves. Nothing further has been heard of this elephant. The villagers have once again started cultivating this area*.

Conservation of Soil

70. To prevent soil erosion in Vilpatti, two methods are adopted, one for plantations and the other for general cultivation. For plantations, the retaining wall method is used in which random rubble stones are dry packed with earth. The second method which is adopted for paddy cultivation and fruit orchards like pears, oranges etc., is ordinary bench-terracing. Loans are given to cultivators for bench-terracing and other methods. Since 1956 to date, 232.33 acres have been taken up for prevention of soil erosion. For soil conservation a total sum of Rs.52,732/- has been given by way of loans to eighty ryots of Vilpatti village.

Ownership of Land

71. We can now have a look at the pattern of land ownership as detailed in Table No. 17 below. The pattern of land ownership of the 234 households surveyed is set down below :

Households owning no land	...	42
" " 5 cents and below	...	Nil
" " between 6 and 10	...	2
" " " cents	...	1
" " between 11 and 20	...	29
" " between 21 and 50	...	60
" " between 51 and 100	...	46
" " between 1 & 2.5 acres	...	36
" " between 2.5 & 4.9	...	13
" " between 5 & 10	...	5
" " 10 acres and above	...	5
TOTAL		234

*This elephant once again appeared on the scene and took up its marauding activities where it left off. But this time it had reached its Waterloo. The earlier orders to shoot this elephant were reissued and bullet from the gun of a local planter ended its reign of terror, early in 1962. Peace reigns once again in this area and cultivation goes on uninterruptedly.

From this statement, it is apparent that nearly 18% of the households surveyed own no land. The pattern of ownership then becomes clear. The majority of the households own between ½ acre to 5 acres. Thus, large scale holdings are at a premium in this village. Actually, only 18 households own lands more than five acres. Thus it is evident that in Vilpatti large scale farmers are non-existent and the economy of the village depends on the fortunes of the small farmer. For farmers to get a good return in such hilly terrain, vast tracts of land have to be cultivated and since the agriculturists of Vilpatti own small bits of land, they are not able to get a steady income out of the land. The predominance of petty land holders as is recognised now leads to subdivision of land area and to the ownership of uneconomic non - optional holdings. Sub - divided holdings is only one aspect of the problem of low productivity of land. The other is the widespread scattering of even the petty holdings. Their effect on the productivity of the agricultural sector is taken up for analysis elsewhere in this Chapter.

Distribution of land

72. Some deductions can also be made about the distribution of land wealth among the different strata of the village society. The survey covers only 234 out of the total of 712 households in the village, i.e., 3 out of the total 6 blocks. The pattern that emerges may be taken to be representative of the village as a whole. The land ownership pattern is as follows:

- 18% of the total households are landless
- 30.8% of the total number of households in the village own about 0.9% of land
- 65.2% of the total number of households own about 5.57% of the total cultivated lands
- 76.06% of the total number of households own about 13.17% of the total land
- 93.6% of the total number of households own about 28.34% of the total land
- and the rest i.e. 6.4% of the number of households own the remaining cultivated land area.

The community-wise distribution of land holdings also makes interesting reading. Of the landless, 7 belong to Reddiar community, 9 to Pillais, one to Mannadis, 14 to Arunthathiars, four to Mudaliar and two to the Parayans. It is evident that Arunthathiars are in the main landless. This is the reason why they provide the agricultural labour for the village. Eighteen Reddiar households own less than one acre compared to 18 among Pillais, and 13 among Mannadiars. But 16 Pillai households own between 2½ to 10 acres when

TABLE No. XVII
OWNERSHIP OF LAND

VILPATTI

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS AND EXTENT OF LAND

Community	Name of Interest on Land	No land	5 cents and below	6 to 10 cents	11 to 20 cents	21 to 50 cents	51 cents to 1 acre	1 to 2.4 acres	2.5 to 4.9 acres	5 to 9.9 acres	10 acres and above
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Reddiar	Land owned	...	...	...	...	6	11	14	5	1	...
	Land held from private persons or Institutions	...	...	1	...	...	...	3	1	...	...
	Land owned and taken on lease	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	No Land	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pillai	Land owned	...	...	1	1	7	8	10	8	3	2
	Land held from private persons or institutions	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	1	1
	Land owned and taken on lease	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	No land	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mannadiar	Land owned	...	...	...	...	4	7	3	4	2	...
	Land owned and taken on lease	1	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...
	No land	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mudaliar	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	5	3	2	...	2
	Land owned and taken on lease	4	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...
	No Land	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mudaliar (Christian)	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Pannadi	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Chettiar	Land owned	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...
Vannan	Land owned	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
	Land owned and taken on lease	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	No Land	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	Land owned	...	...	...	...	1	2	1	1	1	...
	Land held direct from Government under a tennure less substantial than ownership	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...
	Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	3	1	...	...	1	...
	No Land	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
grahmin	No Land	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maruthuvar Naidu	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	3	...	...
	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Malayali	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Konar	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Kahatriya	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Parayan	Land owned	...	...	...	...	2	2	2	...	...	...
	Land held direct from Government under a tennure less substantial than ownership	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
	Land held from Government and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...
	No land	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Adi-dravida	Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...
	Land held direct from Government under a tenure less substantial than ownership	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
	Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	1	3	...	1	...	...
Arunthathiar	Land owned	...	...	...	...	1	6	2	2	1	...
	No land	14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Christian Nadar	Land held from Government and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Muslim	Land owned	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
	Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
	No Land	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

VILLAGE ECONOMY

compared to 7 and 6 among the Reddiar and Mannadiar households respectively. It is thus evident that the Pillais are in the forefront of the land owning classes of Vilpatti.

Crop Pattern

73. The crop pattern and the acreage under different crops is as follows :

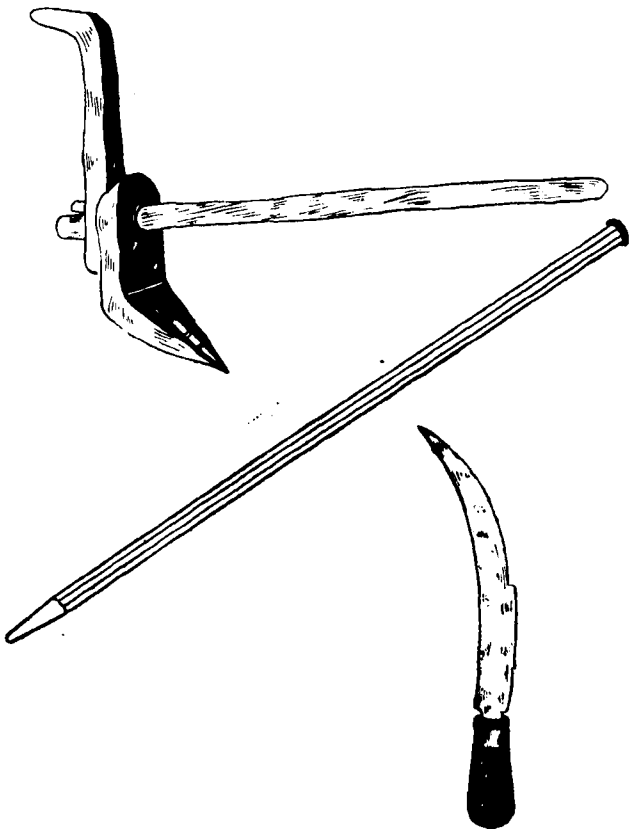
CROP	Area under cultivation	
	Irrigated Acres-Cents	Total Acres-Cents
Potato	218.83	2321.90
Banana	8.96	318.11
Paddy	252.56	252.56
Wheat	30.71	147.53
Coffee	7.62	82.16
Vegetables	32.84	73.01
Pears	6.76	41.62
Garlic	32.08	35.29
Beans	12.00	18.47
Orange	1.54	16.90
Samai	0.10	5.30
Ragi	...	3.46
Grass	1.00	2.00
Peaches	0.24	1.18
Peas	...	0.67
Silver oak	...	0.50
Eucalyptus	...	0.41
Peas	0.22	0.36
Castor	...	0.30
Sweet flags	0.15	0.30
Vendayam	0.03	0.03
Maize	0.02	0.02
TOTAL	605.66	3322.08

There is a multiplicity of crops which is rarely to be found in the pattern of cultivation of a plains village where there will be one predominant crop like ragi or paddy. Yet in Vilpatti, potato seems to be the major crop with a total of 2321. 90 acres under cultivation. Banana, paddy and wheat follow potato in the order of importance. The area under different crops is about 3222. 08 acres. However, the actual cultivated area according to the records is 2000. 52 acres. This is due to the fact that double cropping and mixed farming are practised on a large scale on these lands. This is also a measure of the intensity of cropping in this area. I have already indicated that cabbage follows potato the rotation crop and if the area under cultivation of potato, paddy and wheat is taken as the criterion, the actual extent of land under cultivation, both for single

and double crop, will only be in the region of 2000 acres.

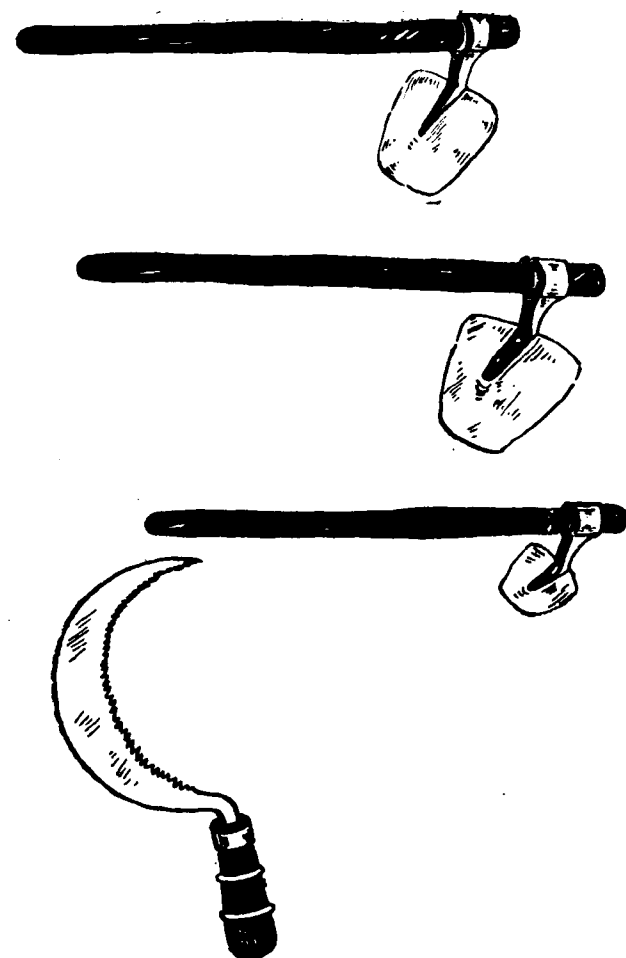
Improved methods of cultivation

74. The scope for adopting improved methods of mechanised farming is limited due to the difficult terrain. Terracing of land also prevents effective utilisation of better implements. The poverty of the people and fragmentation of holdings coupled with nature of terrain and inertia of agriculturists act as a barrier to adoption of improved methods of agriculture. The traditional scythe, plough, spade, rake, crowbar and seed baskets constitute the armoury of the agriculturists. One, therefore, rarely comes across the improved tools in the farms. Cattle power is still extensively used in the agricultural operations. The fields are not sufficiently manured with chemical fertilisers, e.g., potato and paddy need the use of organic manure as well as chemical fertilisers like urea and ammonium sulphate. Even though the Co-operative Societies are prepared to distribute improved seeds and manures to the agriculturists, very few



Agricultural Implements

1. Plough share.
2. Crowbar.
3. Koduwal - a large knife for cutting branches etc.



1. Manvetti (spade)
2. Kalaikkothu (spade for weeding)
3. Manvetti (spade)
4. Aruval (sickle)

agriculturists seem to utilise the services thus provided. The traditional manure used on the field is domestic waste and cattle dung, but the latter is almost used as fuel in the house and very little is left for purposes of manure. Domestic waste in most cases contains merely oven ash which is not much of a manure. It is only during the last five years that the knowledge of chemical manures is fast catching up. About 131 households have stated that they have been using chemical manures during the last five years. But yet the amount actually used is far below that actually required by the fields. The fields are depleted year after year and are hungry for manure and the manure supplied is out of all proportion to their needs. The use of insecticides at the proper time very essential for the preservation of the crop and increase in yield. This is specially true in the case of potato or paddy cultivation. Paddy wilt and rot and potato blight are two of the most common diseases

which affect crops and tend to reduce the yield appreciably, almost destroying completely the harvest throughout the countryside. In Vilpatti, I fear there is a large wastage in the form of pest and insect affection of the crops. The villager had hitherto no protection against these periodic invasions of pests and insects on his planted fields except dusting them with ash and for the rest praying to his God that his harvest may be protected. However, now and then we discern a gleam of hope in this dismal picture. One comes across patches of field planted in the Japanese method. The crops are arranged in rows. Some enterprising villager, of his own accord or through the constant pressure of the Gramasevak, consents to give a trial to new methods. One comes across fields surrounded on all sides by the sesbania plant, a new method of making up for the deficiency of manure. The results of our inquiry on the development activities are embodied in Table No. 18.

It was found that 21 households admitted of having secured better irrigational facilities. 71 households have admitted they have better cattle now than a decade before. About 98 households have given thought to the type of seeds to use and have procured better seeds. About 60 households use better implements today than 5 years before. Knowledge of chemical manure has broken the traditional inertia and 131 households have admitted of having given it a successful trial. 58 households have used pesticides during the last five years. 3 Households have admitted of having tried improved methods of cultivation like the Japanese method. The particulars of agriculture in terms of demonstration plots, improved seeds, better manures, implements and introduction of improved methods—joint efforts of the Block Development Staff and the Agriculture Department—are as follows: Demonstration plots were set up for paddy, wheat, barley, potato and castor and improved seeds were issued to the villagers of Vilpatti. Green manure seeds to the extent of 292 lbs. were issued in the last four years. Vegetable seeds like cauliflower, cabbage and carrot were also distributed. In the year 1960, seeds were issued free to certain ryots for cultivation of radish, cabbage, carrot and turnip. 154 lbs. of urea and 169 lbs. of super phosphate were issued free in the year 1961. 16 sprayers at half cost were distributed among the ryots between the years 1960-62. 100 compost pits were dug and about 700 tons of manure were collected. It was estimated that the distribution of manures in the fields led to an increase in production to the tune of 5%. Insecticides like BHC and Bordeaux mixture were also distributed among the ryots. More remains to be done in improving agriculture.



The farmer, who will not easily accept new methods of cultivation.

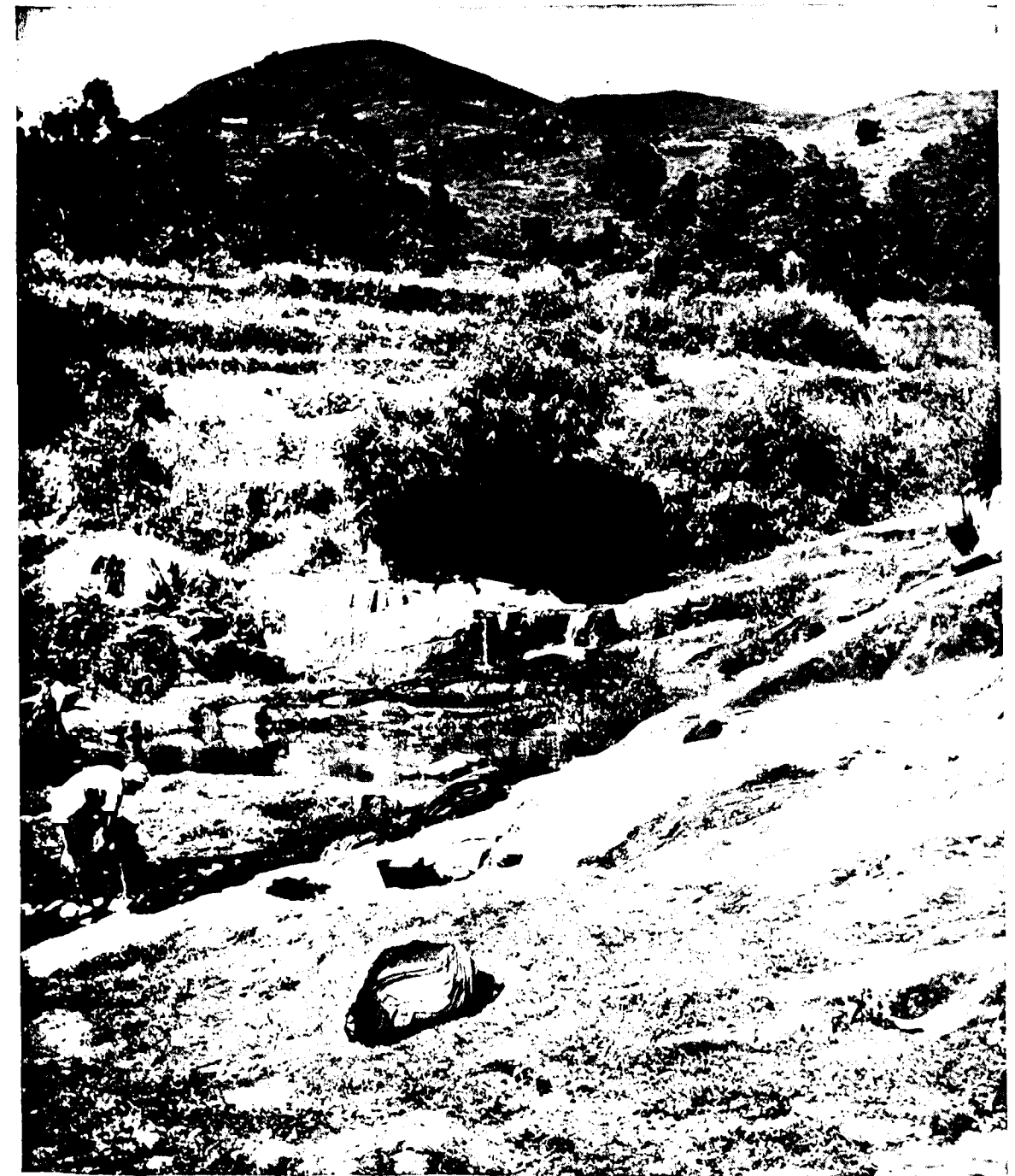
Cultivation of potato

75. As indicated earlier, potato and paddy form the main crops in this village. Cultivation of potato involves the adoption of practices followed in other places. Since the potato is inextricably woven with the economy of this village, a detailed description of cultivation practices adopted for potato growing will make interesting reading. Usually two crops are raised on the fields, the first crop is raised between March to August and the second from September to February. Thus potato cultivation goes on throughout the year. Since most of the lands lie on the slopes, soil conservation measures are strictly followed and the crop is raised on patches of land, reinforced by retaining walls to prevent top soil being washed away during heavy rains which occur between July and September and between November and December. Early in March and again in September, the agricultural labourers swarm over the fields, armed with hoes which have needle sharp prongs. This is used by the men to turn up the soil. Ploughing is not done for potato cultivation. The up-turned soil which is in the form of sods of mud are then broken up by women using wooden mallets. The next operation consists of digging small pits at regular intervals to sow the potato seeds. This is known as "Par Iduthal" in the local terminology. At the time of harvest, the cultivator gathers small sized potatoes and stores them in his godown to germinate. When the potato seeds start sprouting, it is time to sow. The seeds are kept in a dry place and stored carefully, so that germination does not take place too quickly, but only at the time of sowing. The potato seeds are now taken out and sown at the rate of five or six per pit. Afterwards, chemical fertilisers like ammonium sulphate and urea are strewn over the seeds, purchased locally from the Agricultural Depot and from the local agents of Mysore Fertilisers of Shaw Wallace & Co. and the pits lightly filled with mud and tamped. The cultivator, if it is a rain-fed land, now looks at the sky in eager anticipation for the rain to come which duly obliges him in April and again in July. A month later, the seeds sprout and the plant breaking through the soil takes its first look at the world. Forty five days after sowing, women labourers take over and start weeding operations. Weeds quickly grow, attempting to choke the tender potato plant and the women have to carefully remove these weeds. When the plant has attained a height of about 9", the potato tubers need space for expansion lest they bend and break. So the soil is loosened between rows of plants till the root level so as to permit growth of the tubers and

straightening of the plants. This operation is performed by men labourers and takes place two and half or three months after the initial sowing. The harvest takes place in August and February. The potatoes are hoed with the use of the potato drills, the roots are removed, the tubers extracted and filled into sacks and carried by lorry to the nearest godown. Those to be used as seeds are sifted from the lot and transmitted to the cultivator's own home where they are used for the next sowing operation. The average yield of potato per acre on irrigated lands is between 40-55 bags per acre. On rain-fed lands it is 32-40 bags per acre. The average cost of cultivation is as follows: One bag of seed costs between Rs 35-40 if purchased, but since most cultivators have their own seed ready, this normally does not form part of the cost of cultivation. Chemical fertilisers have to be purchased locally at the rate of Rs. 40/- per bag. Cooly charges roughly amount to Rs. 20/- per acre. The daily wage per man which is the same for all operations is Rs. 1/8- and that of a woman is As. 14. About eight people will be required to perform all the cultivation operations per acre. The sale price of one bag of potato differs according to the prevailing marketing conditions. But during times of good harvest, one bag will fetch a price between Rs. 30/- and Rs. 35/-. The most common ailment against which a farmer has to be very vigilant is the potato blight. This attacks suddenly, spreads like wild fire and will affect large tracts of land before the farmer is aware that he is completely ruined. The agricultural as well as the Block Development staff have taken pains to supply insecticides promptly to combat this dread scourge of the potato. A chemical called Dithane Z 78 is issued to combat potato blight. During the year 1960 potato blight attacked vast tracts of land in this village and the extent of damage was estimated to be Rs. 1,427/-. Chemicals to the extent of Rs. 1,500/- issued at half price were distributed among needy ryots during these trying times. No special rites are connected with agricultural practices. For purposes of cultivation, time is divided into periods of 27 days of which each day is named after a ruling star. The year is similarly divided into 27 periods called 'Karthis' named after these stars. This 27-day period is further sub-divided into three sects of nine days each, of which the first is preferred for the sowing of cereals, another for root crops and the third for pulses. Some days are considered inauspicious for sowing.

Irrigation

76. In the first place, the area under irrigation is very limited. From the acreage under different



The Multi-purpose Rivulet. A Boon and a Curse at once!
Boon - God given; Curse - Man made.
VILPATTI'S DHOBÍ GHAT.

crops, it is to be seen that not even 20% of the acreage under different groups are irrigated. All paddy fields are irrigated and they account for 252.56 acres and about 218.83 acres of irrigated land is under potato cultivation. This is, as it should be, for irrigation in the mountain area is difficult by reason of the unevenness of the terrain. There are no permanent and elaborate irrigation systems. The natural stream water is diverted wherever possible for irrigating the land. The canal from Chidambarakesai Odai, lying two miles away from Vilpatti, is also used for purposes of irrigation. There are besides six community wells. The rivers Surakarayar and Thevanalaru are also used for purposes of irrigation. The rest of the land area is rain-fed. The various irrigation systems and the ayacuts under each system are given below :

<i>Irrigation system</i>		<i>Extent</i>
		Acres-Cents
Periyar	...	170.67
Varakkeel Odai	...	9.46
Surakarayar	...	203.20
Vachi Nirpatti	...	1.00
Thannar	...	11.22
Attuvampatti channel	...	25.06
Vannarthurai Aru	...	14.38
Selambarakarai	...	4.73
Pallangi Aru	...	58.32
Puliyaru Odai	...	25.85
Cherangan Odai	...	1.85
Kadunchuthi Odai	...	13.69
Gundaru	...	2.40
Karuvandar Odai	...	3.15
Total	...	544.98

There are proposals to construct two dams near Vilpatti, one called the Pallar dam and the other near Pallangi called the Porudalar dam. The dams creating artificial lakes will not benefit the villagers of Vilpatti. On the contrary, the lake created by the Porudalar dam is expected to submerge the cultivated lands owned by the ryots of Vilpatti. About sixty acres of paddy and two hundred acres of plantains are likely to be affected. Measuring weirs for both the dams have already been constructed. This is likely to be a bitter blow to the aspirations of Vilpatti ryots to extend their cultivation beyond the limits of their village.

Special problems of agriculture

77. From all that has gone before, it is evident that while theoretically there is much scope for increasing

the area of cultivation by not only reclaiming fallow land but by exploring the possibility of cultivating virgin lands beyond the limits of Vilpatti, in practice, it is limited due to the difficulty of the terrain and other factors like the attempt to construct dams. Also there is the more imminent problem of soil erosion considering the amount of top soil being washed away by rains. There seems to be an attempt for an intensive drive towards afforestation of the higher reaches of the mountain slopes to preserve the reclaimed land in the lower reaches from erosion. This concern of the Government to prevent the problem of soil erosion is evident by the orders passed by them preventing further reclamation. It can, therefore, be said that Vilpatti village, given its geographical location and the type of terrain, has reached near saturation point in the matter of extensive utilisation of land area. Further expansion may, while leading to marginal increase, decrease the productivity of intra-marginal lands which can be equated with those lands within the limits of Vilpatti village. Thus, while here and there small patches of land can be reclaimed for further cultivation, no large scale reclamation programme can be undertaken to bring fallow lands into cultivation without seriously effecting agricultural productivity.

Scope for development

78. But there is still ample scope for increasing the net productivity per acre of land under cultivation. This presupposes a change in prevailing methods of cultivation. It is of course debatable whether mechanisation can be introduced in Vilpatti, considering the circumstances obtaining there. But traditional age-old implements can always be displaced by the new improved implements like the iron seed drill; the hoe can always be introduced to make it easier for the cultivator at the time of sowing and weeding. Another problem of agriculture is the sub-division and fragmentation of holdings. Due to soil conservation methods and bunding, fields have necessarily to be small, but fragmentation at least could be avoided by adopting the law of primogeniture. Though consolidation of land holdings on any extensive scale cannot be possible in Vilpatti, at least further fragmentation can be prevented by making it incumbent on families not to possess land less than 50 cents in extent. The use of improved seeds, manures and insecticides must be encouraged in the area. The Agriculture Department is taking steps in the right direction, but a lot still remains to be done. Prompt supply of good seeds, insecticides and chemical manures is of paramount importance for prosperity in the agricultural sector and this, at times, is lacking in almost all parts of

the country. A more efficient system of distribution has then to be drawn up and the supplies effected through the Cooperative Societies rather than through Departments. A change is taking place slowly and the shackles of ignorance and inertia seem to be slightly loosened during the last five years. If this improvement is maintained, under the impact of knowledge of demonstrations, it may yet be possible to change the face of this village and give it an economic uplift.

Livestock

79. Cultivation and livestock are the twin pillars of an agrarian economy and though the economy of Vilpatti does not completely depend on bullock power, yet the preservation of its cattle wealth is of paramount importance for the well-being of its inhabitants. Though cultivation of potato, the main crop, does not require ploughing and the farmer can dispense with his bullocks, yet paddy cultivation in the village requires the oxen to be yoked to the plough. Most of the cattle I came across here were ill-fed and unkempt. Their life span is short and they look very emaciated. This is strange because one always is led to believe that on hills there are vast tracts of grazing grounds and green pastures abound in plenty. Therefore, cattle should normally look well-fed and contented, must be capable of hard labour and yield plenty of milk. However, this does not seem to be the case in this village. The majority of the cattle are left to fend for themselves and are not well-treated. According to the figures available in the village, the following are the statistics of livestock.

Bullocks	...	507
Cows (milch)	...	98
Cows (dry)	...	422
Calf (bulls)	...	48
Heifer	...	94
Over 3 years (young stock)	...	174
Under 3 years (young)	...	93
Sterile cows	...	9
		1445
Buffaloes	...	96
Sheep	...	46
Goats	...	155
Ponies	...	71
		368
Poultry		
Country bred	...	190
White leghorns	...	64
Black minorca	...	1
		255

The figures relating to livestock owned by the households we surveyed are given in Table No. 19.

TABLE No. XIX
LIVESTOCK

Community	Milch Cattle		Draught Bullock		Goat/ Sheep	
	No. of households owning	Total No.	No. of households owning	Total No.	No. of households owning	Total No.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Reddiar	18	41	26	71	10	22
Pillai	26	68	41	204	7	17
Mannadiar	6	11	10	31	4	6
Mudaliar	10	16	10	27	6	10
Pannadi	...	...	1	2	...	...
Chettiar	...	...	1	1	1	1
Vannan	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nadar	2	9	1	7	...	...
Asari	6	9	5	12	2	3
Brahmin	...	...	1	1	...	...
Maruthuvar	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naidu	...	...	2	17	...	...
Malayali	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konar	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kshatriya	...	...	...	...	...	...
Parayan	2	3	4	8	2	5
Adi-dravida	1	1	2	2	2	3
Arunthathiar	3	7	7	16	1	3
Christian Nadar	...	...	...	...	...	...
Christian Mudaliar	1	1	1	1	...	...
Muslim	...	...	...	...	...	...

We found 400 bullocks in all the houses. Of these 204 were owned by 41 Pillai households, 71 by 26 Reddi households, 31 and 27 by 10 Mannadi and 10 Mudaliar households respectively. Among Harijans, 7 Arunthathiars owned 16 bullocks and 6 Harijans owned 10 bullocks. There were 166 milch cattle of which 68

were owned by 26 Pillai households, and 41 by 18 Reddi households. Mannadis, Mudaliars, Asaris, Nadars and the Harijans owned the remainder. Goats and sheep were also to be found, Reddis having the maximum—22 scattered amongst 10 households. Seven Pillai families owned 17 goats.

Cattle in India

80. It is conceded on all sides that cattle labour represents the most useful and important contribution of livestock to Indian agriculture. But even more important than the immediate benefit of their ploughing potential is the part they can play in the regeneration of agriculture in India. By adopting improved agricultural methods and dovetailing it with animal husbandry, all available manure can be used for cultivation. The cultivation of leguminous crops will help to augment soil fertility and provide an ideal source of food for cattle and the consequent increase in crop yield will offset any increase in the cost of production of milk. The first thing that strikes any one regarding cattle in India is the large number of economically superfluous cattle we maintain. The latest livestock census of Madras provides an eye-opener to those interested in improving cattle wealth in India. The following are the figures which are furnished.

Number of cattle	...	1,08,17,327
Number of buffaloes	...	25,74,118
Total bovine	...	1,33,91,445
Number of sheep	...	71,59,326
Number of goats	...	34,26,796
Number of pigs	...	5,01,730
Other livestock	...	1,61,424
		1,12,49,276
Fowls	...	1,07,19,743
Ducks	...	4,85,323
Others	...	91,305
Total poultry...		1,12,96,371

According to these figures, the total bovine population inclusive of buffaloes is 13.39 millions. This works out to 50.7 head of cattle per 100 acres in Madras State. This compares most unfavourably with the figures relating to other countries like Holland and Egypt where the figures are 38 and 25 respectively. As the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India have stated, "the worse the conditions for rearing efficient cattle, the

greater the numbers kept tend to be. As the numbers increase the pressure on the available supply of food leads to still further poorness in the cattle. As cattle grow smaller in size and greater in number, the rate at which conditions become worse for the breeding of good livestock is accelerated. As cattle become smaller the amount of food needed in proportion to their size increases". How true is this in the case of Vilpatti village!

Cattle breeding

81. The value of breeding animals through scientific selection has been recognised by the farmers in almost all countries. But very little attention is paid by our villagers to this aspect and this is especially true of Vilpatti village. Cattle are hardly fed and are allowed to mix with the weak and degenerate types. This leads to deterioration in quality. Another aspect of improving cattle wealth devolves upon the extent of veterinary aid given. Diseases such as anthrax and rinderpest carry away thousands of cattle and leave the rest in a very exhausted condition. Frequent losses of cattle and the need to replace them is one cause of rural indebtedness. This uncertainty in cattle life is one of the main banes of agriculture and compels a farmer to keep large reserves of cattle, to neglect their quality and prevents him from undertaking scientific methods of cattle breeding. In Vilpatti village there is a Veterinary First Aid Centre run by the Block Development authorities. It is attended to by the Extension Officer, Animal Husbandry, Kodaikanal, once a week. The Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, stationed at Kodaikanal does not, however, attend this centre as it is five miles away from Kodaikanal and he cannot reach it quickly. Cases requiring urgent treatment are taken from Vilpatti to Kodaikanal. This itself is a very difficult task and many cattle die on the way. There has luckily been no outbreaks of epidemics during the last three years. Prior to that, there was an attack of rinderpest and anthrax which carried away a large number of cattle. The usual cases prevalent among cattle are digestive disorders due to worms and fermentation, mechanical injuries and in milch cows mastitis and milk fever. Some of the simple cases are treated at the Veterinary First Aid Centre and more serious cases at the Kodaikanal Veterinary Hospital. To improve the breeding of cattle, there is an artificial insemination centre run by the State Government at Kodaikanal with two buffaloes and three bulls. Those desirous of obtaining their services go to Kodaikanal from Vilpatti village. Sheep and goats thrive very well in a temperate climate and Kodaikanal taluk is ideally suited for the rearing of sheep and goats. However, the total number is very small, there being only 46 sheep and 155 goats in the

village, compared to places in the plain. Sheep are kept not for their wool, but purely for purposes of food. Goats are reared for their milk and also to be sent to Kodaikanal from time to time to the butcher. There are 71 ponies in the village which are used only for transportation purposes. Potatoes, bananas and other odds and ends are carried regularly between Vilpatti and Kodaikanal and the surrounding places. Sometimes ponies are used by intrepid travellers for purposes of journey to and fro between Vilpatti and the nearby villages. Poultry, both country-bred as well as the improved stock is being distributed by the Block staff to well-to-do farmers and others who can keep them. There are 190 country-bred poultry and 64 white leghorns which are very good egg yielders. These leghorns have been distributed by the Block staff. There is a Poultry Extension Centre at Kodaikanal catering to the needs of villages within a radius of ten miles and this covers Vilpatti village also. The common cases brought for treatment at Kodaikanal are raniket, grape worms in chicks and roup. There has been no serious outbreak of epidemics among poultry during the last few years.

Tenancy

82. Most of the cultivation is self-cultivation and the majority of the households own lands which they cultivate. Absentee landlordism is rare. Even among the well-to-do communities like the Reddiars, Mudaliars and the Pillais, lease cultivation is very common. Of the people surveyed, it was found that 33 people were engaged in cultivation on lands taken on lease. Lease cultivation was popular among the Harijans, there being 9 people engaged in this type of cultivation. Agricultural labour on the land is provided by the Harijans, especially the Arunthathiars. The majority of the Harijans own small bits of land of sizes varying between 25 cents and 2.5 acres, in which they cultivate paddy and potato. But since the extent of land is negligible and they do not have work throughout the year, they prefer to augment their income by working in the fields of the Reddiars, Pillais or Mudaliars. But in spite of this comparatively scaling down of their social position, harmonious relationship is maintained throughout between the Harijans and the land owning classes. Wages are paid in cash and in kind. The normal wages are Rs. 1-8-0 per man per day and As. 14 per woman. At the end of the harvest, ten measures of paddy or a quarter bag of potato is additionally given to each labourer. Since the extent of lease cultivation is not very large, compared to owner cultivation, difference of opinion between tenants and owners is not

felt to that extent as in other parts of the State, notably in Trichy or Tanjore district. Enactments of the Government, such as the Fair Rent Act and the Tenants Protection Act see to it that owners are discouraged from taking unfair advantage of the tenants. I came across no case of any owner or tenant going to court either for eviction or for reasonable restrictions on the owner. However, there were a couple of cases taken to the local Tahsildar who acts as Tahsildar-cum-Magistrate for this taluk for adjudication in the matter of fixation of fair rents. But such cases were amicably settled without recourse to further litigation and usually the tenant and owner made up and no estranged relationship existed between them afterwards.

Marketing of Produce

83. The main produce in this village being potato, much attention has not been paid to the proper marketing of these products. Marketing of paddy is still done according to age-old customs. More often than not, the ryot who always needs some sort of financial backing during the time of harvesting and sowing, finding that the Cooperative Society does not provide him adequate loans, goes to the money-lender and realises that at the time of harvest he has to pay to his money-lender in cash or in kind. This leads to his selling of his produce at the rates fixed by the money-lender. If he is a person not in the clutches of the village money-lender, he takes it to the market at Kodaikanal and sells it at the prevailing rate. But each farmer adopts his own method of disposal and there is no proper organised system of storage and bargaining for better prices. Further this village being predominantly a rice-eating village, nothing over and above self-consumption is left for marketing. With the acreage under paddy restricted, very little is left over to be taken to the local markets to be sold and, therefore, no organised system of sale of paddy is possible. But the history of the potato crop is quite different. Since nearly 1000 acres of land, of which 200 being wet land, is under the potato crop which usually, unless ravaged by the dread scourge of the potato, the potato blight, yields good return, proper marketing is of vital import to the economy of this village. There is a Potato Growers' Association in Kodaikanal, but it has not yet made its presence felt in Vilpatti village. Barring a certain percentage set apart for seeds for the next crop, the remnant can easily be marketed at Kodaikanal town at the current market rates. The Harijans and people belonging to other communities treat the potato as one of the main constituents of their diet and even with the major portion of the crop going for self-consumption, there is still enough left for marketing. If it is possible to form a Cooperative

Society of potato growers in this village, provide a warehouse in which the potatoes harvested could be stored without fear of germination or spoiling, lorries could be hired at low cost and the potatoes graded and transported to Kodaikanal where it is bound to fetch a good price. As it is, no organised effort at marketing potatoes by the cultivators of Vilpatti has been made and so each cultivator adopts his own method of transportation and individual sales at Kodaikanal town is more the order of the day. As such, the average income of a cultivator is lower than what it should have been under normal circumstances.

Credit Needs of People

84. The Government are increasingly aware of the importance of supplying prompt credit to the villagers during times of sowing, harvesting and marketing. The lack of an organised system of meeting the credit requirements of villagers has hitherto prevented the agrarian economy of the country from functioning efficiently. The efficient functioning of the primary sector is of vital import to any organised system of planning and as it is complimentary to the secondary and tertiary sectors any planned effort should aim at improving the primary sector. This presupposes not only that production should be augmented efficiently, but also, ancillary to production, the financial help needed to gear production to top levels should also be forthcoming expeditiously and here cooperation can do more than any other effort organised towards the increase in production. The village Cooperative Credit Society is an institution which is now recognised as being the bulwark of agriculture all over the country. But in practice, in many villages, it has been found that the Cooperative Credit Society is not functioning as efficiently as it should do, notably in the grant of loans expeditiously, efficiently and at the proper time. This bane of co-operation has led to the villager time and often turning to the village money-lender who is always there, insidiously working in the background and waiting for a chance to get the villagers who are in dire necessity into his clutches. During my enquiries, I realised that the richest man in the village was a money-lender who had to his credit the reputation of having ruined many families in his collection of interest. The strangest part of it was that he was a member of the local Panchayat Board, an interesting character with diamond ear-rings and with a marked reticence about him, justifiable under the circumstances.

Cooperative Credit Society

85. There is a Cooperative Credit Society in the village consisting of the President who is also the

President of the Panchayat Board, a Secretary and three villagers. The President is a resident of the hamlet of Attuvampatti. The Secretary and the villagers belong to Vilpatti. The Society arranges to give loans to the cultivators. The members belonging to different communities are given in Table No. 20. They have two types of loans, one being the long-term loan given for land improvements which is created by means of mortgage of property and the other being a short-term loan for which some sort of surety is necessary. There is also another Cooperative Credit Society for Attuvampatti hamlet. The total number of members in these Cooperative Societies is 589. The loans advanced so far to the villagers amounts to Rs. 1,46,000/-. The loan so far collected amounts to Rs. 66,000/- Therefore, the total amount of outstanding loans still remaining to be collected is Rs. 80,000/- Unfortunately, these outstanding loans stay locked up which is responsible for the lack of efficient functioning of this Cooperative Society. If only outstanding loans are collected in time, the Society can borrow more and be of greater benefit to its members. Another Cooperative Credit Society is to be opened at Naidupuram. The share capital so far collected for that Society amounts to Rs. 500/-. In addition to the Cooperative Credit Society, there is a Milk Supply Society at Attuvampatti. The total number of members is 145 and the loans so far advanced amounts to Rs. 44,000/-. The function of this society is to collect milk from the owners of milch cattle at Attuvampatti and Vilpatti and transport it to Kodaikanal. There is also a Land Mortgage Bank having a membership of 9, and loans for improvement of land and for discharging prior indebtedness and encumbrances on land amounting to Rs. 7,000/- have been granted. A Rural Housing Society for bettering the living conditions of the villagers of Vilpatti is to be formed shortly. Eight members have joined and the total share capital so far collected is Rs. 410/-. I have already mentioned the lack of organised marketing facilities for the cultivators to market their produce in this area. With a view to improve and organise marketing on right lines, the Kodaikanal Cooperative Marketing Society is to be formed to cover the entire taluk and this Society is expected to deal with the produce in this village, notably potato, paddy and vegetables. The total amount of share capital collected in Vilpatti itself is Rs. 1,107/-. In addition to these loans, by way of cash and other means granted under the Intensive Manuring Scheme and from the Block for meeting cultivation expenses by way of provision of seeds, implements and insecticides at half cost, the Government have also granted the following amounts of loans under the L. I. L. Act for land

TABLE No. XX
THE COOPERATIVE CREDIT SOCIETY, VILPATTI

Community	No. of households who have joined the Cooperative Society	Number of households that have not become members because of	
		No land	Unable to become member due to various reasons
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reddiar	16	6	27
Pillai	17	9	30
Mannadiar	9	...	14
Mudaliar	10	4	5
Pannadi	...	...	1
Chettiar	1	...	2
Vannan	...	...	1
Nadar	3	...	1
Asari	6	1	8
Brahmin	1	...	...
Maruthuvar	1	...	...
Naidu	6	...	...
Malayali	...	...	1
Konar	1	...	...
Kshatriya	1	...	...
Parayan	3	2	6
Adi-dravida	4	...	5
Arunthathiar	11	6	9
Christian Nadar	...	...	1
Christian Mudaliar	1	...	...
Muslim	1	2	1
TOTAL	92	30	112

reclamation. The tabular statement, communitywise, is indicated below.

Community	No. of persons	Amount	Reclaimed area
		Rs.	(Acres)
Mudaliars	3	2,500/-	2.75
Pillais	4	2,000/-	4.00
Nadars	2	2,000/-	5.00
Asaris	1	500/-	1.25
	10	7,000-	13.00

Further, for soil conservation measures, a sum of Rs. 52,732/- was given by way of loans to eighty ryots of Vilpatti to reclaim 232.33 acres.

Income and Expenditure

86. The villagers of Vilpatti cannot be said to be under affluent circumstances as they have to rely on seasonal work for their livelihood. Their income fluctuates according to their acquisition of work. The marginal families are a little better off and they are able to buy clothes and live one step above want during the off-season periods. The really well-to-do own the houses in which they reside, maintain cattle and live comfortably. But the poverty stricken families unable to make both ends meet, borrow large amounts of money, consequently entangling themselves in a vicious circle of never-ending payments of principal and interest. One noticeable feature was their reticence with regard to their income. When questioned, suspicious of further taxation and unknown fears, they failed to divulge their precise financial status. On being questioned, they tended at times to give an absurdly low income which did not fit in with what one would estimate after a close observation of their homes and their standard of living. Quite often they grew disinterested with the rest of the interview for obvious reasons. There were still others among them who were voluble regarding their income and expenses. Neither these individuals gave a correct estimate of their income. They tend to inflate their income because of the social benefit which would accrue to them by being placed in the higher income brackets. Hence figures relating to income and expenditure have always to be discounted to a certain extent due to reticence or obvious exaggeration on the part of the informants.

Income Levels

87. Table No. 21 presents income statistics of villagers. According to the statistics available in this village,

of the 137 owner cultivator households, 55 have an income of over Rs. 100/- per month. 50 derive incomes ranging between Rs. 76/- to Rs. 100/-, 25 between Rs. 51/- to Rs. 75/-, 6 between Rs. 25/- and Rs. 50/- and only one family gets a monthly income of less than Rs. 25/-. Of the households belonging to the top income bracket, 12 belong to the Reddiar community, 7 belong to the Mudaliar, 22 to Pillais and the rest distributed among the various communities. The one household which gets an income of less than Rs. 25/- belongs to the Pillai community. Of the 18 households who cultivate lands on lease, five of the households get an income of over Rs. 100/-, seven between Rs. 75 and Rs. 100/-, four between Rs. 51 and Rs. 75 and two between Rs. 25/- and Rs. 50/-. The Headman who belongs to the Harijan community gets an income of over Rs. 100/-. The petition-writer belonging to the Yadava community, the Kovil Pusari who is a Malayali and the Provision Store-keeper, all get income of over Rs. 100/-. The 34 households engaged in business other than potato, hotel or Provision Stores, get incomes ranging from Rs. 50/- to over Rs. 100/-. Of the 48 households engaged in agricultural labour or general labour, it was interesting to note that none of them earns less than Rs. 25/- whereas five households earn over Rs. 100/- This is possible because they are engaged in road building or as watchmen in Kodaikanal town.

Pattern of Expenditure

88. The expenditure pattern in the village also makes interesting reading. In Vilpatti, the major portion of the expenditure relates to meeting the day-to-day wants of the households. Table No. 23 presents data on average expenditure on different items by various occupational groups. This table is appended to this Chapter. A fair share of the expenditure relates to food and clothing. Since the majority of the people take rice, sometimes twice a day, a large slice of their income is diverted towards satisfying this necessity. Almost in all houses, tea and coffee drinking is practised and this is especially true in the case of Reddiar, Pillai and Mudaliar households. Expenditure on marriages constitute the next important item of expenditure and a drain on the financial resource of the people. The range of expenditure on marriage differs from community to community and within the community, according to the social status of the individual concerned. Since dowry system is in vogue among the Brahmins and Nadars, expenditure on marriages among them is slightly higher. Marriage expenses are higher also among the Pillais, Reddiars and Mannadiars. The Harijans spend least on marriages. One more item relates to the innumerable festivals normally conducted in this village. At the time of the "Panguni Nombu"

TABLE No. XXI

MONTHLY INCOME PER HOUSEHOLD

Community	Occupation of Household	Monthly income per household in the range of				Rs. 101 and over
		Rs. 25 or less	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 76-100	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Pillai	Cultivation	1	...	5	9	22
	Lease Cultivation	...	...	1	2	2
	General Labour	...	2	4	4	3
	Tea Shop	...	...	...	1	...
Reddiar	Cultivation	...	1	6	16	12
	Lease Cultivation	...	2	...	2	...
	General Labour	...	4	2	2	...
	Business	...	...	...	1	...
	Not stated	...	1	...	...	...
Mudaliar	Cultivation	...	...	5	4	5
	Lease Cultivation	...	...	...	...	1
	General Labour	...	...	3	...	1
Asari	Cultivation	...	1	4	2	1
	Lease Cultivation	...	1	...	1	1
	General Labour	...	1	...	...	...
	Tailor	...	...	...	1	...
	Clerk	...	...	...	...	1
	Carpenter	...	...	1	...	...
Muslim	Lease Cultivation	...	...	1	...	...
	Business	...	...	1	1	1
Chettiar	Cultivation	...	...	...	3	...
Christian Nadar	Business	...	...	...	...	1
Nadar	Cultivation	...	...	...	1	1
	Business	...	...	...	...	2
Naidu	Cultivation	...	...	1	...	3
	Tailor	...	...	1	...	...
	Tea Shop	...	...	...	...	1
Malayali	Temple Priest	...	...	...	...	1
Vannan	Dhobi	...	...	...	1	...
Maruthuvar	Cultivation	...	...	...	1	...
Pannadi	Cultivation	...	...	...	...	1
Brahmin	Village Official	...	1	...	...	...
Kshatriya	Business	...	...	...	...	1
Konar	Petition Writer	...	...	...	...	1
Mannadiar	Cultivation	...	1	7	7	5
	Lease Cultivation	...	...	...	2	...
	Cooly	...	1	...	...	...
Arunthathiar	Cultivation	...	...	2	4	3
	Cooly	...	2	10	3	1
	Village Official	...	...	...	...	1
Parayan	Cultivation	...	...	1	3	2
	Lease Cultivation	...	...	1	...	1
	Cooly	...	...	3	...	...
Christian Mudaliar	Cultivation	...	...	1	...	...
Adi-dravida	Cultivation	...	...	...	1	1
	Lease Cultivation	...	...	1	1	2
	Cooly	...	...	2	1	...

festival as well as the "Shasti" festival, people spend a lot on flowers, puja expenses, on good clothes and on fire works. Expenses relating to the type of business run or on cultivation is another item on the budget. This accounts also for a fair share of the expenditure. Cultivating Pillais spend most on food and fuel, these constituting 61.36% and 13.32% of their income. Pillais who are general labourers spend slightly more on clothing than other Pillais, the percentage being 10.82 and 10.36 respectively. Reddis tend to spend slightly less than Pillais on food and on fuel, their average expenditure on food working out to Rs. 87 compared to Rs. 95 of the Pillais and Rs. 10 to Rs. 13 respectively. The Mudaliars tend to spend more on food than either Reddiars or Pillais, their average expenditure working out to Rs. 103 per household. Mannadis spend less than the communities mentioned above on all items-food, clothing, fuel, education and luxuries. Among the Harijans, Arunthathiars on an average spend about Rs. 86/- on food and Rs. 15/- on clothing; but their expenditure on fuel and luxuries is low compared to caste Hindus. One noticeable feature is that no household on an average spends more than Rs. 10/- on education. Among the Harijans the expenditure on this item is practically negligible but this is due to scholarships and free elementary education.

Debt

89. A look at the pattern of debts reveals that domestic expenditure constitutes the major reason for indebtedness in the village. The position vis-a-vis landless households is still worse. But for those who are engaged in the non-agricultural sectors, the landless households in the agricultural sector mainly form the labour class. While they are employed fully during the agricultural season, they are virtually unemployed during the off-season periods. There are, however, certain mitigating circumstances such as existence of coffee plantations where they can find work or seasonal work at Kodaikanal town. But this work is not lasting and sufficient to keep all of them employed. They often have to rely on what they have saved for a rainy day during the days of plenty. The extent of indebtedness among different sections of society is seen from Table No. 22. Of the 234 households surveyed, 171 were found to be in debt. We found that not even the well-to-do communities of the Reddiars, Pillais and Mudaliars were exempted from this dread malaise of indebtedness. The following figures indicate the extent of indebtedness among the communities.

Community	No. of households in debt
Reddiars	35
Pillais	44
Mudaliars	13
Asaris	11
Mannadiars	18
Parayans	7
Adi-dravidas	7
Arunthathiars	19

The total amount of indebtedness was estimated to be Rs. 1,29,236/-. Of this, Rs. 71,936/- was attributed to expenditure on domestic wants exceeding total income. 88 households mentioned this as the sole cause for their indebtedness. 74 families who attributed expenses on household cultivation as the reason for their debt, had an outstanding debt of Rs. 51,080/-. 9 households who mentioned marriage expenses as the reason for their indebtedness, stated that they had a sum of Rs. 5,150/- as outstanding debt. 2 households who undertook house construction or renovations to their existing dwelling were indebted to the tune of Rs. 700/- on this account. Surprisingly enough, only one household mentioned that they were in debt to the extent of Rs. 20/- due to the dowry system. One reason for this was that dowry system was confined only to Nadars and to the Brahmins and expenses incurred on dowry was included in the general marriage expenses. One household mentioned that it incurred a debt of Rs. 350/- due to borrowing for conducting the business run by that household. It was revealed that the sources from which these households borrowed may either be the Cooperative Society, Banks, local money-lenders or some other Governmental institutions. A majority of them have borrowed considerable amounts from the Cooperative Society. The enquiry relating to the source of debt reveals that 106 households had borrowed from the Cooperative Society, 14 of them borrowing Rs. 501/- and over, 47 between Rs. 200/- to Rs. 500/-, 28 between Rs. 100/- to Rs. 200/- and 17 below Rs. 100/-. 97 households had borrowed from the money-lenders, 36 of them borrowing over Rs. 500/-. Six families have borrowed from Banks and 16 from the Government of which 3 had borrowed Rs. 500/- and over. This revealed that money-lenders were as popular as Cooperative Societies, mainly because of their expeditious disposal of loan applications and the ease with which they put off repayment, as it was to their advantage to prolong the debt as much as possible.

TABLE No. XXII

INDEBTEDNESS

Community	I group (Monthly house- hold income Rs.)	Indebtedness by income group				Average indebted- ness for House- hold in debt Rs. nP.
		Total No. of Households	No. of Households in debt	Percentage of Col. (4) to Col. (3)	Total indebtedness (Rupees)	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
REDDIAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	8	5	63	2,500	500-00
	51 to 75	8	5	63	1,510	302-00
	76 to 100	21	14	67	4,750	339-29
	101 and over	12	11	92	6,626	60-36
PILLAI	25 and below	1	1	100	500	500-00
	26 to 50	2	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	10	10	100	3,350	335-00
	76 to 100	16	10	63	7,895	789-50
	101 and over	27	23	85	24,175	1051-09
MANNADIAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	2	2	100	700	350-00
	51 to 75	7	4	57	2,000	500-00
	76 to 100	9	8	89	6,950	868-75
	101 and over	5	4	80	4,250	1062-50
MUDALIAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	8	6	75	2,000	333-33
	76 to 100	4	3	75	1,550	516-63
	101 and over	7	4	57	11,800	2950-00
PANNADI	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	1	1	100	500	500-00

TABLE No. XXII (Contd)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
CHETTIAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	3	3	100	1,690	563-33
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
VANNAN	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	1	1	100	200	200-00
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
NADAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	1	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	3	3	100	4,550	1516-67
ASARI	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	3	2	67	300	150-00
	51 to 75	5	4	80	3,550	887-50
	76 to 100	4	2	50	700	350-00
	101 and over	3	3	100	4,000	1333-33
BRAHMIN	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	1	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
MARUTHUVAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	1	1	100	2,350	2,350-00
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...

TABLE No. XXII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
NAIDU	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	2	2	100	2,950	1,475-00
	76 to 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	4	4	100	9,000	2,250-00
MALAYALI	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	1	...	...	...	...
KONAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	1	1	100	1,600	1,600-00
KSHATRIYA	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	1	1	100	1,350	1,350-00
PARAYAN	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	5	3	60	900	300-00
	76 to 100	3	2	67	200	100-00
	101 and over	3	2	67	450	225-00
ADIDRAVIDA	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	3	1	33	200	200-00
	76 to 100	3	3	100	400	133-33
	101 and over	3	3	100	1,070	356-67

TABLE No. XXII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
ARUN- THATHIAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	2	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	12	10	83	2,900	290-00
	76 to 100	7	5	71	2,900	580-00
	101 and over	5	4	80	3,750	937-50
CHRISTIAN NADAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	...	...	...	...	...
	76 to 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	1	...	...	...	...
CHRISTIAN MUDALIAR	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	1	1	100	1,050	1,050-00
	76 to 100	...	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	...	...	...	...	...
MUSLIM	25 and below	...	...	...	...	...
	26 to 50	...	...	...	...	...
	51 to 75	2	2	100	2200	1100-00
	76 to 100	1	...	...	...	...
	101 and over	1	...	...	...	...

TABLE No. XXIII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
MANNADIAR															
	General	Food	1	50.00	74.63	...	...	1	50.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Labourer	Education	1	2.00	2.98	...	...	1	2.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	5.00	7.46	...	...	1	5.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Fuel	1	10.00	14.93	...	...	1	10.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
MUDALIAR															
	Cultiva- tion	Food	14	102.57	63.18	...	...	...	...	5	74.00	4	76.50	5	152.00
		Education	6	13.33	8.21	...	...	...	...	2	7.50	...	...	4	16.25
		Clothing	14	13.93	8.58	...	...	...	...	5	11.50	4	9.25	5	19.80
		Fuel	11	17.45	10.75	...	...	...	...	5	13.00	3	15.67	3	26.67
		Luxuries	14	15.07	9.28	...	...	...	...	5	11.00	4	8.50	5	24.40
	Lease	Food	1	75.00	65.21	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	75.00
	Cultiva- tion	Education	1	5.00	4.35	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5.00
		Clothing	1	20.00	17.40	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	20.00
		Fuel	1	5.00	4.35	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5.00
		Luxuries	1	10.00	8.69	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	10.00
	General	Food	4	65.00	62.15	...	...	...	...	3	66.67	...	...	1	75.00
	Labourer	Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	3	13.33	12.75	...	...	...	...	2	15.00	...	...	1	10.00
		Fuel	1	15.00	14.34	...	...	...	...	1	15.00	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	4	11.25	10.76	...	...	...	...	3	11.67	...	...	1	16.00
PANNADI															
	Cultiva- tion	Food	1	90.00	60.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	90.00
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	15.00	10.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	15.00
		Fuel	1	30.00	20.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	30.00
		Luxuries	1	15.00	10.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	15.00
CHETTIAR															
	Cultiva- tion	Food	3	70.00	62.32	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	70.00
		Education	1	10.00	8.90	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	10.00
		Clothing	3	10.00	8.90	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	10.00
		Fuel	3	12.00	10.68	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	12.00
		Luxuries	3	10.33	9.20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	10.33

TABLE No. XXIII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
VANNAN															
	Dhobi	Food	1	80.00	64.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	80.00	...	...
		Education	1	10.00	8.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	10.00	...	...
		Clothing	1	20.00	16.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	20.00	...	...
		Fuel	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	1	15.00	12.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	15.00	...	...
NADAR															
	Business	Food	2	55.00	55.56	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	55.00
		Education	2	8.50	8.59	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	8.50
		Clothing	2	15.00	15.15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	15.00
		Fuel	2	13.00	13.12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	13.00
		Luxuries	1	7.50	7.58	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	7.50
	Cultivation	Food	2	96.50	67.48	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	93.00	1	100.00
		Education	1	8.00	5.59	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	8.00
		Clothing	2	10.00	6.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5.00	1	15.00
		Fuel	2	21.50	15.04	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	15.00	1	28.00
		Luxuries	1	7.00	4.90	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	7.00
ASARI															
	Clerk	Food	1	90.00	80.36	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	90.00
		Education	1	2.00	1.79	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2.00
		Clothing	1	8.00	7.14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	8.00
		Fuel	1	2.00	1.79	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2.00
		Luxuries	1	10.00	8.92	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	10.00
	Culti- vation	Food	8	71.25	59.53	...	...	1	60.00	4	75.00	2	80.00	1	50.00
		Education	5	7.00	5.85	...	...	...	...	4	6.75	1	8.00	...	...
		Clothing	8	12.50	10.45	...	...	1	10.00	4	15.00	2	12.50	1	5.00
		Fuel	6	16.67	13.93	...	...	1	15.00	2	17.50	2	17.50	1	15.00
		Luxuries	8	12.25	10.24	...	...	1	10.00	4	15.00	2	11.50	1	5.00
	Lease	Food	3	93.33	70.00	...	...	1	80.00	...	...	1	50.00	1	150.00
	Culti- vation	Education	1	6.00	4.50	...	...	1	6.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	3	21.33	16.00	...	...	1	20.00	...	...	1	4.00	1	40.00
		Fuel	3	4.67	3.50	...	...	1	10.00	...	...	1	2.00	1	2.00
		Luxuries	3	8.00	6.00	...	...	1	7.00	...	...	1	7.00	1	10.00

TABLE No. XXIII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
ASARI	Tailor	Food	1	19.00	27.53	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	19.00	...	...
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	15.00	21.74	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	15.00	...	...
		Fuel	1	20.00	28.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	20.00	...	...
		Luxuries	1	15.00	21.74	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	15.00	...	...
	Carpenter	Food	1	60.00	78.95	...	...	...	...	1	60.00	...	...	...	...
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	8.00	10.53	...	...	...	...	1	8.00	...	...	...	...
		Fuel	1	3.00	3.95	...	...	...	...	1	3.00	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	1	5.00	6.57	...	...	...	...	1	5.00	...	...	...	...
	General Labourer	Food	1	45.00	80.36	...	...	1	45.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Fuel	1	8.00	14.28	...	...	1	8.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	1	3.00	5.36	...	...	1	3.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
BRAHMIN	Village official	Food	1	30.00	58.82	...	...	1	30.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	10.00	19.61	...	...	1	10.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Fuel	1	10.00	19.61	...	...	1	10.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	1	1.00	1.96	...	...	1	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
MARUTHUVAR	Cultivation	Food	1	60.00	60.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	60.00	...	...
		Education	1	2.00	2.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2.00	...	...
		Clothing	1	20.00	20.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	20.00	...	...
		Fuel	1	10.00	10.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	10.00	...	...
		Luxuries	1	8.00	8.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	8.00	...	...
NAIDU	Tea Shop Owner	Food	1	90.00	64.29	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	90.00	...
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	15.00	10.71	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	15.00	...
		Fuel	1	25.00	17.86	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	25.00	...
		Luxuries	1	10.00	7.14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	10.00	...

TABLE No. XXIII (Contd)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
NAIDU	Cultivation	Food	4	138.33	70.43	...	...	...	...	1	50.00	...	...	3	121.67
		Education	3	8.67	4.41	...	...	...	...	1	6.00	...	...	2	10.00
		Clothing	4	21.75	11.07	...	...	...	...	1	10.00	...	...	3	25.67
		Fuel	4	14.00	8.15	...	...	...	...	1	7.00	...	...	3	16.33
		Luxuries	3	11.67	5.94	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	11.67
	Tailor	Food	1	60.00	62.51	...	...	...	...	1	60.00	...	...	...	...
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	8.00	8.33	...	...	...	...	1	8.00	...	...	...	...
		Fuel	1	20.00	20.83	...	...	...	...	1	20.00	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	1	8.00	8.33	...	...	...	...	1	8.00	...	...	...	...
MALAYALI	Temple Priest	Food	1	40.00	83.33	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	40.00
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	2.00	4.17	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2.00
		Fuel	1	2.00	4.17	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2.00
		Luxuries	1	4.00	8.33	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	4.00
KONAR	Petition Writer	Food	1	50.00	48.78	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	50.00
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	5.00	4.88	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5.00
		Fuel	1	40.00	39.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	40.00
		Luxuries	1	7.50	7.32	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	7.50
KSHATRIYA	Business	Food	1	120.00	56.34	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	120.00
		Education	1	25.00	11.74	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	25.00
		Clothing	1	15.00	7.04	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	15.00
		Fuel	1	28.00	13.14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	28.00
		Luxuries	1	25.00	11.74	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	25.00
PARAYAN	Cultivation	Food	6	69.17	71.86	...	...	...	...	1	60.00	3	65.00	2	80.00
		Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	6	15.00	6.77	...	...	...	...	1	10.00	3	15.00	2	17.50
		Fuel	6	31.33	14.15	...	...	...	...	1	18.00	3	41.67	2	22.50
		Luxuries	6	16.00	7.22	...	...	...	...	1	20.00	...	14.33	2	16.50

TABLE No. XXIII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
PARAYAN															
	Lease	Food	2	70.00	56.91	...	...	...	...	1	90.00	...	...	1	50.00
	Culti-	Education	1	8.00	6.50	...	...	...	...	1	8.00	...	...	...	...
	vation	Clothing	2	12.50	10.16	...	...	...	...	1	15.00	...	...	1	10.00
		Fuel	2	19.00	15.45	...	...	...	...	1	20.00	...	...	1	18.00
		Luxuries	2	13.50	10.98	...	...	...	...	1	10.00	...	...	1	17.00
	General	Food	3	80.00	71.65	...	...	...	...	3	80.00	...	...	...	...
	Labourer	Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	3	13.00	11.64	...	...	...	...	3	13.00	...	...	...	...
		Fuel	3	10.67	9.55	...	...	...	...	3	10.67	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	3	8.00	7.16	...	...	...	...	3	8.00	...	...	...	...
ADI-DRAVIDA															
	Cultiva-	Food	2	60.00	60.90	...	...	...	...	...	1	50.00	1	70.00	...
	tion	Education	1	3.00	3.06	...	...	...	...	...	1	3.00	...	...	...
		Clothing	2	11.50	11.67	...	...	...	...	...	1	8.00	1	15.00	...
		Fuel	2	12.50	12.69	...	...	...	...	...	1	20.00	1	5.00	...
		Luxuries	2	11.50	11.68	...	...	...	...	...	1	5.00	1	18.00	...
	Lease	Food	4	43.00	47.52	...	...	...	...	1	40.00	1	109.00	2	66.00
	Culti-	Education	2	6.00	6.63	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	6.00	...
	vation	Clothing	4	12.00	13.26	...	...	...	...	1	5.00	1	20.00	2	11.50
		Fuel	4	15.75	17.40	...	...	...	...	1	10.00	1	20.00	2	17.50
		Luxuries	4	13.75	15.19	...	...	...	...	1	8.00	1	15.00	2	16.00
	General	Food	3	73.33	54.98	...	...	...	...	2	80.00	1	60.00	...	...
	Labourer	Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	3	13.33	9.98	...	...	...	...	2	25.00	1	15.00	...	...
		Fuel	1	30.00	22.49	...	...	...	...	1	30.00	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	3	16.67	12.55	...	...	...	...	2	15.00	1	20.00	...	...
ARUNTHATHIAR															
	Village	Food	1	73.00	64.04	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	73.00
	Official	Education	1	2.00	1.75	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2.00
		Clothing	1	20.00	17.54	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	20.00
		Fuel	1	4.00	3.51	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	4.00
		Luxuries	1	15.00	13.16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	15.00

TABLE No. XXIII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
ARUNTHATHIAR (Contd.)															
	Culti-	Food	9	85.56	61.97	...	...	...	...	2	40.00	4	110.00	3	83.33
	vation	Education	3	9.33	6.76	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	11.50	1	5.00
		Clothing	9	19.67	14.25	...	...	...	...	2	9.00	4	29.25	3	14.00
		Fuel	8	12.50	9.05	...	...	...	...	2	7.00	4	13.00	2	17.00
		Luxuries	9	11.00	7.97	...	...	...	...	2	4.50	4	12.00	3	14.00
	General	Food	16	51.25	71.17	...	...	2	35.00	10	48.00	3	70.00	1	60.00
	Labourer	Education	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	16	6.94	9.64	...	...	2	3.50	10	6.50	3	9.67	1	10.00
		Fuel	15	6.13	8.51	...	...	2	5.00	10	5.80	2	2.00	1	20.00
		Luxuries	16	7.69	10.68	...	...	2	1.50	10	8.00	3	10.00	1	10.00
CHRISTIAN-NADAR															
	Business	Food	1	50.00	70.42	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	50.00
		Education	1	2.00	2.82	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2.00
		Clothing	1	9.00	12.68	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	9.00
		Fuel	1	5.00	7.04	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5.00
		Luxuries	1	5.00	7.04	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5.00
CHRISTIAN-MUDALIAR															
	Culti-	Food	1	65.00	77.38	...	...	...	...	1	65.00	...	...	...	...
	vation	Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Clothing	1	17.00	20.24	...	...	...	...	1	17.00	...	...	...	...
		Fuel	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	1	2.00	2.38	...	...	...	...	1	2.00	...	...	...	...
MUSLIM															
	Lease	Food	1	12.00	66.48	...	...	...	...	1	12.00	...	...	...	...
	Culti-	Education	1	8.00	4.43	...	...	...	...	1	8.00	...	...	...	...
	vation	Clothing	1	25.00	13.85	...	...	...	...	1	25.00	...	...	...	...
		Fuel	1	20.00	11.08	...	...	...	...	1	20.00	...	...	...	...
		Luxuries	1	7.50	4.16	...	...	...	...	1	7.50	...	...	...	...
	Business	Food	3	68.33	65.76	...	...	...	...	1	45.00	1	60.00	1	100.00
		Education	2	3.50	3.54	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2.00	1	5.00
		Clothing	3	10.67	10.79	...	...	...	...	1	3.00	1	4.00	1	25.00
		Fuel	3	11.67	11.82	...	...	...	...	1	3.00	1	12.00	1	20.00
		Luxuries	3	8.00	8.09	...	...	...	...	1	8.00	1	8.00	1	8.00

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Religion and worship

90. Of the 234 households surveyed, 228 profess the Hindu faith. There were two Christian families belonging to the Mudaliar and Nadar Community and four Muslim families. Of the Muslim households, two were Labbais and the others Rowthers. Religion has always played an important part in social cohesion and in bringing together people belonging to different walks of life into a common brotherhood, to pray and to subordinate themselves before the awful immensity of the supernatural. However, in village community life, religion has never played the cohesive part which it normally should. Instead, in many cases, under the guise of religion, petty differences and quarrels are perpetrated, mainly man-made and relating to common trivialities, for example, management of a temple and the position of importance to be assigned to different personalities, belonging to different communities while celebrating the festival forming a bone of contention between parties leading to a disturbance of the public peace. Thus, even in the temple of God, petty jealousies and rivalries are carried to the extreme, leading to greater schism rather than to a common fraternity. Luckily the temples in Vilpatti being limited in number, these petty quarrels are not common among the various communities and there is a definite sign of cohesion and unity among people, though necessarily not because of the same religion they profess.

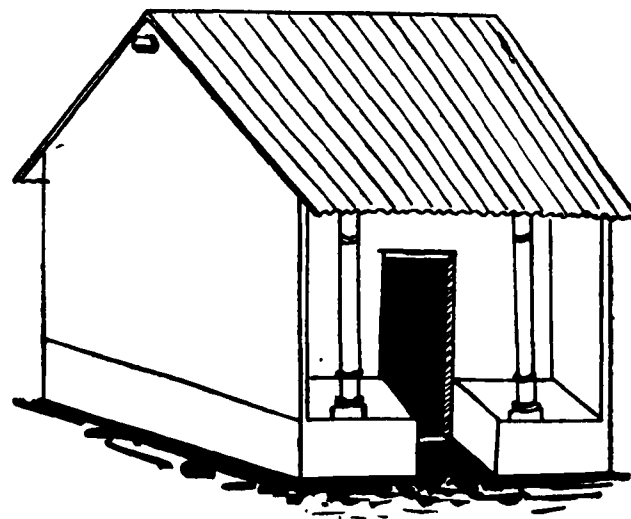
Village deities

91. The principal deities worshipped by these people are Vinayagar, Subramaniam, Madurai Veeran, Karuppuswami and Pathamma. There are five temples in the village, one dedicated to each deity. The caste Hindus worship Vinayagar and Subramaniam while the Harijans worship the latter three. Harijans also render worship to the first two Gods. Lord Subramaniam is known in this village as "Kurinji Andavar". According to the inhabitants, there are four types of soil and their soil belongs to the 'Kurinji' category; hence their worship of Kurinji Andavar. In the Harijan cheri, one came across a small mud enclosure. Different types of tridents were stuck in the mud and saffron had been liberally smeared all over the space and this place of worship belonged to "Madurai Veeran". In another street facing north was a little temple which was in a

dilapidated condition. A peculiar odour emanated from that temple while opening the little doors. It was sad to see how ill kept were these little places of worship in the area. The temples in Vilpatti were kept in a better condition and apparently were visited more frequently. The original Subramaniam temple at Kovilpatti is said to have been built by a Pandiya King about 500 years back. There are no authentic records, legends, inscriptions or copper plates to indicate the exact date of its construction or the name of the King who had ordered the construction. The surrounding Mandapams and Gopurams are recent additions when the temple was renovated. The sanctum sanctorum is the original construction by the Pandiya King.

Kurinji Andavar temple

92. The Kurinji Andavar temple, the exact replica of the original Subramaniam temple, was built by an American, Lady Ramanathan who was converted to Hinduism. She was the wife of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, a noted savant, philosopher and educationist of Jaffna in Ceylon, the founder of the Ramanathan College. In the course of his lecture tour in America, he met his wife whom he converted to the Hindu faith. She thereupon took the name of Leelavathi. Both husband and wife have written many books on Hindu epics and Philosophy. After leaving Jaffna, the couple settled down at Kodaikanal and built



Pillaiyar temple

NEW KURINJI ANDAVAR TEMPLE



Truly India is a land of contradictions - of the old and the new.
From the VIMANA to the Tin-Roof. The transition seems to be abrupt.

NEW KURINJI ANDAVAR TEMPLE



A God should have grandeur and glory - even if it is by props such as these -
The VIMANA of a village temple.

a house very near the present location of the temple. It was Sir Ramanathan's custom to stand on the summit of the hill and gaze upon the Palni temple below. He was a devout worshipper of Lord Subramaniam. After having visited the Lord Subramania temple at Kovilpatti, he desired to renovate this temple. But the villagers of Vilpatti objected to this and so he could not fulfil his cherished desire. On his death bed, he exhorted his devoted wife to construct a temple in honour of Lord Subramaniam. Thereupon, Lady Ramanathan took up this noble task and constructed a temple at the exact spot where it was the custom of her late husband to stand and gaze upon the Palni temple down below. The temple is a perfect gem of architecture with delicate carvings intagliated on the pillars and walls.

Festivals

93. Most important among their festivals are the Panguni Nombu and the Harvest Dance. The Harijans celebrate Madurai Veeran festival with pomp and pageantry. The Panguni Nombu is celebrated with great eclat by all the villagers and the festivities last for seven days. The God in whose honour the festival is held is known as the Twelve God. The following are supposed to be the twelve deities :

1. Kopparan (chief deity)
2. Durga Kali
3. Vettakaran
4. Karuthavelan
5. Bhoothanachi
6. Peruvayal Bhootham
7. Thattagasel Bhootham
8. Arakkal Bhootham
9. Erakalthattu Bhootham
10. Manjakal Bhootham
11. Poothanthotti Bhootham
12. Ootupatti Bhootham

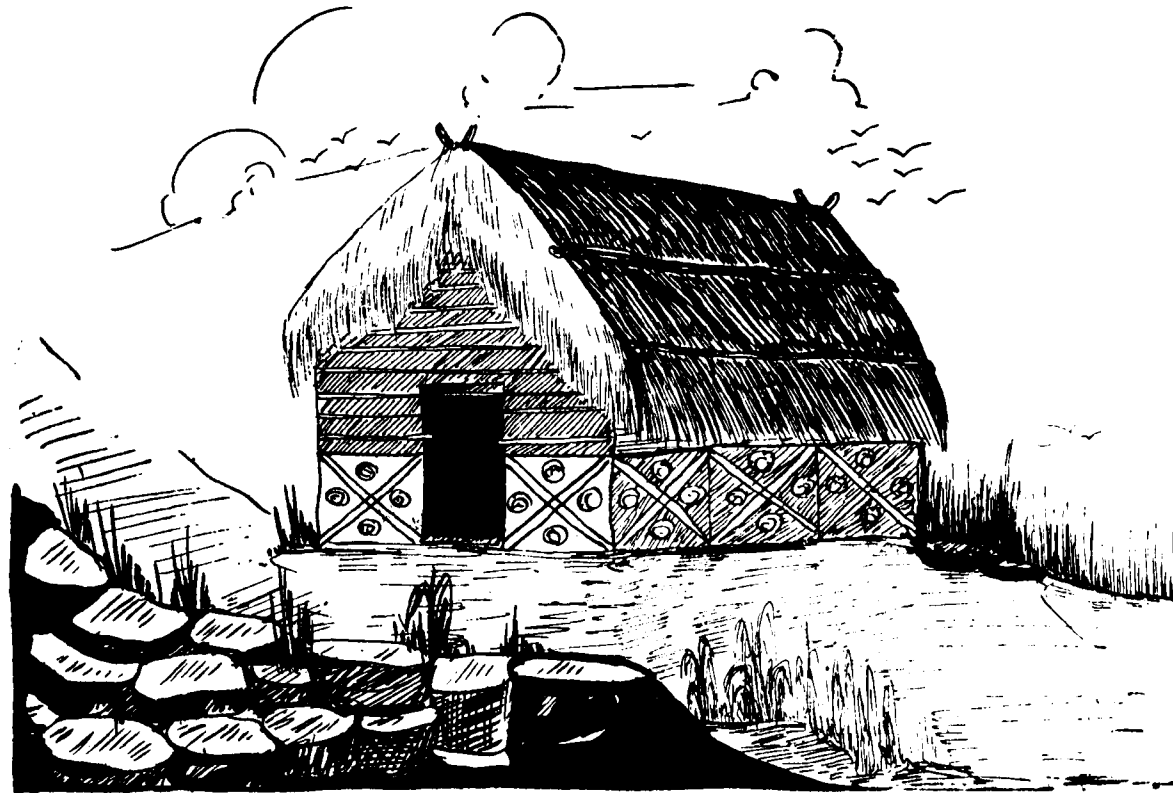
The Twelve God is the patron of the villagers and is supposed to protect and bless them. The tradition is that during the festival, the Twelve God descends on the head of a particular villager who is possessed by the deity and who executes a dance contrary to all theories of gravitation and equilibrium. The people can question the possessed man who answers all their questions and gives them advice. The deity descends on the head of one particular villager alone during the time of the festival every year. When a man dies, his successor is discovered in a most interesting manner. The Pulayans are sent for and they play the same type of music, the peculiar haunting rhythm which rises into a frenzied tempo. As the music grows louder and louder, one of the villagers begins to dance

gyrating round and round in a peculiar manner. Immediately he is acknowledged as the successor and henceforth he becomes the holy man on whom the person of the Twelve God descends during the time of festival.

Twelve God festival

94. On making enquiries, I discovered that the present holy man on whom the Twelve God was in the habit of descending was residing at a place called Vellakavi lying eight miles away. He is known as Murugesu Mudaliar. But during the time of the Panguni Nombu, he comes to the village the day before the commencement of the Twelve God festival. He is given a bath in the nearby river and is attired into a saffron coloured dhoti of six yards length. A little house of God set apart for this specific purpose is his residence for the next seven days. It is a small room in which the gold and silver jewellery of the Twelve God is kept during the period. For the next three days, he sits in a sort of trance with six people attending on him. Every morning he bathes in the river and returns to his sacred abode. He consumes a great quantity of milk and fruits while three assistants chant 'mantras' from dawn to dusk. He makes queer spasmodic movements now and then with his long hair hanging loose over his shoulders. This continues for three days while the people prepare for the festival. Every morning he bathes in the river to the accompaniment of music and then followed by his three assistants he finds his way back to the sanctum where he relaxes in a sort of trance to the chanting of mantras. On the fourth day the celebrations actually commence. The head priest is completely covered with ornaments and costly jewels. The village bulls are painted and sporting events are conducted. In the morning, the animals are taken to the fields and allowed to graze freely till sunset. At four in the evening, the painted bulls are brought to the shandy yard and races are held between villagers and the bulls. Young men perform various feats of strength and dexterity and the 'Kavadi' dance begins. In this dance, people hold palanquin-like structures on their heads and shoulders and dance vigorously. At the time of sunset, the possessed man begins his strange performance and executes a fantastic dance while spectators sing and cheer.

95. For the next three days, the festival continues and during that time, the villagers arrange entertainments, fairs and sports of various kinds. On the seventh day, the celebrations come to an end. For the first six days the villagers and devotees fast and take only vegetarian meals. On the seventh day they take meat,



Madurai Veeran temple

chicken etc. Once in twelve years this very same festival is celebrated on a larger scale, the festival lasting for fifteen days. This is in honour of the Kurinji tree which is supposed to flower only once in twelve years. The celebrations are then carried on with greater enthusiasm and rejoicing.

Madurai Veeran festival

96. Poor, though they may be, they tend to spend lavishly during the time of festivals. Even the poverty-stricken Harijans enjoy the Madurai Veeran festival with religious fervour and zeal notwithstanding the expenses that might arise. As a community, they seem so greatly transformed on such occasions that one begins to wonder whether these could be the people who sweat and labour on a rocky terrain for a meal that is provided to them only at irregular intervals. Little calves are sacrificed to the Twelve God and Madurai Veeran. In both these cases, it is said, that not a drop of blood was seen on the ground after the kill. Since I was not present on such an occasion, I was unable to test the veracity of this statement. The bloodless carcass falls to the ground and is carried away to be buried under the

Kurinji tree in the case of the Twelve God. When the sacrifice is done to Madurai Veeran, the Harijans fall upon the meat and consume it. But this is done only by the Arunthathiar community. The Muslims celebrate their Bakrid and Muharram festivals much in the same manner as many of their brethren elsewhere in the country. For the Christians, there is the Lady of the Lourdes festival held annually in February. There is a Lady of Lourdes Church at Attuvampatti and Christians of this village as well as the surrounding parts attend this festival. The attendance is roughly in the region of 300.

Fairs

97. Vilpatti has no separate fair as such, but along with the festivals, fairs are also held where commodities are brought and sold. During the time of the Panguni Nombu and Harvest Dance festivals, fairs are held as part of the entertainments. On such occasions, the vendors who come from other villages with their gaily coloured wares excite the fancy of the young and the old. Visitors from other villages come here to take part in the festivals and there is a fair attendance. Laughter and music pervade the air, all round. People relax



Karupannaswami, — By the wild shrubs in unheeded repose.
This lonely god a solitary vigil keeps.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

completely from their toil for a few days and enjoy the sight of merry-go-rounds, pony rides and the mirth of the jostling humanity as it rests for a moment from the day to day chores.

Recreation and Leisure

98. In addition to the festivals and fairs which they celebrate from time to time, the only other forms of recreation open to the villagers of Vilpatti is to listen to the music from the battery set or play indoor games and thumb through the magazines at the Panchayat Board Office or which is dear to the village folk, sit around, drink a cup of tea, smoke and gossip. With the introduction of the community development scheme and its attendant benefits, certain indoor games have been popularised among the younger generation and carroms is a hot favourite among young men of the village. Sometimes dramas depicting the life of men, exciting stories or scenes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha are enacted by the villagers and at such times, it is a delight to watch them rehearse or play. A crude stage is erected and under the dim lights of lanterns or petromax lights, crowds gather to watch the simple and rustic folk make up for their lack of experience in the thespian art by vigorous gestures, improvised dialogue and crude music and dancing. Occasionally, ballads are sung by some of those who possess a good voice and these ballads are heard with great enthusiasm by the village folk. Not for them our symphony orchestras or regular dramas. They are satisfied listening to their legendary tales and a night spent sitting on bare earth and watching the antics and gestures of the amateur artistes of the village is for them the best method of utilising their leisure hours. The local games played by these people are Indian cricket called 'Gilli' and 'Chadugudu'. Both these games can be played by any number and two teams fight it out to the encouraging shouts of the multitude. Even elderly men gamely partake in this type of event.

Music

99. Considering music, their musical instruments are simple and crude. They have different types of drums and flutes but we could sense no difference in the notes produced from them. On festive occasions when music is required, the villagers send for the Pulayans who come from the hills some distance away. They, with their flutes and drums, produce a strange haunting melody creating exotic sensations that linger for hours after the musicians have gone.

100. Their dance is similar to that of the villagers of the plains, but there is a queer gyration of the hips which is interesting to observe. Their dances have been

described when we alluded to the Panguni Nombu festival. These people dance not only during festivals and on happy occasions, but also during morbid events like death.

Village Politics

101. There are political parties too in the village, but they move with each other normally on the most friendly terms except during times of election. They listen to political tirades with genial good humour and do not get offended at the invectives sometimes thrown at them by opposing parties. The main political parties existing in this place are the Communist, the Congress and the D.M.K. They have no violent clashes and political affiliations do not affect the cordiality that exists among them. The results of our enquiry relating to social and political activities are embodied in Table No. 24.

Caste Panchayat

102. There is a Caste Panchayat in the village for arbitration of petty disputes like minor thefts, misbehaviour, disputes regarding small items of property, dowry, adultery, divorce etc., The Caste Panchayat is

TABLE No. XXIV

GENERAL

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS

Community	Total No. of households	Reading daily news paper	Member or members of which work for social uplift	Member or members of which take active part in politics.	Member or members of which have joined co-operative societies.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Reddiar	49	1	1	...	16
Pillai	56	2	6	3	17
Mannadiar	23	...	1	...	9
Mudaliar	19	2	1	1	10
Pannadi	1	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	...	...	...	1
Vannan	1	...	...	...	...
Nadar	4	4	1	1	3
Asari	15	...	2	...	6
Brahmin	1	...	...	...	1
Maruthuvar	1	...	1	...	1
Naidu	6	1	1	1	6
Malayali	1	...	...	1	...
Konar	1	1	1	1	1
K-hatriya	1	...	...	...	1
Adi-dravida	9	...	...	...	4
Parayan	11	...	...	...	3
Arunthathiar	26	...	...	...	11
Christian Nadar	1	1	1	1	...
Christian	1	...	...	1	1
Mudaliar	1	...	...	...	1
Muslim	4	...	...	...	1



The spirit is one but the forms are many; God has taken this form in a VILPATTI Temple – Madurai Veeran.

composed of elders and responsible leaders drawn from various communities. These Panchayat leaders conduct their sitting on the earthen mound in front of the Panchayat Board Office. There is a legislative book maintained by this Panchayat in which is recorded all disputes referred to it along with the decisions given on them. Most of the disputes are settled amicably and a decision of the Panchayat enforced. In a few cases where enforcement is not possible, the matter is taken to the Law Court. As far as possible, the Panchayat tries to enforce its decision. Only 5% of the cases are referred to regular Law Courts or to the Police. There are no separate Caste Panchayats for individual communities. This is a feature peculiar to Vilpatti and speaks volumes for the amicable relationship existing between various communities. Normally it is customary for each community to have its own Caste Panchayat or Panchayat of elders to arbitrate between parties and to settle disputes. In Vilpatti, this welcome feature has provided immense benefits in reducing inter-caste disputes to the minimum and strengthening the bonds of friendship among the villagers.

Panchayat

103. The village Panchayat Board which came into existence on the 1st April 1960 seems to be functioning very well. The President is one Sri Munuswamy Nadar who is assisted by Sri Rangaswamy as the Vice-President. The Panchayat Board consists of eleven members with one co-opted member. All the members including the President and Vice-President were unanimously elected. One feature about Kodaikanal taluk was the absence of a contested election in all Panchayats. The members and the President of the Panchayat Union Council were also unanimously elected. This is a happy feature which shows the measure of co-operation among the villagers who stand uninfluenced by personal differences and caste prejudices. There are certain compulsory functions and some discretionary functions vested upon the Panchayats. The compulsory functions relate to the provision of protected drinking water supply, drainage, sanitation and maintenance of internal street lights, maintenance of burial grounds and the provision of educational facilities. The discretionary functions are as follows: Tree planting, maintenance of slaughter house and markets, organisation and provision of fairs and festivals, provision of bus stands and rest houses for tourists, provision of reading room and recreational activities and finally social education schemes.

Income of Panchayat

104. The income of the Panchayat is derived from the following sources: 1. house tax 2. profession tax and 3. vehicle tax. Profession tax is levied once in six

months at the rate of 8 Annas for incomes above Rs. 300/- The net income accruing from this tax is Rs. 64/- only. For all vehicles except those which come within the purview of the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, vehicle tax is levied, but the income is nil as there is only one bullock cart in the entire village and no cycle and the tax for the bullock cart is levied by the Kodaikanal Municipality. Taxes are levied on dangerous and offensive trades, the total amount accruing from this source being Rs. 200/-. In addition to these direct taxes, there are indirect taxes like surcharge on stamp duty, transfer of property, surcharge and additional surcharge on the sale. The income from these sources roughly amounts to Rs. 3,000/-. In addition, Government give a matching grant on the total amount levied by way of house tax.

Activities of Panchayat

105. The Panchayat Board office consists of a small room containing a number of new chairs, a table and an almirah. There are many indoor games like carroms and chess. In addition, certain Tamil magazines and the daily newspapers are also purchased and kept in this office for the benefit of readers who avail themselves of the facilities provided. Adjoining this room is a small apartment containing a brand new radio set run on battery. It was bought by the villagers, half the cost being paid by them and the other half by the Government. There are loudspeakers attached to it and every evening or during particular occasions the radio set is tuned on for the benefit of the listeners. The Panchayat has paid by way of contribution Rs. 1,400/- towards construction of a school building. In addition, it paid Rs. 1,050/- towards the construction of a Veterinary First Aid Centre which was opened in 1961. However, there is no arrangement to man the centre, and therefore, this is not being exploited for the benefit of the villagers. In addition, the Panchayat has prepared an estimate for cement concreting the streets, putting up of an automatic flush out latrine and seven kerosene street lights. Electricity is coming to this village shortly and it is learnt that 99 households have given their willingness to utilise electricity for domestic consumption. Under the Rural Water Supply Scheme, an overhead tank at an estimated cost of Rs. 30,000/- was constructed and opened by the Collector of Madurai on 26th November 1961. In spite of the diversity of communities with different customs and manners and though belonging to different political parties there is unity and cooperation among the villagers as far as the functioning of the Panchayat is concerned and no party differences and ideologies are permitted to creep into the cooperative effort, directed to confer benefits on the villagers of Vilpatti.



Faith and prayers are additional implements in villagers Armoury.



A FESTIVE OCCASION

The primeval beat of the drums, the sonorous rhythm of the songs; the "Va-et-la" of guests, cordiality and friendliness pervade the air.

Urbanisation

106. Kodaikanal being only five miles away as the crow flies, it will not be incorrect for any one not having lived at Vilpatti and studied its socio-economic conditions to assume that the impact of a municipal town will be felt in this rural village. However, the effects of urbanisation have been felt to some appreciable extent. However, Vilpatti, though only a few miles away, is not connected by a good approach road from Kodaikanal town, albeit a proposal pending with the Government for taking up the road now maintained by the Municipality completely by the Highways Department, which is likely to take some time. Any proposal to take over local administration of Vilpatti by the Kodaikanal Township Committee is not feasible at this stage because of the financial condition of the latter. Any taking over brings in its wake the necessity for providing amenities like supply of drinking water, medical facilities, lighting and maintenance of interior roads. The local Panchayat is also likely to object to this proposal on the ground that at present the Rural Development Department of the Government are providing them with necessary funds to give the identical amenities the Township Committee will have to provide. As such, even though the effects of urbanisation could have been keenly felt, in practice, Vilpatti still remains outside an urban tract. Quasi-urbanisation has brought in its wake the following benefits to the villagers of Vilpatti. Many are members of the Kodaikanal Cooperative Society from which they purchase the bulk of their household needs. They are also members of the Kodaikanal Agricultural Bank, the Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank and the Cooperative Milk Supply Unit. They get the bulk of their credit requirements from the former and to the latter they sell the bulk of the milk available in the village. The proximity of the village to Kodaikanal, in addition to providing certain material benefits like the steady supply of household necessities, acts also as a place for marketing their produce on a credit basis. It is also reflected in their sartorial style. The well known coats, hats and cloth turban which are the sartorial items sported by people living in Kodaikanal town can also be seen in Vilpatti village whereas in some of the interior villages, a simpler form of dress is worn. The location of a cinema theatre at Kodaikanal as also a few restaurants also attract these villagers thus acting as a drain on their resources and creating an imbalance in their family budget. We have already explained that occupational mobility is facilitated to a great extent due to the urban character of Kodaikanal town. The location of a high school at Kodaikanal also helps the villagers of Vilpatti to send their children to the school. According to the statistics available, about 15 boys and girls of this village regularly attend this school.

Panchayat Raj

107. Panchayat Raj has come to Vilpatti. This village being located within the aegis of the Kodaikanal Block Development Scheme, the Block has materially assisted the villagers in bringing into existence a local Midwifery Centre and a Women Welfare Centre with a local teacher as the convenor. But from personal observation, I could infer that neither of these projects have been of success, for soon after the inauguration, they grew defunct. Partly the blame can be laid at the door of the Block staff who did not display sufficient enthusiasm to get the people to utilise the benefits conferred on them by the opening of these centres and partly to the lack of response of the villagers themselves who prefer to go to Kodaikanal town rather than visit these centres. The Block has also contributed to the opening of a First Aid Centre. Either due to a paucity of cattle requiring treatment or due to some unknown reason, the centre presents a deserted appearance. The village has the benefit of the services of a Grama Sevak and a Grama Sevika. The Grama Sevak resides in the village proper and provides assistance to the people which they accept with condescension. During the course of my visit to Vilpatti, the Grama Sevak was on hand and helped me to contact the villagers. He seems to be well known in these parts and has a good working knowledge of the village and the surroundings. This is a good augury for the future as Community Development cannot survive without the Grama Sevak's assistance and his relationship with the people with whom he is supposed to work has to be extremely cordial. According to the comments of the villagers, the Grama Sevika does her duty by visiting the place once a fortnight. One reason for her conduct could be that a visit involves considerable physical exertion in the absence of proper conveyance and hence the Grama Sevika has to space her visits at such long intervals. In the sphere of social education, it is stated that the local teacher assists the village women in learning needle work, embroidery, knitting and other net work. This educational centre goes by the impressive name of "Ahila Hindu Mathar Sangham", but we could observe no activity whatsoever at the centre during the time of our visit. It was being used as a godown for storing potatoes and kept closed. We have already explained in detail the other benefits conferred by the Community Development Staff in the matter of improving agriculture, supplying seeds, manures, insecticides and agricultural implements and helping the villagers to adopt better agricultural practices and improving their livestock. However for one and half years of Community Development and National Extension, the benefits conferred on the villagers are not commensurate with what is normally to be expected. One reason may be due to the poverty and the inertia of the villagers

themselves. But generally, much more has to be done and more enthusiasm has to be displayed by the Block staff before the economy of the village can be given a face lifting—the primary objective of the scheme.

Crimes

108. The local Magistrate's Court is situated at Kodaikanal town. The Tahsildar of Kodaikanal acts as the Sub-Magistrate-cum-District Munsiff. The Court is in possession of a Sub-Jail where the prisoners are remanded until further action is taken. When offences of a serious nature are committed and offenders convicted, they are kept separately and then transported to the Central Jail at Vellore. The following are the particulars of crimes committed in Vilpatti village from 1951 to 1956. Figures for the later years are not available. There were fourteen cases under the Indian Penal Code and seventeen cases under various Sections of the Prohibition Act. Compared to crime statistics in the State and in other villages, this is rather high. Among the fourteen cases, there was only one case of murder in the year 1954, and five cases of theft. The other cases related to comparatively minor offences. From the statistics relating to prohibition offences also, it is seen that they have been kept down to the absolute minimum, there being only seventeen cases for the last five years. As a rule, I noticed that people do not drink hard liquor in this village or even if they do, they manage to effectively cloak their movements.

Inter-caste relationship

109. Caste hierarchy is a common feature of all villages of South India. The essence of this hierarchy is the absence of equality among the various castes forming the constituent units. In this strict and narrow sense, the various communities in Vilpatti village do belong to a hierarchical set up. There are differences of dietary and occupation and the units are also separated by endogamy. But it is rather difficult to determine the exact place of each community in this set-up. The Asaris and Muslims, as a rule, generally, follow their traditional occupation or run their business and do not take to agricultural occupations. But here the distinction stops because the other communities like the Reddiars, Pillais, Mudaliars and the Harijans take to agriculture and also have a second string to their bow in the shape of other forms of occupation or business. Similarly, in the case of their diet, the majority of the villagers are non-vegetarians, only a particular group of Harijans called the Arunthathiars eating beef and pork. All communities inclusive of the other Harijans, Reddiars, Pillais, Mudaliars and Mannadiars except Brahmins eat non-vegetarian meals, luxuries being utilised according to the income of the particular household.

Thus in Vilpatti village, caste hierarchy is influenced by local factors over a period of time. Hierarchy also becomes dynamic. One excellent feature about Vilpatti as has been already mentioned by me is the lack of individual caste panchayat for each community and the existence of a Panchayat composed of elder members drawn from the various communities. Disputes arising among various communities are adjudicated by this Panchayat and from the very fact that decisions are strictly enforced, it means that all communities are united in a cohesive bond and inter-caste relationship is kept on a very sober and friendly plane. But they draw the line at only one point. No inter-caste marriages are allowed. So far we never came across a single instance of an inter-caste marriage. Marriages are confined to the community itself and marital relationship outside the community is non-existent. People call on each other and there are no restrictions on members of one community entering the streets in which other communities live, though there are separate habitations for each community. They mix freely, take part in common religious functions and worship in the same temple, the only distinction being that Harijans worship separately Madurai Veeran and other local deities whereas the other communities worship only Lord Vinayaga and Subramania. People eat in each other's houses during wedding feasts and there is no social ostracism on any occasion. However, conservative practices die hard and the innate dislike for mixing with Harijans who are considered to be low caste people has prevented the caste Hindus of Vilpatti from mixing very freely with Harijans. In hotels and tea shops of the village, we came across Harijans sitting with a Mannadiar, a Mudaliar or a Reddiar, chatting freely and drinking cups of tea. But we never heard it said that a caste Hindu would permit a Harijan to enter his kitchen and partake a meal side by side. This in spite of people being aware of the laws of untouchability and its penal provisions! The caste Hindu allows the Harijan to enter his temple, sit with him in a tea shop or even go together to a wedding feast. But to enter each other's house and be welcome guests—this is too much for them. The most interesting feature is that both parties abhor such a freedom where normally one would expect the Harijan to fight for his legitimate place in society. Probably the agricultural labour being drawn exclusively from the Harijan community has emphasised the servant-master relationship to such an extent that it will take years before this bane is shattered and the Harijan takes his legitimate place beside a caste Hindu. Yet we came across no instance of open hostility in this village and relations appeared most cordial amongst all communities.



A place of reverence and worship in an ideal setting.



A village scene - The voice of the mountain drowned in the blare of the loudspeakers - An overflowing leisure; An inebriating lethargy.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

110. We have now come to the end of this interesting story about Vilpatti and its inhabitants. Judging by fictional standards it may appear an ordinary story but in its content of human interest, setting forth as it does the life history of simple villagers, it has its interest. Yet within its short compass, I have tried to dwell at length on various points which go to make up the broad canvass of life in this village—the day to day existence of the inhabitants, their relationship with each other and between communities as these differ from village to village. But the pattern which emerges as a whole is very clear. A quaint village, inhabited by simple-minded yet interesting folk belonging to a variety of communities, they yet manage to form a

homogenous unit, ready to help each other in times of adversity. Theirs is a simple and hard life. They have no time to rest on their oars as the very nature of the soil and the hilly terrain preclude them from doing so. They work hard trying to get every little bit out of the un-yielding soil. Their economy depends to a large extent on the potato. Kodaikanal, a paradise for tourists, is situated very near but the impact of urbanisation is not very keenly felt in this village. To a certain extent it provides them some sort of diversion as well as a place where some secondary means of occupation can be found. Its main impact is probably in the sphere of education and its indirect effects on the occupational structure obtaining in the village.

APPENDIX I

CENSUS 1961 - SOCIO ECONOMIC SURVEY

HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE

Name of—

District :

Taluk :

Village :

1. Name of the head of the family.
2. (a) Religion.
(b) Community.
(c) Name of S.C. or S.T.
3. Did this family settle down in this village within the last 10 years? If so, state reasons for migration to this village.
4. (a) Total number of members in the family.
(b) Total number of rooms occupied by the family.
5. Has any member of the family left the village during the last 10 years in search of employment? If more than one member has gone away, state the total number of members.
6. Is any industry or business conducted in the house? If so, state the particulars.
(a) Nature of industry/business.
(b) Number of persons working in each.
(c) Total monthly income from each.
(d) When was it started?
(e) Is any financial assistance received from—
Government.
Co-operative Society.
Others.
(f) State the quantity produced per year.
Quantity consumed at home.
Quantity available for sale.
7. Total family income from—
(a) Land under cultivation.
(b) Rent from land
(c) Industry or business.

APPENDIX I

(d) Occupation.

(e) Others.

8. Has the family incurred any debt? State the amount outstanding—

(a) From Co-operative Society.

(b) Money lenders.

(c) Banks

(d) Government.

9. What is the average expenditure per month on

(a) Food

(b) Education.

(c) Clothing.

(d) Fuel.

(e) Luxuries.

10. (a) State the total area of land owned classified by crops cultivated.

(b) Are the lands owned or taken on lease?

(c) Are the lands hereditary or acquired? Indicate area under each.

(d) How is the surplus produce marketed?

Is it sold in the neighbouring town or in shandies or through middlemen who visit the village.

If sold to middlemen is it because of financial assistance received from the middlemen for agricultural operations?

11. Has the household invested anything during the last 10 years on—

(a) Better irrigation.

(b) Better type of cattle.

(c) Better seeds.

(d) Better implements.

(e) Better manure

(f) More land for cultivation

(g) Pesticides

(h) Improved method of cultivation.

(i) Other improvements.

Amount

Rate of Interest

12. Diet—

- (a) How many times do they take meals in a day?
- (b) What are the main constituents of their food?
- (c) How many times in a week do they take non-vegetarian food?
- (d) How many times do they take milk, eggs, fish and meat?
- (e) Is any article of food forbidden? If so, state which and why?

13. Medical Care :—

Do women go to hospital for confinement?
Do Doctors visit the house for confinement?
Is the assistance of qualified midwife sought?
What is the medical system followed?
Allopathic.
Homeopathic.
Others.

14. Cattle owned :

No. of cows :
Bulls :
Buffaloes :
Goats :
Sheep :

15. Does the household possess :

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| (a) Bench | (i) Table |
| (b) Chair | (j) Almirah |
| (c) Stools | (k) Lantern |
| (d) Cot | (l) Petromax |
| (e) Cycle | (m) Electric light |
| (f) Battery light | (n) Kerosene stove |
| (g) Radio | (o) Car |
| (h) Gramophone | (p) Bullock Cart |
| | (q) Jutka |

16. What is the dress worn by

Ordinary.

Special occasion

Men
Women

17. What are the ornaments worn? (Give sketches wherever possible.)

18. Utensils used

What types of utensils are used for cooking and household use

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| (a) Earthenware | (c) Copper |
| (b) Aluminium | (d) Brass |

- 19. Does the household purchase newspaper daily?
- 20. Has any member of the family taken active part in politics?
- 21. Has any member taken part in social uplift?
- 22. Is the household member of a co-operative society?
- 23. What are the principal deities worshipped?
- 24. What is the expenditure on marriage?
- 25. Is any dowry given?
- 26. Is the family in debt on account of this?

NAME. (1)	Sex (2)	Age. (3)	Marital Status. (4)	Age at Marriage. (5)	Literacy. (6)	Primary Occupation (7)	Monthly Income. (8)	Secondary Occupation. (9)	Monthly Income. (10)	Activity, if not working (11)	Is the occupa- tion traditional or not. (12)
1.											
2.											
3.											
4.											
Total family income per month											

AREA UNDER

	Crop I	Crop II	Crop III
Own lands			
Taken on lease			
Total ...			

APPENDIX II

CENSUS 1961 - SOCIO ECONOMIC SURVEY

VILLAGE SCHEDULE

1. Name of village :
2. District/Taluk :
3. Area :
4. No. of households :
5. Distance from nearest town :
6. Distance from nearest Railway Station :
7. Distance from main road :
8. Is it connected by bus ?
9. Is there a Post Office/Telegraph Office in the village ?
(b) If not, which is the nearest Post/Telegraph Office and distance at which situated :
10. Is the village covered by the Community Development Programme ?
11. Is there a Panchayat in the village ?
12. Total population of the village—1951 & 1961.
(& 1941 & 1931, if available)
13. Is the village electrified ?
14. Give the number of births and deaths during the past 10 years :

I. Housing :

- (a) What are the common types of house ?
(Give a brief description about type of roof, wall, flooring etc.,)
- (b) Are houses owned or rented ?
- (c) Are the house-sites sufficient for the population ?

APPENDIX II

- (d) Do members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes live separately from the others or is there any progress towards their living together ?
- (e) What is the arrangement of houses in the village ?

II. Literacy & Education :

- (a) Is there any school in the village ?
(Specify whether it is Elementary, Higher Elementary, High School and also whether it is a night or day school)
- (b) What is the highest class upto which education is imparted ?
- (c) Who runs the school ?
- (d) Specify the number of students and teachers in each :
- (e) Is there a reading room/library in the village ?
- (f) Total No. of schools :

III. Health & Sanitation :

- (a) Common diseases of the village :
- (b) Is native or indigenous medicine practised ? If so, by how many ?
- (c) Give your impressions of cleanliness (inside and outside the houses):
- (d) Are there any latrines in the village ?
- (e) If there is no latrine, where do the villagers go to answer their calls of nature ?
- (f) What is the source of drinking water ?
- (g) What are the drainage facilities available in the village ? Is it adequate ?
- (h) Do villagers send their clothes to the washerman for cleaning ?
- (i) How often do they bathe and what do they use for body cleaning ?
- (j) Was the village affected by epidemics recently like Cholera, Malaria, Smallpox etc.,?
- (k) What measures were taken to control their outbreak ?

- (l) When did the last cases of epidemics occur?
- (m) What diseases are commonly prevalent in this village?
- (n) Which is the nearest hospital?
- (o) Is there a Primary Health Centre in the village?
- (p) Does it have a Maternity Ward?
- (q) Where does delivery take place? At home or in the hospital?
- (r) Are there any midwives in the area?

IV. Social life :

- (a) Do the villagers mix freely with each other on all occasions?
- (b) Is widow remarriage allowed?
- (c) What is the system of inheritance among the villagers?
- (d) What are the essential ceremonies that a man undergoes from birth to death?
- (e) What are the essential ceremonies a woman undergoes from birth to death?
- (f) How is the body disposed off after death?
- (g) What is the expenditure incurred on these funeral rites?

V. Agriculture:

- (a) Total cultivable area:
- (b) Principal crops grown with their area for 10 years:
- (c) Have the villagers taken to improved methods of cultivation?
- (d) What are the sources of irrigation prevalent in the village?
- (e) Are there any disused tanks in the village? Has any step been taken to renovate them?

- (f) Number of pumpsets and irrigation wells:
- (g) Do people hire out ploughs etc.?
- (h) What are the usual hire charges?
- (i) Is there mutual cooperation in agricultural practices?
- (j) Are chemical fertilisers used?
- (k) Is there any industrial establishment like flour mill, rice mill etc. in the village?

VI. Marriage:

- (a) At what age are marriages contracted?
- (b) Write a note on the marriage ceremonies?
- (c) Is polyandry or polygamy practised?
- (d) Is divorce granted? If so, by whom and for what reasons?

VII. Religious Practices:

- (a) No. of temples/mosques/churches in the village:
- (b) Do villagers ever join in common worship?
- (c) What are the main fairs and festivals celebrated?
- (d) How ancient is the festival? Mention the local legend about the village and the fair or festival
- (e) Does this attract people from nearby villages?
- (f) Mention the name of the deity :
- (g) What is the duration of the festival?
- (h) Is any shandy conducted during the festival either in the village itself or in the outskirts
- (i) Are communal feasts or free kitchens organised during the festival?

VIII. Co-operation:

- (a) Is there a Co-operative Society?
What is the nature? (credit, marketing etc)
- (b) Total share capital:
- (c) Number of members:
- (d) Total dues outstanding as on date:
- (e) Is there scope for development of co-operative activities?

IX. Recreational Facilities:

- (a) What are the recreational facilities available?
- (b) Do all villagers participate in these activities?
- (c) Is there any play ground in the village? Mention area of playground:
- (d) Is there any Club for sports or recreation? What sports are played and what amenities are provided in the Club?

X. Livestock:

- (a) Total number of livestock in the village as per 1956 Livestock Census:
- (b) Are there any improved breeds of cattle in the village?
- (c) Average milk yield — buffalo/cow
- (d) Which is the nearest Veterinary hospital?
- (e) Is there a cattle pound in the village?
- (f) Is animal transport used?

XI. General:

- (a) Do villagers tattoo their bodies?
- (b) Do villagers favour female education?
- (c) Do the children get sufficient quantities of milk?
- (d) No. of street lights : (kerosene or electric lamps to be specified)
- (e) Are there any craftsmen in the village?

XII. Is any legend attached to the origin of the village?

XIII. Are there any ancient monuments or places of architectural value in the place? Ifso, describe them.

APPENDIX III.

GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS.

<i>Tamil Words</i>	<i>English Equivalents</i>
AARTI	... The waving of lighted camphor to dispel the evil effects
AGRAHARAM	... Settlement of Brahmins
CHERI	... Segregated settlement of low castes
DHARBA	... A kind of grass used in some ceremonies
GOPURAM	... Tower of a temple
GRAHA PRAVESAM	... House-warming ceremony
HOMAM	... Offering of ghee, grain etc. to the sacred fire
IDLI	... Steamed rice cake
KAVADI	... A palanquin-like structure in which the offerings to a deity are suspended
KURINJI	... Hilly tract
MANDAPAM	... Hall
MANAI	... A wooden plank used for sitting
MANTRAS	... Prayers or spells recited
NANAL	... A kind of reed
PANGUNI NOMBU	... A festival celebrated in the Tamil month of Panguni (March-April)
PUJARI	... Temple priest
SHASHTI	... A chief festival for Lord Subramaniya
THALAYARI	... Village watchman
THALI	... Marriage badge tied to the bride's neck
THOTTIL IDUTHAL	... Ceremony at which the child is laid in the cradle for the first time

ERRATA

Page No.	Paragraph No.	Table No.	Column No.	For	Read
9	23	II	(II) heading	1001 & lower 862 males	1001 & above 557 males
27	52	...	...	865 females 1042	570 females 102
28	53	...	...	182	82
...	...	VIII	(2)	179	79
				168	68
36	60	...	...	47 non-workers	44 non-workers
58	89	XXII	(2) heading	1 group	Income group

